

The Baltic and Arctic Areas under Stalin. Ethnic Minorities in the Great Soviet Terror of 1937-38.

International Research Group

ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

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Japan and Soviet National Minorities: Missing Links.
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Certain ethnic groups were disproportionately hit by Stalin's Great Terror. In most cases, this fact is explained by the threat from the West (i.e. Nazi Germany). Often forgotten in the literature on the Great Terror, however, is the threat from the East (i.e. Japan). Although scholarship on the period mentions the threat from the East when it comes to the 1937 wholesale deportation of ethnic Koreans from the Far East, the role of Japan has largely been ignored. This paper will emphasize the Eurasia-wide threat from Japan with which Stalin sought to justify his terror against national minorities.

Japan's use of national minorities (Poles, Finns, Lithuanians, Georgians and others) against Russia had a long history starting with the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. Stalin had no doubt that Japan continued to use them against his government. Japan encircled the Soviet Union with intelligence stations under the cover of diplomatic posts (especially in the bordering states: Finland, the Baltic states, Poland, Romania, Turkey and Iran). It worked closely with Poland for this purpose. In May 1937, immediately before the beginning of mass terror operations, Germany and Japan concluded a secret intelligence agreement against the Soviet Union. This signified to Stalin a tri-partite intelligence union against Moscow. This is the background for the terror against many national minorities, including western and northern minorities.

Stalin's assumption was correct. All important capitalist powers had subversive intent and practises against the Soviet Union. Germany, Japan, and Poland were the foremost among them. However, the Soviet counter-intelligence penetrated them deeply. Although Stalin knew that the scope of their subversion was extremely limited, he terrorized, in any case, all national groups (including those of the Baltic states) targeted by these countries.

Dr Tomislav Dulic (Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University)

Why Genocide? Legal definitions, theory and mass violence in the Soviet Union

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The issue of definition causes controversies in most studies of mass violence during the twentieth century, and the violence perpetrated in the Soviet Union or other communist countries is no exception. One reason for this is the considerable variation in the definitions used, where national legislations and definitions of genocide sometimes differ considerably from the convention that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. Hence, there sometimes develops a situation where scholars interested in comparative research use the same words to describe a phenomenon, while in actual fact speaking about quite different things.

The presentation begins with a couple of examples regarding controversies that are associated with the convention and its possible application on communist atrocities. After that, attention will be paid to a more detailed analysis of the UNGC, with a special focus on the legal interpretations of key aspects such as intent and the constitution of the group, as well as the relationship between genocide and other crimes against international humanitarian law such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The final section will be dedicated to a listing of criteria, which might guide researchers that are interested in comparative analyses of mass killing, where similarities and differences between the legal and some scholarly definitions of genocide will be addressed.

Prof. Bogdan Musial (University of Stefan Wyszyński in Warsaw)

The Polish operation” of the NKVD

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Between summer 1937 and autumn 1938, the time of the “Great Terror”, numerous so-called “National Operations” targeting ethnic minorities were carried out in the USSR. The largest was the “Polish Operation”. Starting in August 1937 and ending in October 1938, NKVD units arrested over 150,000 persons, half of whom were soon shot. Stalin even dissolved the Communist Party of Poland, ordering most of the arrested leaders to be executed.

The “Polish Operation” marked the zenith of the persecution of Poles in the Soviet Union, which had already begun in the early 1930s when the party leadership embarked on systematic mass terror against the Polish minority. Between 1930 and 1936 Stalin ordered the Belorussian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics to be purged of Poles, resulting in thousands of deaths and many more deportations. It is estimated that Polish losses in the Ukrainian SSR were about 30%, while in the Belorussian SSR, where some 300,000 persons declared themselves as Poles in the 1920s, the Polish minority was almost completely annihilated or deported.

The available sources clearly imply that it was ethnic-defined terror and that the “Polish Operation” was merely a peak in the persecution. Thus, it does not seem unlikely, as Soviet statistics indicate, that the number of Poles dropped from 792,000 in 1926 to 627,000 in 1939.

The presentation outlines the course of the anti-Polish mass terror and its motivations. The origin of the Bolshevik complex vis-à-vis Poland will also be explored.

Prof. Irina Takala (Petrozavodsk University, Russia)

Finnish operation of the NKVD in Soviet Karelia during the 1930s.

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Wide-scale ethnic cleansings in the Soviet Union carried out during the Great Purge still remain a controversial issue for scholars. So-called ‘ethnic orders’ issued during summer and autumn of 1937 became the basis for mass repression against many ethnic minorities, primarily those representing title nations of the “bourgeois-fascist” states which bordered the Soviet Union, namely Germans, Poles, Latvians, Estonians, etc.

At the same time it is hard to distinguish between state-wide operations of the 3rd (counter-intelligence) and 4th (secret political) departments of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD. In many cases, “internal and external counter-revolutions” were regarded as one, and ethnic affiliation became only a part of the Great Terror initiated by the state against their own citizens. This is clearly seen in the case of Soviet Karelia where “ethnic operation” was carried out by the Soviet political police throughout the entire 1930s and was an integral part of political, economic and social life of the border republic.

This paper will focus on the causes, methods of implementation and tragic results of the Finnish operation of the NKVD in Soviet Karelia. Although there was no special “Finnish order”, the Finns, who constituted slightly more than three per cent of the Soviet Karelian

population in the mid-1930s, made up over forty per cent of all victims of the mass operations of NKVD in Karelia – approximately five thousand people. This case-study of the mass repression in Soviet Karelia and analysis of local sources allows to understand better the overall machinery of the Great Purge and to argue that “ethnic operations” as a part of the Great Purge were used by the Soviet leadership to solve problems which were outside the domain of the “nationalities question” in the USSR.

Prof. Victor Dönninghaus (Albert Ludwig’s University of Freiburg, Germany)

The Western national minorities and the ‘ethnic cleansings’ from 1934 - 1936 as a ‘dress rehearsal’ of the Great Terror.

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Stalin’s policy in relation to the non-Russian nationalities is one of the central problems of Soviet history. From the 1917 revolution through to the deportations in the Second World War up until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the problems of the nationalities played a decisive role. In the course of the construction of the USSR nation-state, the so-called titular nations of the Soviet republics occupied the highest level of the „national-hierarchical structure“. Thus, they were in a privileged position. The scattered minorities were placed in the lowest level of this structure, which was designed by the Kremlin. They were thereby legally disadvantaged in this „great experiment“, i.e. the construction of a unified socialist nation (the „Soviet people“), and were more vulnerable.

At the centre of research is a group of scattered minorities, classified by Stalin as „fluctuating national groups“, who possessed no territories of their own, and who were the national minorities of the West (Germans, Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and Finns, amongst others). By means of extensive sources from Russian archives, the bases, the decision mechanisms and the modes of operation of Soviet policy towards the national minorities of the West (above all towards the Germans) are investigated at the highest level. It is shown from which background and in which way political decisions materialized, how they were embedded in the general ideological framework and how they were put into practice by the institutions of the party and the soviets (in particular the politburo). Using the example of the interaction between the central institutions and the national minorities of the West, corresponding parallels can be drawn between the nationality policy towards the rest of the national minorities in the Soviet Union. In light of the reality of the Stalinist system, the concealed mechanisms and instruments of the political and economic influence of the Russian-speaking centre on the foreign-speaking periphery are further exposed.

The seizure of power by the National-Socialists in Germany did not only lead to the confrontation of two totalitarian systems, but also had a decisive influence on the relationship of Stalin’s leadership to the „reichsdeutschen“ specialists and the Russian-Germans, working in the USSR. The main task consisted in finding „potential bases“ of German spy-activities in the USSR. Besides the employees of the Soviet-German „concessions“ and technical specialists with German nationality, also former war-prisoners, politemigrants and all persons, who had lived in Germany for a period of a longer time, became suspects. The politburo gave special attention to the discovery of „spy cells“ in industrial companies, where besides Germans Russian-Germans, too, had been arrested.

In 1933 was asserted, that the specific „instruments“ of „nationalities’ policy“ in the 1920th - as the formation of a German speaking party- and Soviet-elite and the foundation of administrative national territorial units - did no longer correspond with the new political line. This point of view was renewed in 1933, when the politburo made a large-scale campaign against „Hitler-help“. „Hitler-help“ assured the Kremlin-leadership against the backdrop of the intensified preparation of a war against Germany not only in their doubts in the loyalty of the Russian-Germans. But later that served as pretext to incriminate the receivers of this help having connections with the National Socialist Germany.

In November 1934, the local leaders received a telegram of the ZK, telling them to fight instantaneously against counter revolutionary elements in the German villages. The NKVD took this directive as reason to straighten part of the apparat directly on the „work among Germans“. In the German rayons they aligned authorized agents, specially „operative colleagues“ with knowledge of German language.

In addition to the Germans the Kremlin did not forget the members of other non-reliable nationalities. By signing the German-Polish non aggressive pact the 26th of January 1934, Poland was finally put into the position of a potential war-enemy of USSR. This contract was the catalyst for repressions against Polish people, living in USSR. Many of the Polish party- and Soviet-elite fell victims.

The first big „trophäe“ of „Polish activities“ of OGPU in 1933/34 was the annulation of the so-called POW [Polska Organizacja Wojskowa], which turned against politemigrants and Polish Soviet citizens. The case POW did not only serve as an instrument of discreditation of high-levelled Polish party- and Soviet functioneers and members of the communistic Polish party, but this case played a central role during the mass repressions against the Polish population in 1937/38.

Little by little the mechanisms of political repression against the Finish speaking population in SU was set into motion. This campaign for annulation of „national deviance“ was justified with the thesis, that the Finish secret service had intensified their acts of spy- and sabotage-activities on Soviet areas.

In 1933, the GPU of the military rayon Leningrad discovered the so-called „complot of the Finish general staff“. Several persons were apprehended and condemned. According to members of the GPU, who had fabricated this case, the agents of the „Finish general staff“ were active in whole Karelia and the Ingria-rayons of the region Leningrad to found „insurgent cells“ there. Besides, the same activities and goals - that had been revealed by the GPU in the German and Polish settlement areas - were more or less ascribed to the pretended counterrevolutionary groups. The procedures against Finish and other Western nationalities based on fabricated „proofs“, a practise, which was fulfilled in the years of the „Great Terror“ in 1937/38.

It could be shown that the Western national minorities had become a target of the politburo even before the beginning of the immense repressions in 1937/38. In the eyes of the politburo the minorities were nothing else than a potential base for the formation of a „fifth column“.

Even at the beginning of the 1930th, the employees of the OGPU/NKVD had carried out - as instructed by Stalin personally - cleansings in the national regions, spied out the Western national minorities` (especially Germans) contacts abroad, had put together lists of potential national enemies and arrested single representatives of the national elite, political emigrants (independently from their nationality) and foreign specialists. The sources suggest that the „ethnic operations“ in the Soviet Union (the purposeful search for spies, agents, saboteurs and unreliable ethnicities) already began in the spring of 1934, i.e. long before the decision had passed the politburo in July 1937.

With the help of the ethnic cleansings and imprisonments in the years of 1934 - 1936 and the accompanying massive propaganda campaigns the Soviet society should get used to the

omnipresence of terror. The politburo wanted to „implant“ the idea in the Soviet society that the minorities were malicious and to spread the conviction, that a „fifth column“ existed in Soviet Union.

The politburo used the deterioration of the international situation and particularly the objectively existing danger of a war, to produce an atmosphere of anxiety and cover up contradictions within the existing model of Socialist society. The national minorities were ideally suited to play the role of the internal enemy. Due to their higher standard of living, their chosen isolation, their knowledge of foreign languages, their willingness to emigrate and their contacts to relatives abroad they were viewed as being a reactive and disloyal part of the society.

Dr. Iryna Ramanava (National Academy of Sciences of Belarus)

The Repressions against Latvian and German population in the Soviet Belarus.

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Due to the geopolitical position of the Soviet Belarus – a borderline between two “irreconcilably hostile” systems – in the 1930-s a massive campaign was launched there aimed at ensuring the safety of the western USSR border. One of its vital elements was removing all hostile and disloyal elements from the area marked as “frontier”, which actually covered half the Republic’s total territory. With the deliberate build-up of tension through propaganda promoting the idea of “the Socialist Motherland besieged on all sides by enemy forces”, the national minorities (especially those whose historical homeland had a common border with the USSR) became automatically regarded as the imperialistic “fifth column” and were subject to preventive repression.

Repressions against national minorities steadily grew in scale and reached its peak in the years of Great Terror. From August 1937 till September 1938 acting on orders from NKVD Byelorussian authorities executed a large-scale campaign aimed at extermination of the Polish, German and Latvian agents.

Under this campaign all the Polish, German and Latvian population residing in regions directly adjoining the border, including party members and those who actively supported Soviet rule were subject to expulsion. In the regions further away from the border the campaign was selective in character – only the people living in strategically important territories such as around railway stations were to be expelled.

The following extract from an official document provides an idea of what the process of “exposing” enemy agents looked like: “Head of the Rechitsa Department of the State Security Administration Volovik at the meeting with his subordinates announced that their district received orders to expose and arrest 300 Poles, Latvians and Germans and gave instructions to find and disclose such individuals at the enterprises and village councils.” This shows that ethnicity alone was sufficient grounds for arrest.

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Ethnic” cleansings and the NKVD actions under the order № 00447. A case study: repressions of Western Siberia Germans.

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In 1937 –1938, there were the mass repression actions carried out against some national minorities. According to the generally accepted opinion, it was those “ethnic” cleansings in which the absurdity and abuse of “Great Terror” was clearly revealed.

In favour of this view, there are many relevant arguments, the most important of which may be ranked in the following way:

1. **Perceptions of hostility and "counter-revolutionary character" of certain national minorities**, which Stalin’s leaders and the political police had back in 1920, and which was taken as the ideological basis of ethnic cleansing.
2. **Repressive tradition against a number of national groups, especially Germans and Poles**, established by the beginning of the Great Terror period. This tradition could be so stable that carrying out of repression in 1937-1938 against the German minority didn’t even require publishing a special order of the NKVD.
3. **The presence of the factor of "military threat"**, ideal for explanation of mass repression against the members of national minorities.
4. **Specific character of national operations** which lay in the lack of so-called "limits", that implies the absence of any quantitative restrictions in the repressive activities of organs.
5. **Lack of uniformity in the order of conviction** of the victims, that suggests the weakening of the activities of organs control from "above".
6. Plenty of evidence of survivors, NKVD executives and materials of prosecutors inspections describing **mass arrests of members of Diasporas without any compromising material**.
7. **Archival materials from investigation dossiers of victims of national operations**, which contain mostly trumped-up charges and a minimum of reliable information.

Nor should we forget the impact of methodology and theory of studying the history of the "final solution" to Jewish Question in Nazi Germany, as well as the history of mass deportations of "punished peoples" of the USSR during the Second World War.

Taken together, the above arguments would seem to prove that a determinative moment in the fate of victims of national operations was an objective criteria - belonging to a "harmful" national minority - rather than a subjective criteria – a social behaviour, past and present.

The study of “German operation” in Western Siberia allows to put the certainty of this interpretation to doubt.

The comparison of “ethnic” cleansings and NKVD campaign under the order № 00447 (*“kulak operation ”*) gives the key to understanding the peculiarities of the former. For historians who study the "Great Terror" period, unoriginality, both in time and in methods, of the "national operations" in general, and “German” operation in particular, in regard to “kulak operation” is obvious. "Kulak" operation made a kind of "motor" and a model for the "national" operations. The specific character of “ethnic” cleansings was determined by the regions characteristics as well as by the presence of different groups of *“spectcs-contingent”*. We will not obtain a reliable, highly complex and differentiated picture of "national" operations if we do not always remember to distinguish actions carried out by the NKVD in places of dense residence of "harmful" minorities (national village councils, districts, autonomous regions and republics) on the one hand, and on the other hand - in their places of

disperse settlement. National operations must also always be considered in terms of the following oppositions: 1) City - collective farm village, 2) Border regions – internal regions, 3) the area of the Defence Industry - other areas, 4) places of mixed residence with a predominance of the titular nation (Russian) – with a dominance of ethnic minorities.

People with foreign surnames were persecuted only in metropolitan, industrial or border regions, and also where there were no settlements of ethnic minorities. In case of superposition of these factors punitive effect multiplied. Obviously it must be admitted that the mass unjustified repression of the victims according to objective criteria – belonging to "counterrevolutionary" nationality - were really carried out by the NKVD while trying to create a "homogeneous, modern landscapes (J. Baberovsky). The political émigrés, defectors, members of socialist parties, former prisoners of war, former foreign citizens who worked in the Soviet Union in the Defense Industry or in Transport Industry, former employees of pre-revolutionary foreign enterprises or Soviet concessions, members of the Soviet military, administrative and economic elite were at risk as well. They were eliminated almost without exception. These punitive practices fit well the theory of "ethnicisation" of internal enemy.

As for the regions of dense residence of Diasporas, the arrest of entire "*spets-contingent*" was not feasible, therefore, each of the "ethnic" operations could be regarded as a social cleansing. Describing it figuratively, any of the national orders can be compared with a magnifying glass, which was designed to strengthen, sharpen the attention of the NKVD to this particular national group. There is no doubt that there were additional risks in "repressive attention" to a national minority which Stalin's leaders considered as having a distinct feature of counter-revolutionary. In fact, in the case of publishing each new "national order" there was the same regularity as in the formation of new administrative unit during the Great Terror of 1937 - 1938 - it automatically led to increase of repression in the newly formed area.

Our studies show that preliminary selection of victims was usually carried out in places of dense residence of Diasporas. It was performed by the same officers of the NKVD who participated in the implementation of a "*kulak*" operation. The criteria of the social past life was determinative in choosing a person as a victim of "ethnic" cleansing. The inertia of social cleansing and class perception was still too high to be substituted with reckless eliminating people on national basis. As a rule, the choice of victims was made as a result of close cooperation of the punitive organs and the Party and Soviet committees of village, the candidates for being arrested were chosen by them together on the grounds of links with *kulaks*, previous convictions, poor work for the collective farm, etc. Thus, the victims of a "German operation" in Western Siberia were those engaged in the following "groups of risk": clergymen and churchgoers, people who received "Hitler's help", former "*kulaks*" and convicts, people who visited German consulates, people who had relatives abroad. But the main "group of risk" included the participants of mass emigration movement of Germans in 1929 – 1930. The information obtained from investigation dossiers as well as evidence given by members of NKVD staff in 1939-1940 indicate that the main reason for the terror against Siberian Germans within "German operation" was revenge for the attempt to emigrate.

The importance of this factor for carrying out the "German operation" in Western Siberia is confirmed by significant differences of its results in the Altai region and the Omsk region. In 1937 number of Germans there was approximately equal - about 30 thousand people. But while in the Altai region about 2 thousand Germans were arrested in November 1937 - June 1938, according to our calculations, in the Omsk region over the same period - about 500 people, given those arrested by November 1938 - about 600 people. It is hard to explain such a dramatic difference in the number of victims just by Altai NKVD-men's bloodthirsty and their special hate for the Germans. The materials from investigation dossiers as well as evidence given by members of NKVD staff in 1939-1940 confirm the assumption of revenge against former "immigrants" as the main reason of terror against the Germans in 1937-1938.

The Altai Germans are known to have been those who represented the major part of mass emigration movement: 5.761 people emigrated from the USSR in 1929, about 4.4 thousand of them left the settlement of Germans in Western Siberia, including about 3.8 thousand from the territory of the future Altai region, and only about 250 people - from the territory of the Omsk region. Thus, mass participation of the Altai Germans in emigration movement was a fatal circumstance for them.

Nevertheless, it is very difficult to believe in a personal motive of revenge, especially taking into account the constant rotation of NKVD personnel. It is most likely that the fact which played a fatal role for the Altai Germans is written records of their participation in the mass emigration movement in 1929-1930 as in the documents as in memory of the villagers (potential witnesses) and employees of village councils (staff witnesses who wrote references about the prisoners. Such references were taken as the only evidence of guilt) that allowed the NKVD to arrest and convict "emigrants" as anti-Soviet "*contingent*."

So, it is considerably to put forward a thesis that each "ethnic" cleansing in places of dense population of national minorities is an essentially a "*kulak* operation" but within a given national minority, and a degree of reference in NKVD actions was significantly higher than has been considered before. It is necessary to distinguish between unjustified repression only on the basis of national origin, which really took place, and the repression against various dissidents, real opponents and critics of the Stalin's regime.

Erika Aronowitsch (Living History Forum, Sweden)

The Living History Forum's mission in the understanding of crimes against humanity under communist regimes.

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The paper deals with the Living History Forum's brief to promote tolerance, democracy and human rights with a starting point in the history of the Holocaust but to also focus on the crimes against humanity under Communist regimes.

By using the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity as a starting point the Living History Forum, a Swedish public authority, seeks to oppose the lack of respect for equal values for all and to find ways to reduce all kinds of intolerance.

One method used is to work with authentic personal histories connected to actual historical events to help young people to identify and to reflect on these crimes. The perspective of the Past and the Present are continuously present in everything we do. We also attempt to show patterns in the different processes towards the ultimate forms of intolerance and its consequences.

The agency seeks to equip people, in first hand young people, with knowledge for the future with the goal to strengthen the will to work for equal values for all. However, to deliver relevant information is not sufficient. To be able to reach out and to attract young people requires a creativity and finding ways to reach them not only intellectually but also to reach them by the other senses. This emerges a lot of challenges in connection with the special commission of this quite special governmental agency.

Dr. Art Leete (Tartu University, Estonia)

Understandings of Change in Western Siberia in the 1930s.

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During the 1930s there was considerable change in the way of life of the peoples living in the taiga and tundra belts of Western Siberia, such as the Forest Nenets, Khanty and the Mansi peoples. These changes culminated in the armed uprising undertaken by the Khanty and the Forest Nenets peoples against Soviets in 1933-34: the Kazym War. This uprising was followed by extensive repressions against the local indigenous population.

One of the prominent reasons of the conflict was that the authorities had not paid sufficient attention to the beliefs of the Khants and Forest Nenets.

Northern peoples' responses to extreme survival problems in the 1930s were religiously organized. It is then also possible to apply the idea of reintensification of vernacular religion for interpreting the northern peoples' anti-Soviet uprising. During the Kazym uprising shamans did not propose new or considerably modified religious ideas. But divine messages about gods' demands they delivered to their peoples (to sacrifice the Russian officials) were extraordinary, indeed. Change in practices based on worldview changed radically during the uprising but these changes did not prolong but vanished soon after the Kazym War.

Quick multi-dimensional changes in religious domain illustrate most clearly differences in understanding of social processes that culminated for Western Siberian indigenous groups in violent conflicts with the authorities.

Dr. Olle Sundström (Umeå University, Sweden)

Repression of "shamans" in the Soviet North in the 1930s.

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The paper deals with the so called "struggle against shamanism" (Ru. *борьба с шаманизмом*) launched around 1930 by the Communist party to liquidate the indigenous religions of Siberia and northern Russia. In the talk I will give a short summary of what we know about the aims, execution and effects of the campaign, as well as of what we *do not* know. From what we know, the Soviet Communist Party had as its expressed goal to liquidate all religion in the Soviet Union, and replace it with the atheistic world view of Marxism-Leninism. If the constitution of 1918 had limited the rights of priests, it was not until 1926 that "shamans" were expressly included in that same category as priests. But still, the struggle against shamanism was supposed to be completed mainly through enlightenment and propaganda. This we know from the articles and pamphlets that were published in the 1920s and 1930s – and also again in the 1950s.

That the "struggle against shamanism" escalated during the 1930s, and that it included systematic incarceration and even execution of putative "shamans" is *not* mentioned in Soviet publications of the time. In post-Soviet research – mainly relying on oral history and memories of relatives to the people affected by the campaign there are some data concerning what was happening between the lines of official declarations. But the information in research

literature on the theme is still fragmentary and anecdotal, and it is not clear neither what “shamans” were formally accused of, nor what they were sentenced to.

The talk ends with an outline of proposed further research in connection to my ongoing project *Repression of “shamans” in the Soviet North from the late 1920s through the 1950s: An archival study*.

Prof. Tatiana Bulgakova (Institute of Nordic Peoples in St. Petersburg)

Interpretation of the Anti-shamanic Campaign in the Native Siberian Literature.

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The native Siberian writers and poets reflect the Big Terror in the two different ways. On the one hand, they concentrate on the outward side of the actions. Within that course, they choose different positions with respect to the tragic events. Having identified themselves with the victims, they sympathize the sufferers and condemn the organizers of the terror. In some other works they try to understand those natives who supported the new authority and worked for it against the interests of their own peoples.

On the other hand, the native writers focused on the internal side of those activities, which they describe. Being the bearers of mythological worldview and successors of shamans, they interpreted the deeds of the Soviet authority as inspired by the shamanic-like spirits. Behind the material persecutions they revealed the more significant spiritual struggle. The ‘red’ chooms and ‘houses of culture’ seemed to them as ‘houses of cul (houses of evil spirits)’, the portraits of the leaders as images of soviet spirits, which need sacrifice, the acts of big terror as special shamanic-like sacrifices, etc. From that point of view, the cruel deeds of the authority were interpreted as the logical episodes of spiritual shamanic-like struggle, in which the natives should not just fight, but rather choose the most advantageous and save position. Anti-shamanic persecutions were understood in such native literature as the manifestation of ordinary spiritual competition between the communists-magicians and the native shamans and as the authority’s attempt to get rid of those spiritual harms, which shamans could cause to the Soviet power. Paradoxically it leads the native literature heroes to the tendency not to oppose the new strong and dangerous authority, but to support it in order to join the new more powerful spirituality as compared with the native shamanic one.

Prof. Igor Nabok (Institute of Nordic Peoples in St. Petersburg)

Repressions against the indigenous peoples of the Russian North in the 1930-th as an instrument of socio-economic transformations. The presentation will be held in Russian. The abstract in English is available for participants and guests.

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The history of repressions against native minor nations in the 30s is still insufficiently explored, and the number of victims is unaccounted. Undoubtedly repressions became one of the expressions of the government powerlessness, its inability to realize social and economic reforms to improve the living conditions, development of native nations. Despite the fact that elimination of economic disparity and improvement of living standards were the main slogans of the reforms of the 20-30s in the North. We shouldn't deny that in those decades some positive results in improvement of native nation's everyday life, engraining of sanitary and hygienic skills, creation of written languages, involvement of native nations' representatives in administration (it was called "localization policy") were achieved. The Institute of Nations of the North of the Herzen University in Saint-Petersburg (which the speaker represents) was created in 1930 and it is still successfully training teachers from among native minor nations.

Measures of land nationalization, expropriation of property of wealthy peasants, disclosure of shamans at the North were taken in the middle of the 20s. Nevertheless we should admit that mistakes and crimes against native nations of the North committed in the 30s caused considerable, irreplaceable damage. Repressive policy of the Soviet government at that period was one of the measures of social and economic reforms, which were carried out without taking into account the ethnic, economic and cultural characteristics, traditions, historically established life-support systems of native minor nations, and therefore caused inevitable resistance. Because of total ideologizing any reaction of local population on incompetent administration, abuse of power, unreasonable and ineffective economic measures was considered as anti-Soviet, criminal action, intrigues of the "class enemy" and mercilessly punished. According to well-known researcher A. V. Golovnev, Nenets people consider the period of the years 1937-1938 as a war not on scale of resistance (it is unknown) but on scale of repressions.

Undoubtedly the situation emerged in different regions of the North, Siberia and the Far East, occupied almost 70% of the country territory, has its own specificity, which was defined by many circumstances including the characteristics of traditional cultures and life-support systems of different minor nations. But the nature of "averaging" of economic policy of Soviet state wasn't oriented on this specific character. Thus the "sovietization" of tundra was accompanied essentially by destruction of the economic structure of mainly reindeer-breeding nations - Nenets, Khanty, Komi and others. At the first years of the 20s some of the Soviet leaders appraised the situation soberly. A. E. Skachko, the head of national minorities department of VTsIK (All-Russian central executive committee), asserted in his report in 1923 that "Siberian nations have been oppressed by Russians during 300 years, but the exploitation has never been of such impudent proportions and forms as under the Soviet government".

In the beginning of the 30s members of the Committee of the North plenum arrived at a deplorable conclusion that transferring of 20% of reindeer herd from private to public sector turned out to the death of 35% of the herd. But it is the beginning of the 30s when was finally decided to head for cardinal transformations of native nations' life in the image and likeness of the population of the European part of the Soviet Union. It meant collectivization, struggle against the kulaks, transfer of nomadic and seminomadic nations to settled way of life, integration of settlements. All these actions, taken into administrative way, caused the negative reaction and resistance. Yet no doubt that traditional tolerance peculiar to native

minor nations, their disunity didn't allow to reach large scale of resistance appropriate to the emerging situation.

The so-called "Kazym war" (November 1933 - March 1934) and Yamal "Mandalada" can be ranged the most significant events of the resistance in the 30s. According to OGPU (the Unified State Political Department of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR) some "kulak and shaman groups" united into the mandalada by 1934. Despite we shouldn't overstate the military significance of these resistance actions, already described in literature and generated myths and legends, its psychological purport was considerable. Thus "mandalada" (on Nenets language this word means "meeting, assembly, people who get together", but employees of OGPU called it sometimes "mandolyda", sometimes "mandala") was a slogan, a call of resistance, insubordination to the government, though the scale of the battle action wasn't significant. Moreover, there was one remarkable fact: most of leaders of the resistance didn't go very well with combat command because of the age of 60-70, but above all they had authority of the elders, advocate of people's interests. There were a lot of shamans among them – spiritual leaders, foretellers, clan conservators. According to many researchers' estimates the struggle of reindeer breeders of the Yamal tundra was first of all the struggle for preservation of traditions, which was realizes as a fight for survival, nation self-preservation. Every action of resistance was preceded by meeting – gathering and ended by shamanistic ritual and getting spirits' consent. Just these very actions preceded killing five soviet officials came to negotiations during the Kazym uprising; just so the decision about taking reindeers away from kolkhoz (collective farm) was taken during the mandalada on Yamal. According to some reports 29 out of 49 people who been detained and convicted of "kazym case" were shamans (interestingly enough that public prosecutor's office of Tumen' region turned down their request to rehabilitation).

Special attention must be given to the term "kulak and shaman grouping". Party and soviet officials were guided by "class approach" to estimate the resistance, but for reindeer-breeding nations it was difficult to understand the sense of this approach. It hardly coordinated with tribal specifics of traditional society. Indeed the process of "amputation" of kulak from indigenous (aboriginal) population has its own complications. Thus at the 7th Plenum of Committee of the North it was mentioned that "the remains of patriarchal-patrimonial system, occurrences of tribal mutual aid and forms of subsistence production at the peoples of the North extremely obscure class stratification". The criteria used to estimate peasant farms of the European part of Russia didn't fit to the economy of nations the North. One more problem was property detection, economic differentiation of sectors. Tribal organization system of the most of communities didn't give an opportunity to assign property to separated farms, specified family's ownership of reindeer herd was relative enough. But it didn't stop the "fighters against class exploitation". The main criterion to define kulak (wealthy peasant) was first of all the quantitative one – the number of reindeer. Considerable diminution of reindeer total number caused first of all by unskillful management during the process of collectivization also was a reason for repressions.

Repressions against well-to-do peasants were one of the main causes for mandalada. It is no coincidence that among the basic demands and at the same time slogans of the resistance both in the period of Kazym uprising and on Yamal were the requirements to release the reindeer breeders detained by OGPU accompanied by the statement "We don't have kulaks, all of us are equal". Generally it was accompanied by a requirement to restore kulaks' and shamans' suffrage. According to reputable sources some well-to-do reindeer breeders often distributed their herds by piecemeal to less wealthy relatives and neighbors trying to avoid repressions, but it was also considered by the government as an anti-soviet action, a display of class struggle. Dispossession of the kulaks and wealthy reindeer breeders

and then their banishment to other regions of the North went slowly in distant and hard-to-reach regions and lasted right up to the end of the 30s. Moreover this remoteness created the opportunities for numerous abuses: besides "legitimate" forms of dispossession of the kulaks – compulsory purchase of reindeers for sovkhoses (state farms), individual taxation, so-called "cultural dues" – direct administrative taking-away of reindeers with confiscation of household equipment and even lodging was widespread. Huge damage was caused by the policy of "consolidation of farms" which didn't take into account that in the regions of the North economical activity can be developed only on vast space, by forced "shift" from one of its type to another, for example, from stock-raising to agricultural. Nevertheless the main blow was delivered to the reindeer breeders whose nomadic type of faring was interpreted as a "cultural rudiment" contradictory to social progress and the principles of socialistic development. That's why the resistance appeared and developed first of all among the reindeer breeders. It seems interesting that among the leaders of the resistance groups were not only shamans and kulaks, but also poor men and peasants of average means - this fact obviously disprove the statement about purely "class" nature of mandalada.

Special attention must be paid to the "last mandalada" which took place at the height of the Second World War in 1943 and was organized (according to documentary data) by the chief of the Yamal district department of the People's Commissariat for State Security (NKGB) Medvedev (later he himself got a term of 10 years in prison). That was obviously thoroughly prepared provocation exploited the situation of the reindeer breeders' distress and incited them to breaking up of the kolkhoz herd. As a result many people living in tundra were arrested (the exact number is still not established). Even a "German trace" was "found" - Plyusnin, the head of the hydrographic party of the Main Department of Sea Northern Lane, was arrested on charges of espionage for Germany and even of the mandalada leadership.

Thus repressions proved to be one of the main tool of social and economic reforms with far-reaching consequences for the native nations of the North we can observe nowadays. Moreover as a result of repressions and unskillful vicious economic policy, the resistance acquired "ethnic" tinge and was considered as confrontation of "Russians and reindeer breeders". What is more, the real danger of a complete "absorption" of native nations' ethnic traditional culture by more strong Russian culture has appeared.

Nevertheless we are still at the very beginning of researching and evaluating of the policy of the 20-30s at the North, of specifics and scales of repressions against native nations. Obviously the greater part of archival documents is still unapproachable for researchers. That's why, on our opinion, the speculations about this period appeared last time are out of place - in particular they grossly exaggerate scale of the resistance of native nations, and interpret the resistance as a continuation of civil war. Historical justice and professional conclusions are necessary first of all for the possibility to preserve nowadays the unique native nations, amazing northern cultures which have a high value not only for Russia but for the whole world.

Dr. Marc Junge (Ruhr-University of Bochum, Germany)

Repression along National Lines in the Ukrainian SSR in the Great Terror. Ethnic Cleansing as a Focal Point of the Stalinist Reign of Terror versus a Multifactor Persecution Strategy.

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In his research on Azerbajdzan, Jörg Baberowski from the Humboldt University in Berlin develops the thesis of the Ethnicization of the Bolshevik's portrayal of the enemy: "The Bolshevik leaders perceived their environment as an arena of interethnic conflicts".

According to Baberowski, the ethnic categories become one of the most important components of the stalinistic image of the enemy. The author eventually states that, in the Time of the Great Terror, "ethnic cleansing stood in the center of the Stalinistic terrors". Baberowski traces this back to a strategic shift, starting in the Summer of 1937, which called for the enemy to be categorized only according to objective criteria.

The criticism of this concept is: The relevant assumptions are not empirically supported. The suspicion persists, that one is dealing with a "one to one" transference of research theses related to german national-socialism derived from the imprisonment and destruction of the jewish and Roma and Sinti populations according to "objective" ethnic criteria.

The counter thesis would be the following: In the Soviet Union, even during the Great Terror, the ethnical categorization was "one criteria among many" for the arrest and condemnation of a person. Furthermore, the arrest and even more, the condemnation of a person were characterized by a flexible mixture of multifaceted "objective" and "subjective" reasons: 1. Objective criteria such as Nationality (ethnicity), the affiliation with certain population categories, such as "former" and former political enemies of the Bolsheviks and social deviants 2. Subjective factors such as behaviour or- mostly presumed- intentions of the individual and 3. the determination of repeated conspicuousness in the past and present. The paper will operate on Ukrainian archival materials about National operations, mainly the "dokladnye zapiski".

Dr. Andrej Kotljarchuk (Umeå University, Sweden)

Spies in the Kolkhoz. The Conceptualization of Great Terror and the Swedish Colonists of Ukraine.

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The ethnic Swedes of Gammalsvenskby were descendents of colonists whose roots in Russia date back to the 18th century. Gammalsvenskby was founded in 1782 by Swedes from the island of Dagö and Swedish prisoners of war. The 1926 census counted 868 Swedes in Gammalsvenkby. In 1929 most of the Swedish colonists of Gammalsvenskby immigrated to Sweden. However, in 1931 hundreds of individuals voluntary returned back home and founded the *Sverges Kommunistiska Parti* kolkhoz led by the group of Swedish communists sent by the Comintern – the only Swedish kolkhoz in the USSR. The village was renamed to Röda Svenskby and the area was given special status as an ethnic Swedish territorial unit. Between October 1937-November 1938 NKVD arrested 25 individuals from 41 families of Gammalsvenskby. Almost all of them were shot as "Swedish spies" out-of-court and then buried in secret places.

The Conceptualization of terror is talking about how the ideology was mediated to the public and how the terror was legalized by formal instruments. As Leo Kuper noted, it is not the social conditions within a society that causes mass murder, but rather a situation where the powerful make and implement a decision to exterminate a group of people.

The studies of Holocaust show that a state terror was prepared by the mass propaganda against hatred group.

Main Aims of State-Sponsored Propaganda:

- To bring some explanation
- To create an atmosphere of insecurity, fear and suspicion
- To create a negative image of risk groups
- To redirect the senses of fear from insecurity to extent groups
- To pacify “bystanders” in order to reduce their individual behaviour to mechanic cooperation and non-resistance to mass violence

Did propaganda play its role in the case of the Stalin’s Great terror against Diaspora minorities?

The investigation of the local media of Kherson district summer-fall 1937 could help to find an answer on this question.

Dr. Oleksandr Beznosov (Dnipropetrovs’k National University, Ukraine)

The Great Terror in the German colony of Pavlovka/Osterwick.

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The large-scale repressions in the Soviet Union, which having place during 1930-s, were carried against all the groups of it peoples. Persecutions on the ethnic ground were the special trend in the Stalin policy of the total victimization. The thousands files against representatives of different national minorities (especial Germans, Czechs, Poles, Swedes and others) were inspired by the punitive organs of authority. The events, which having place in the Pavlovka German settlement in 1937-1938, were the striking examples on the anti-German persecutions.

The Pavlovka German settlement was founded as Osterwick by the German Mennonites from the Western Prussia in 1812. The village was allotted to the Chortiza region of the Dnepropetrovsk oblast during the second half of the 30s of the 20th century. About 1500 peoples were the inhabitants of its. More then 80 percent were ethnic Germans, the others were ethnic Ukrainians. The mass repressions of the village peoples had been conducting from the 1937’ spring to the end of 1938. The aggressive Stalin propaganda as the ideological base of the ‘internal enemy’ persecutions created the atmosphere of total suspicious and distrust, provoked denunciation. Thus the terms of the German and Ukrainian inhabitants became worse. The arrest actions were fulfilled in night or pre-dawn time as a rule. The young and medial old men (more then 66 Germans and 2 Ukrainians) were the primary contingent of the victims. The most of these persons were charged with membership of so called the Fascist rebel organization. This “organization”, which has professing to deal on the entire Chortiza region, was the fruit of fabrication of the NKVD. The most arrested

peoples were executed. The others were sentenced to imprisonment for long time. The relapse of repressions took place in autumn of 1939, when the delegates of the village community to the German Embassy in Moscow were arrested and executed. Thus all the events more than 31 percent of the German families in the village had not had the fathers by beginning of 1941.

The research base of the project grounds on the materials of the different Communist party organisations, files of the NKVD and memories of the eye-witnesses, which collected during the 2003 ethnographical expedition to Pavlovka.

Lecturer Stella Sevander (Umeå University, Sweden)

The War as Viewed by North America Finns.

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A group of American Finns, emigrants to the Soviet Union from the United States and Canada, was one of western minorities in the multinational Soviet Karelia of the 1930s. This group amounted to about 6000 people according to historical estimation available. The aim of this mystical migration was the desire to take part the great experiment, i.e. to build up the new socialist society.

Those who directly fell victim to the Great Terror of 1937-1938s were mainly the elder generation of emigrants who made the decision to emigrate. The younger generation of American-born, who came to the Soviet Union as children or adolescents, were looked upon as “enemies of the People” and had the hardships of the War ahead of them. By the time the War started they were of age and the citizens of their new motherland. During the War not only they shared the tragic destiny of the Soviet people but also had their own full share of mistrust and suspicion on the part of the authorities.

Using written memoirs of the younger generation, by K. Ranta, M. Sevander, A. Sihvola, interviews with those still alive in Russia and other countries, as well as letters from personal archives and documentary films made in Finland and the United States, an attempt is made to re-establish the key moments in the lives of former Americans fighting the War on the side of their new motherland.