

EVACUATION AND REPRESSION: THE SPANIARDS' LIFE IN KAZAKHSTAN

EVACUACIÓN Y REPRESIÓN: LA VIDA DE LOS ESPAÑOLES EN KAZAJISTÁN

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ABSTRACT: When the war erupted between the USSR and Germany, the emigrants who were in the European part of the USSR were evacuated to the eastern republics, including Kazakhstan along with some children from children's homes. The Spaniards repressed by the Soviet government and the soldiers-prisoners of the "Blue Division" were kept in the Kazakh camps. This paper examines the Spanish emigrants' life and activities in Kazakhstan, their resettlement from Kazakhstan to the Crimea, and the problem of Spanish emigrants' conscription in the Soviet Army. Also, the fate of repressed Spaniards who were sent to correctional labor camps in the Karaganda region has been traced.

KEYWORDS: Civil war, Spanish emigrants, repressions in the USSR, Spanish Republicans, MOPR, Karlag.

RESUMEN: Cuando estalló la guerra entre la URSS y Alemania, los emigrantes que se encontraban en la parte europea de la URSS fueron evacuados a las repúblicas orientales, incluido Kazajistán, junto con algunos niños de hogares infantiles. Los españoles reprimidos por el gobierno soviético y los soldados-prisioneros del "La División Azul" se mantuvo en los campamentos kazajos. En este artículo se investigan la vida y las actividades de los emigrantes españoles en Kazajistán, el traslado de españoles de Kazajistán a Crimea y el reclutamiento de emigrantes españoles en el ejército soviético. También se observa la suerte de los españoles represaliados que se encuentran en los campamentos de trabajo de la provincia Karaganda.

PALABRAS CLAVE: guerra civil, emigrantes españoles, represión en la Unión Soviética, republicanos, MOPR, Karlag.

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1. Introduction

The World War I brought down the existing world order with its basic ideas and became the starting point of a new stage in the history of European civilization. The war reflected the deep crisis trends characteristic of the development of Western civilization in the first decades of the 19th century. During this period, several possible options emerged for social development. Each model was backed by certain social and political forces followed by a global struggle between alternative models. This struggle led to civil wars in some countries, including Spain. It was a civil war but Spain became a battleground of international forces which turned the war between the citizens of one country into a fierce battle of irreconcilable hostile ideologies on the eve of World War II.

During the civil war the Spanish Republicans' children were transported to European countries including the Soviet Union. In the USSR the special children's homes were established for Spanish children. After the war the republican supporters emigrated to Soviet Union but when the war erupted between the USSR and Germany, they were evacuated from the European part of the USSR to the eastern republics, including Kazakhstan along with some children and their teachers from children's homes. The Spaniards repressed by the Soviet government and the soldiers-prisoners of the "Blue Division" were kept in the Kazakh camps.

The study of Spaniards' history of life and activities in the USSR began in the Soviet period. From the Soviet period publication, we can only note the participants' memories of the guerrilla movement in the German-occupied territory of the USSR about the Spanish emigrants' exploits¹. An intensive study of Spanish emigration's history started in the post-Soviet period. A.V. Elpatyevsky's book analyzes the composition and number of Spanish emigrants in the USSR, their participation in the Patriotic War². The author used unpublished documents from the archives of Russia in his work. The book contains an overview of Spanish authors' scientific research and participants' memoirs of the Patriotic War. I.Y. Voronkova's book is devoted to the study of the problem of the Republic of Belarus's participation in the Spanish Civil War³. The book's chapter 6 covers the Spanish emigrants' involvement in the battles

¹ Tsesarsky, 1956; Medvedev, 1985; Meroño, 1977.

² Elpatyevsky, 2002.

³ Voronkova, 2009.

on the Soviet-German front and the partisan movement on the territory of Belarus. A.V. Elpatyevsky's research gives some information about the repressed Spaniards in the Kazakhstani camps. However, the life and fate of Spanish emigrants in Kazakhstan has not yet been studied.

The Spanish literature related to this problem covers a large volume of memoirs, observations of Spaniards about their experiences in emigration in the USSR, as well as scholars' research. Back in 1947 a Cuban Journalist R. Miralles, participant in the Spanish Civil War published a book⁴. The book truthfully described the difficulties of Spanish life in the Soviet Union, where everything was alien: a language, the way of life and the local population. In 1959 his memoirs were published in Buenos Aires. Monclús Guallar, one of the young Spanish pilots who had fighter pilot trainings at the airfields of Kirovabad in the Caucasus⁵. An activist of the anarcho-syndicalist organization Vicente Monclús Guallar was among those who refused to stay in the USSR therefore, he along with 8 other pilots were arrested and sent to a camp. The life and fate of Vicente Monclús Guallar and other Spaniards in the USSR are detailed in Luis Antonio Palacio Pilacés' book⁶.

It is necessary to note the modern Spanish authors' great interest to the history of Spanish emigration. D. Arasa's work "Los españoles de Stalin" is a comprehensive systematic study of the history of the life and activities of Spaniards in the USSR⁷. D. Arasa notes that the majority of Spanish Republicans, regardless of belonging to the PSUC or PCE, were ready to go to the front as soon as German troops invaded the territory of the USSR, the Spaniards also actively worked in the rear in Soviet plants and factories. The book contains many names and surnames of Spanish emigrants, who tell how they adapted to the Soviet everyday life, describe the difficulties they experienced at the front and in the rear. The participation of the Spanish Republicans in the battles on the Soviet-German front is described in the book E. Cimorra, I.R. Mendieta and E. Zafra⁸ and in the collection compiled by R. Serna Martínez⁹. Roque Serna is a worker, trade union

⁴ Miralles, 1947.

⁵ Monclús Guallar, 1959.

⁶ Palacio Pilacés, 2013.

⁷ Arasa, 2005.

⁸ Cimorra, Mendieta y Zafra, 1970.

⁹ Serna Martínez, 1981. (Translated into Russian and published in 1986 under the title "The Spaniards in the Great Patriotic War").

activist who joined the Red Army and participated in the battles in the defense of Moscow, on the Kalinin Front, in the Caucasus and Kuban. By the end of the war he realized that it was necessary to collect everything that related to the experiences of him and his comrades. The first recordings of the memoirs were made in 1946. Thus, this book was compiled from similar notes and from Roque Serna's own sketches. The story of the Spaniards' heroic struggle on the fronts of the World War II is significantly supplemented by Eduardo Pons Prades' book¹⁰. Pons Prades restores the memory of those Spaniards who gave everything, including their lives for the ideals of freedom and justice, fighting for the liberation of the occupied territory of France and other European countries and the USSR. C. González Martínez and M.E. Nicolás Marín's paper analyzes the socio-political characteristics of Spanish emigrants in the USSR, the participation of Spaniards in the Great Patriotic War, and captured soldiers' position from the "Blue division" in the USSR¹¹.

The most research issue of Spanish historiography has remained the problem of the evacuation of Republicans' children to the USSR. The book by E. Zafra, R. Greco and C. Heredida describes one of the most outstanding evacuations of the Spanish Civil War period – the arrival in 1937 of about 3,000 children in the USSR¹². A. Alted Vigil, M. E. Nicolás Marín and R. González Martell's book describes the reason and course of the evacuation of the Republican children in the USSR in 1937-1938, their stay in children's homes, the impact of the World War II on their daily lives. The book covers the life of these children in the post-war period, the history of their return and integration into Spanish society¹³. M.J. Devillard, Á. Pazos, S. Castillo and N. Medina's book is devoted to the same problem¹⁴. The book contains statistics of evacuated children, an analysis of their life stories, and the departure to the war of some grown-up children as volunteers. Recent studies include I. Colomina Limonero and N. Ibáñez Ortega¹⁵. These works deal with the history of the evacuation of children in the USSR, their placement in special homes for Spanish children, education and integration into Soviet society.

¹⁰ Pons Prades, 2003.

¹¹ González Martínez y Nicolás Marín, 2016.

¹² Zafra, Greco y Heredida, 1989.

¹³ Alted Vigil, González Martell y Nicolás Marín, 1999.

¹⁴ Devillard, Pazos, Castillo y Medina, 2001.

¹⁵ Colomina Limonero, 2010; Ibáñez Ortega, 2012.

The history of the Spanish children's life in the USSR has become one of the most frequent research aspects in the history of the civil war. Daniel Kowalsky, an author of many studies about the Spanish civil war, devoted one book chapter "Stalin and the Spanish Civil War" to the problem of evacuation of Spanish children in the USSR¹⁶. The analyses of Russian archives' materials enabled the author to give detail description of the background of the Spanish children's evacuation in the USSR: "From its earliest stages, Soviet humanitarian relief to the Republic had granted special dispensations for children. On five separate occasions between 9 September and 16 October 1936, the Central Committee approved decisions authorizing various kinds of aid to children in Republican Spain. In addition, on 22 September 1936, the Comintern Secretariat submitted a letter to Stalin with the request that he allow Spanish children to be admitted to the USSR. At the same time, from 15 September to early October, the Soviet press issued numerous calls for increased assistance to Spanish war orphans. Editorials in Pravda, Izvestiia, and Literaturnaia gazeta suggested that Spanish children residing in areas of combat be evacuated to the Soviet Union"¹⁷. In 2020 the University of Toronto Press published Karl D. Qualls' book that dedicated to the life history of Spanish children in Soviet orphanages¹⁸. Based on the analysis of archival materials and numerous letters, oral stories and memoirs, the author shows how Spanish refugee children became Soviet citizens. The Soviet boarding schools were formed specifically for Spanish refugee children where they were taught and raised for fourteen years and eventually turned them into committed Communists. Subsequently, they became teachers, workers, athletes, artists, some of them were Fidel Castro's advisers in building socialism in Cuba. P. Aguirre Herranz has studied the problem of the Spaniards' return to their homeland in 1956-1957 and the complex problems of their adaptation to the new realities of social and political life in Spain¹⁹.

The fate of repressed Spanish people in the USSR and their life in labor camps (GULAG) were studied by S. Serrano, L. Iordache, C. Güell, C. González Martínez, M.E. Nicolás Marín²⁰. Among them, it is nec

¹⁶ Kowalsky, 2004.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁸ Qualls, 2020.

¹⁹ Aguirre Herráinz, 2015.

²⁰ Serrano, 2011; Iordache, 2008; Iordache and Güell, 2013; González Martínez and Nicolás Marín, 2016.

essary to highlight Secundino Serrano's book, dedicated to the study of the history of 185 Spanish Republicans who found themselves in Soviet camps, who suffered humiliation and deprivation in the country of socialism. According to the author, 27 Republicans died in Soviet camps and almost half of them in Kazakhstan. As for the history of the Spaniards' stay in Kazakhstan, some information about it can be found in A. L. Encinas Moral's book, written as a result of a scientific project called "Spaniards in Russia"²¹. This book contains a list of 70 Spaniards' names who visited Kazakhstan during this period. This book contains a list of 70 Spaniards' names who visited Kazakhstan during this period.

One of L. Iordache's work covers the fate of Spanish in Kazakhstan camps. Drawing on the published sources the author describes Spanish Republicans' life who were interned in labor-training camps of Spassk and Kok-Uzek as part of Karlag system²². Wayne Foster's article examines the history of three groups of Spaniards who arrived to the Karaganda camp in 1942: the first group – Republicans who emigrated to the USSR; the second group – pilots who were trained in the USSR and sailors of the Spanish merchant fleet; the third group – civilians who accompanied Spanish children evacuated to the USSR²³. As it can be seen from a brief historiographical review, the Spanish emigrants' life story who were evacuated to Kazakhstan in 1941 has not yet received proper coverage in the scientific literature.

The sources of our research were materials from the Kazakhstan archives and published documentary sources. The materials of the Kazakhstan branches of the International Organization for Assistance to the Fighters of the Revolution (Fund 1125) and the Red Cross Society (Fund 1620) have been studied in the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CSA of RK). These public organizations provided Spanish emigrants of all ages financial support, warm winter clothing, and solved issues related to citizenship, employment and housing. The Kazakhstani branch of the MOPR was engaged in solving the problem of residence of all political emigrants in the Republic such as assistance in obtaining a residence permit. We have studied the materials of the fund 708 of the Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AP of RK) which contains correspondence,

²¹ Encinas Moral, 2008.

²² Iordache, 2019.

²³ Foster, 2008.

reports, resolutions of the Central Committee and regional committees of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. The published documents have reflected the legal basis for the placement and movement of emigrants and prisoners of war on the territory of the USSR are of great importance²⁴. Some information has been also obtained from internet resources²⁵.

Research methodology. When analyzing this topic, the historical-system method is used which allows us to review the research object as part of a complex organized system. The functioning and development of this system includes the main components such as a separate specific event, historical situation, and global process. In our case, a separate specific event is the emigration of Spanish Republicans to the USSR, a historical situation —the civil war in Spain, and the historical process— the struggle between alternative models of political development. These real events, phenomena, and processes are interrelated, interdependent, and have cause-and-effect relationships. Identification of these internal connections allows us to understand and evaluate the research object. The principle of historical method involves studying the history of the Spanish emigrants' fate in the context of the historical reality of the socio-economic and political development of the USSR before and during the World War II.

The research also uses the narrative method to study the problem of “real life” which restricts an author of the historical text in his desire to imagine the reality of the past. The use of the narrative method allows us to reconstruct the history of the evacuation of Spaniards to Kazakhstan, the conditions of their life during the Soviet-German war, and also helps to build a causal relationship between the events described: The Spanish civil war – the emigration of Spaniards to the USSR – the beginning of the Soviet-German war – the evacuation of Spaniards to Kazakhstan – the deportation of Tatars and Greeks from the Crimea – the Spaniards move to the Crimea.

2. The evacuation of Spanish emigrants to Kazakhstan

During and after the Spanish Civil War, more than 500,000 people emigrated to Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, France, the USSR and other

²⁴ Collection, 1956; Prisoners, 2000; Lubyanka, 2003; The Crimea, 2017.

²⁵ Red Falcons, 2000-2015; Memorial, 2015.

countries. Among them 200,000 people remained outside of Spain for many years but others left the country forever. Many Republicans from the army command, ordinary soldiers, and leaders of the Communist party emigrated to the Soviet Union after the defeat of the Republic. They were workers, peasants, intellectuals, engineers and technicians, young people, women, and veterans of the revolutionary struggle. According to Spanish researchers Luiza Iordache and Casilda Güell, after the defeat of the Republic, 891 Republicans emigrated to the USSR, mainly members of the Partido Comunista Español (PCE) and Partido Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (PSUC), 2,895 children, 130 teachers and assistants who accompanied children, 189 cadets-pilots who were trained at the Caucasian Military Academy, 156 sailors from the ships' crew that carried military equipment and other supplies from the USSR to Spain. 38 Spanish Republicans who were "saved" by the Red Army as a result of Berlin liberation in 1945 also arrived in the USSR²⁶. Russian researcher A.V. Elpatyevsky, referring to J. Rubio's book, writes that in 1939 there were 6,000 Spaniards in the USSR, of which at least 4,000 came directly from Spain during the war, and the rest – in the spring and summer of 1939 from France and Africa²⁷.

During the civil war, the Spaniards tried to save their children's life first of all and then only themselves. Most of the refugees were accepted by France, Belgium, Great Britain, Holland and Mexico. Ships with small Spaniards were also sent to the Soviet coastlines. In compare with other countries where Spanish children were mostly taken to foster homes, in the Soviet Union Spanish children ended up in orphanages. Both adult Spaniards and Soviet specialists were engaged in their education and upbringing. The Spaniards were not settled in ordinary orphanages instead so-called the special-purpose orphanages were created for them. Spanish children bore the hardships of wartime on a par with all the peoples of the USSR.

When the Soviet- German war broke out, the evacuation of the population from the Western regions, including emigrants, to the Eastern Soviet republics was launched. On June 27, 1941, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a resolution "On

²⁶ Iordache and Güell, 2013, p. 261.

²⁷ Elpatyevsky, 1979, p. 352.

the procedure for the export and placement of human contingents and valuable property". On its basis the industrial enterprises, cultural and scientific institutions, food supplies, raw materials and other material resources were evacuated to the eastern republics, which were situated far from the front. The evacuation allowed the main economic base and industrial potential of the country to be preserved, which were necessary for the victory in the war. Among the eastern republics, Kazakhstan, which has a vast territory and rich natural resources, turned out to be the most profitable place to accommodate evacuated economic facilities and people.

By July 1, 1943, the number of evacuees stationed in Kazakhstan reached 419,855 people²⁸. Almost all emigrants and refugees who arrived in Kazakhstan in July-August 1941 tried to reach the capital of the Republic – Alma-Ata and stay there. However, Alma-Ata only could accommodate 98 political emigrants and Alma-Ata region – 118 people out from 764²⁹. The authorities had to prohibit the residence and registration of emigrants in Alma-Ata due to the difficulty of urban food-supply system and the need to accommodate famous cultural and scientific figures evacuated from the Western regions of the USSR.

In November 1941, a group of political emigrants – workers of the October revolution locomotive factory were evacuated from Voroshilovgrad to Kazakhstan, including 26 Spanish emigrants with their wives and children who arrived to the USSR in 1937-1939. Among them were 2 designers, 7 turners, 2 electricians, 2 painters, 1 locksmith, 1 driver, 1 tailor and 1 non-qualified worker. All of them were employed at the Alma-Ata heavy engineering plant for except a tailor and a non-professional worker. Later, tailors also managed to get a job at a sewing workshop. By the end of December, only two emigrants were unemployed. However, in Alma-Ata the housing was a big problem and for some time they had to reside in railcars without a heater, suffered extreme hardships. Finally, the club of one of the enterprises, located 8 kilometers from the city, was converted into a hostel for this group of emigrants. The data collected by the Kazakh section of the MOPR shows the tragedy of the Spaniards, whose family members were separated by several borders. For example, Álvarez

²⁸ AP RK, Fund 708, inventory 7/1, case 932, page 9.

²⁹ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 207, page 12.

Santiago arrived in the USSR with his wife while his father was in France and his children were in Spain; Herrera H. Gómez was able to go to the USSR with his wife while his parents and sisters remained in Madrid. José Fernández's parents and sister were held in a concentration camp in Spain³⁰. A further challenge arose relating to the military operations in the European part of the USSR, the emigrants' journey to Alma-Ata by roundabout routes took 45 days resulted in shortage of money that received during the evacuation of the Voroshilov plant. On December 20, 1941, the Kazakhstani section of the MOPR gave them a cash allowance in the amount of 6275 rubles³¹.

Table 1

Statement for the provision of cash allowance to the Spanish emigrants evacuated from the Voroshilovgrad locomotive plant named after "October Revolution"³²
December 20, 1941

No.	Full name	Number of family members	The amount	Advance payment	Due to the deduction	Receipt
1.	Cobena I.P.	4	350	100	250	250
2.	Álvarez S.	3	350	100	250	250
3.	Aparicio H.	3	300	100	200	200
4.	Domínguez F.	3	300	100	200	200
5.	Abuin H.	2	250	100	150	200
6.	Gómez-Herrera	2	250	100	150	200
7.	Gironés H.	2	250	100	150	200
8.	Plaja R.	2	250	100	150	200
9.	Fernández H.	1	150	100	50	150
10.	Aparisi R.	1	150	100	50	150
11.	Porrás E.	1	150	100	50	150
12.	Rico H.	1	150	100	50	150

³⁰ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, pages 3, 12, 100-103; case 302, page 9.

³¹ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, pages 18, 194.

³² CSA RK, fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, page 18.

As it can be seen from the letter of the Kazakhstan branch of the MOPR dated January 6, 1942 to the Saratov branch by the end of 1941, all the Spaniards who arrived in Alma-Ata were settled:

In November, 1941, a group of political emigrants-workers of this plant was evacuated from Voroshilovgrad with a plant "October Revolution" partly to Omsk, and partly to Alma-Ata. On the way, several people lagged behind this group, one of them was Laos Cesar, a sick political emigrant from Spain who remained in Saratov hospital No. 1, building No. 11. In the first part of December, a group of political emigrants in the number of 53 people from this plant led by comrade Weiss, arrived in Alma-Ata. Currently they are in the process of getting job at the Narkomtyazhmash plant. The Central Committee of the MOPR of the Kazakh SSR asks you to find out the comrade Laos's health state and if he is able to go, send him to Alma-Ata. All political emigrants who arrived from Voroshilovgrad live near Alma-Ata 1 at the Melkombinat club. Give comrade Laos this address. Please report the results. Address: Alma-Ata, 8th March street 15, House of Industry³³.

The MOPR also took care of sick Spaniards. On December 11, 1941, the Chairman of the Central Committee of the MOPR wrote a letter to the Director of the polyclinic No. 1 in Alma-Ata with a request to take three sick emigrants for treatment without waiting³⁴.

Spaniards continued to arrive in Kazakhstan in groups and alone, in January 1942 there were 59 people (excluding wives and children). The main groups were in Alma-Ata and Tekeli, 2 Spaniards (María Isart, born in 1918, a dressmaker and Roque, the wife of a member of the international brigade) lived in the Karaganda and Dzhambul regions. In August 1942 I. Quirós Álvarez and A. Fernández-García, teachers of the children's home No. 8, evacuated first from Leningrad, then from Pyatigorsk, arrived in Kazakhstan. They fell behind the main staff of the orphanage due to illness, and the Kazakhstani branch of MOPR searched the address of the Leningrad orphanage where they worked. At first, there were great difficulties to employ both of them, then they were sent to the Alakul district that provided them financial assistance. On March 22, 1943, I. Quirós-Álvarez and A. Fernández-García

³³ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, page 12.

³⁴ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 143, page 122.

wrote a letter to the instructor of the Kazakhstani MOPR on political emigration:

We have been living here for a month now. Initially, it was difficult to live, then the District Council helped us a lot by providing 200 rubles to each and sent us to different places to employ but we could not get a job because there was no work for us. After that, we went to the District Party Committee and the MOPR District Committee that settled our issue. They employed us and assisted us through the District Party Committee. Before we lived in a very cold apartment but now we have a good room. We received 20 kg of flour and 20 kg of potatoes through the collective farm Board, and tomorrow we will receive another 3 poods of potatoes and half a kilogram of butter. These are gifts from various organizations. Tomorrow we should go to the Secretary of the District Party Committee that promised to give us shoes. Women at the District Party Committee gave us mattresses, spoons, plates, and others. Now our situation is completely different. We thank you very much, we learned that you wrote a letter to the District Committee of the party to asked about us. We did not expect such a big help and we are completely surprised and do not know how to thank you for all they did for us³⁵.

Spanish political emigrants who worked at the Sadon lead-zinc plant were evacuated to Kazakhstan on September 18, 1942 to work at the Tekeli plant (this lead-zinc plant had just begun to be created on the basis of equipment evacuated from the Western regions of the USSR). Spanish emigrants spent two months in unheated railcars that was very cold. At the same time, some Spaniards managed to get salary, others did not, and only 7 people received an advance payment for 15 days, although, according to the law, they should have received salary for the travelling time. They did not receive the promised food for the journey in full, and the food they received was only enough for them to reach Baku. In order to provide themselves with food, they had to sell their belongings on the way. Along the way, two adults and four children died due to illness and exhaustion. This was not an isolated incident, the emigrants who were evacuated to Uzbekistan were in the same situation. This is recalled by Spanish emigrant Enrique Castro: “The Spanish refugees found themselves in a pitiful situation. A large number of “collectives” who left Ukraine in the

³⁵ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 135, pages 13, 18.

first days of the war were on trains for more than two months, living on platforms at temperatures of more than 30 degrees below zero. In this way they found themselves in Siberia. Most of them did not reach the end of the journey. In Asia, the situation is terrible”³⁶.

On November 3, 1942 an executive instructor of the Kazakh section of the MOPR S. Weiss received news that 152 Spanish emigrants were at the Arys station. When he arrived at the Arys station, Weiss learned that a group of Spaniards went through Arys to Aktyubinsk at the end of September. After receiving confirmation that 102 Spaniards arrived in Aktyubinsk, the Kazakhstani branch of the MOPR sent them 15 thousand rubles, later, when the Spaniards reached the final destination – Tekeli, the Evacuation Department of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Kazakh ASSR transferred them 18 thousand rubles, then another 15 thousand rubles³⁷. 108 people arrived at the Tekeli combine, including 34 men, 46 women, and 28 children. among the emigrants were several disabled people from the civil war, as well as families of Spaniards who were drafted into the Red Army from the Sadonsky factory³⁸.

All arrived emigrants were placed in the premises of former schools. In the dormitories, sanitary conditions were poor, there were no latrines and heating, the Spaniards received only trestles without mattresses and bedding. Spanish political emigrants were also poorly provided with shoes, clothing, underwear and warm clothes, bread cards only 20 days after arrival. Only 2 people worked because the plant could not provide all Spaniards with work by their specialty, housing and work clothes. 7 Spaniards fell ill with typhoid, malaria, which raised fears of further serious diseases, especially among children³⁹. The plight of the Spanish emigrants was described in a letter from the head of the Kazakh MOPR to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Kazakh SSR dated December 4, 1942 (this letter was kept in the archive under the heading “secret”):

A large group of Spaniards evacuated from the Sadoni factory (Ordzhonikidze region) to the Tekeli combine (Taldy-Kurgan region) are in a disastrous situation. Due to the lack of basic food and money

³⁶ Coronelli, 2015, p. 133.

³⁷ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 135, page 70.

³⁸ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 235, page 1.

³⁹ AP RK, Fund 708, inventory 6/1, case 525, pages 6-8.

during the journey (6 weeks) and already here, 6 of them (1 man, 1 woman and 4 children) died due to literally exhaustion and serious diseases. Among 108 comrades who currently live in the Tekeli plant, 9 comrades are seriously ill, 7 of them are in the hospital. The administration of the Tekeli plant did not pay the Spaniards-employees of the Sadoni plant salaries and daily allowances for the time of travel and lifting, despite the fact that the Spaniards received a transfer to the Tekeli plant. And so the legal situation is violated. They are definitely not employed. Among 27 able-bodied and qualified Spaniards, only 8 of them work but do not practice their profession. Among 22 women who are qualified specialists, none of them work. Food, housing conditions, and fuel are extremely scarce. The comrades went almost all barefoot and undressed. The District Committee of the Party does not take seriously to the collective of Spaniards' needs. Among them 34 comrades are in the Red Army, whose families also arrived in Tekeli-combine. Political mass work is not conducted. The comrades lagged behind political events. Neither the Secretary of the Party Bureau of the plant, comrade Bondaryanko, nor the Secretary of the District Party Committee, nor any of the executive managers of the plant have ever visited the Spaniards to get acquainted with their situation and help them. We transferred 15,000 rubles to the District Party Committee to meet the initial needs of the Spaniards"⁴⁰.

97 people arrived at the Tekeli plant, including 28 men, 41 women and 28 children but the administration of the plant was unable to provide work for them due to the partial completion of the construction of the plant and its commissioning. The commissioning of the first stage of the plant was planned in the autumn of 1942, but construction work stopped due to the lack of the necessary amount of construction material and equipment. Having familiarized with the situation of Spaniards in Tekeli, an official of the Kazakhstani branch of the MOPR S. Veiss offered to employ emigrants elsewhere by their specialty, to create adequate conditions, to immediately release basic foodstuffs, to provide shoes, clothing, bedding, to pay salaries, conduct medical examination and treatment, to allocate fuel and material assistance⁴¹. The MOPR decided to relocate them to Chimkent (a city in southern Kazakhstan) because of the lack of suitable housing for the Spaniards in Tekeli. However, the

⁴⁰ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 135, page 70.

⁴¹ AP RK, Fund 708, inventory 6/1, case 525, pages 6-8.

Council of People's Commissars of Kazakhstan did not release the people since the Tekeli plant under construction needed labor force⁴². After the commissioning of the Tekeli-combine, the Spaniards tripled to work in this enterprise, locksmiths received a salary of 404-496 rubles, security—230 rubles, non-qualified workers— 147-148 rubles⁴³.

Spaniards who arrived in Kazakhstan with their families were in particular need of a cash allowance. On February 13, 1942, the Commission for Assistance to Political Emigrants under the Central Committee of the MOPR of the Kazakh SSR decided to provide monetary assistance in the amount of 100-200 rubles to 5 households and 2 sick emigrants⁴⁴. In such difficult conditions, the Spaniards managed to survive primarily because of mutual support and close interaction with each other at work and in their free time.

The Soviet leadership took special care of the members of the Communist party of Spain, the main type of assistance was significant monetary benefits. On the 7th February, 1942 the Central Committee of MOPR USSR sent “The list of families of members of fraternal Communist parties that are to receive financial benefit” to the Kazakhstani branch. The MOPR allocated the enlisted people 450 rubles (compare with table 1)⁴⁵. The Soviet government's concern for the Spanish Communists was gratefully accepted by the representatives of the Communist party of Spain. The letter to the Chairman of the Central Committee of the MOPR of Kazakhstan proved it: “After being informed from comrade Cobena about the care and attention you give to all our comrades, I take this opportunity to Express our deep gratitude to you on behalf of the Communist party of Spain. At the same time, I am asking you to assist especially comrade Cobena since he is an old revolutionary who was wounded during the war in Spain. 14.01.1943. I shake my hand gratefully. Representative of the CP of Spain J. Hernández”⁴⁶.

Most of the political emigrants arrived in Kazakhstan spontaneously, alone or together with other evacuated population from the Western regions of the USSR without referral from the MOPR. They applied to the Kazakhstani branch of the MOPR when they were particularly in need

⁴² CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 217, page 9-12; case 211, page 2.

⁴³ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 207, page 12.

⁴⁴ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, page 173.

⁴⁵ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, page 116.

⁴⁶ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 194, page 7.

of assistance. So information about the number of political emigrants in Kazakhstan in the first months of the war could not be complete. After the Central Committee of the MOPR of the USSR sent a letter to all Republican branches of the MOPR about political emigrants' statistics evacuated to their territory, it turned out that by the end of May 1942, 420 emigrants lived in Kazakhstan, 130 of them were members of their families; among them, 21 Spaniards (excluding family members)⁴⁷. Due to the mobilization of all the state resources for the needs of the front, the availability of food among the population decreased which also affected the emigrants in Kazakhstan. However, the MOPR continued to support political emigrants. So, in February 1944, the MOPR sent its representative to Tekeli to check the emigrants' situation. During the inspection, it turned out that the emigrants had not yet received the food allocated to them in the last months of 1943. Owing to to the MOPR employee's efforts 45 kilograms of sausage, 85 kilograms of frozen fish, and 32 kilograms of vegetable oil were distributed among 33 families of emigrants⁴⁸. During the war, Kazakhstan received more than half a million evacuated people from the Western regions of the USSR, and the same number of deported peoples. Therefore, every year it became more and more difficult to provide everyone with food but nevertheless, the Kazakhstani branch of the MOPR did its best to assist the evacuated Spaniards with food and clothing.

3. From Kazakhstan to the Front

Unlike other political emigrants, some Spaniards moved to the USSR with their families. When the Spaniards went to the front while their families remained in Kazakhstan. The problem of sending Spaniards to the front was a complex issue that had several aspects. Did the Spaniards receive the Soviet citizenship which obliged them to serve in the Soviet Army? If they did not get it could they go to the front as volunteers? Did they have a chance to get into the regular units of the Soviet Army? These and other aspects of this problem require a special study. As noted by A.V. Elpatyevsky, one of the first acts of the Soviet government towards

⁴⁷ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 135, page 1.

⁴⁸ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 207, page 14.

Spanish emigrants was the withdrawal of their national passports in exchange to the residence permits as stateless persons⁴⁹. Under article 3 of the law “On citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” dated the 19th August, 1938: “Foreigners, regardless of their nationality and race, are admitted to citizenship of the USSR upon the request of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR or the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union Republic, where they reside.” Article 8 of the same law states: “Persons residing on the territory of the USSR who are not citizens of the USSR by virtue of this Law and who do not have proof of their foreign citizenship are considered stateless”⁵⁰. Thus, Spanish emigrants could obtain Soviet citizenship at their own request or keep the status of “stateless persons”. However, there was almost no “voluntary” desire to obtain Soviet citizenship. Spaniards were issued a three-month residence permit which gave them the right to work. Such short a period, apparently, was due to the hope at first that the Republicans would win an early victory. Subsequently, this period was constantly extended, the Spanish emigrants for the most part did not seek to obtain Soviet citizenship since most of them considered their stay in the USSR temporary.

In Kazakhstani archival documents we can encounter the definitions of “citizen” and “person without citizenship”. So, in the list of political emigrants and their family members located in the Tekeli plant of Taldy-Kurgan district of the Alma-Ata region, compiled in 1944, 21 Spaniards had “the stateless persons” status, some of the spouses had the citizenship of the USSR since they were not emigrants but real Soviet citizens. Spanish woman Cantos Lloveras María and her son Rodríguez Cantos Delfos (born in 1936) were “stateless persons” but her husband was in the Red Army at the time⁵¹. Her husband, probably, received Soviet citizenship and he was drafted into the Red Army but if he got citizenship then, why were his wife and “son stateless”? Apparently, all the Spaniards conscripted into the Red Army did not serve in regular army units, they were enlisted in militia units, partisan detachments, in reconnaissance companies. In Moscow, in 1941, a special purpose sabotage Brigade was formed, subordinated to the NKVD with including 125 Spaniards⁵².

⁴⁹ Elpatyevsky, 2002, p. 243.

⁵⁰ Collection, 1956, p. 64.

⁵¹ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 335, page 1.

⁵² Serna, 1986, p.28.

According to the sources, the Spaniards served in militia units, partisan detachments, and reconnaissance companies. Spaniard Grandal Corral Ángel recalls his service in the commando unit:

Like most Spanish volunteers, I fought against the Nazis as part of a separate special purpose brigade of the state security service. I was a member of a “sabotage group” in the German rear. .From the very beginning of the war, we applied to be conscripted into the army but we were always told that this was impossible because we were foreigners. Finally, from Kazakhstan, the Spanish Republicans wrote a letter to the then leader of the country, Joseph Stalin that has borne fruit – soon we were called to Moscow. We were sent to the intelligence school which was headed by Colonel Starinov. Many of us knew him from Spain, where he was a military adviser⁵³.

At the end of July 1942, the Higher Operational School for special purposes was established at the Central Headquarters of the Partisan Movement. Among the first students and teachers of the school were Spanish Republicans who participated in the Spanish Civil War Juan Lorente, Cañizares, Sánchez Coronado, Jose Vesca, Fusimania, Francisco Gullón, Ángel Alberca, Benito Ustarroz, Joaquín Gómez⁵⁴. Most of the Spaniards fought with the Germans as part of the Voroshilov partisan detachment operating in the Leningrad region. This unit was under command of captain Francisco Ernesto Gullón, was called the “Spanish international unit” in the partisan environment⁵⁵. When Francisco Ernesto Gullón died of bullet wound in partisan battles at the age of 22 years old, his funeral was organized in Moscow.

The volunteers in the regular units of the Red Army seemed to have obtained military experience during the Civil War. As early as July 1941, a special group of more than a dozen Spanish pilots was formed in the Urals. According to some reports, more than 70 Spanish pilots fought on the Patriotic War’s fronts. The most famous Spanish soldier of the World War II believed to be a captain of the Red Army, commander of a gunners’ squad Rubén Ruiz Ibárruri, son of the leader of the Spanish Communist movement Dolores Ibárruri. Ruben was awarded posthumously by the Star

⁵³ Coronelli, 2015, p. 134.

⁵⁴ Starinov, 1997, pp. 323-324.

⁵⁵ Freidzon, 2010, pp.150-153.

of the Hero of the Soviet Union. Some of the Spaniards remained in the Soviet Army after the war. For example, captain García Cano António, a pilot, went to the front in November. Some of the Spaniards, and after the war he served in the Soviet army. For example, captain García Cano António, a pilot, went to the front in November 1941, joined an aviation regiment, participated in the battle of Moscow, reached Germany and continued to serve in the Soviet Army after the war⁵⁶. In general, among the Spaniards who emigrated to the USSR, 785 went to the front, 187 of them (according to other sources, 207) died⁵⁷.

The Central State Archive of Kazakhstan has preserved a list of political emigrants called up to serve in the Red Army. 12 Spaniards were from Alma-Ata: Badía Abad José, Lahoz César Polo, Aparici Rafael, Fernández José, Alarcon Joaquín, Plaja Ricardo Matas, González Romas Verduras, Porrás Eugenio, Domínguez Francisco Rosado, Abuin José, Gómez Herrera Juan, Gironés Jesús; 13 Spaniards were from Aktyubinsk: Alapont García Juan, Arrizabalaga Manuel, Ruiz Gabiña Julián, López Losada António, Marín Ortiz Vicente, Olmo Berlanga, Mauricio García José, Maneja António, Marino José Juan, Brotons Jorda Francisco, Bellovi Reigjan, Funqueriño Francisco, Villamor Silvio; 14 Spaniards were from Tekeli: Rodríguez Lauriavo, Grandal Ángel, Martínez António, Gabin José, Sainero Manuel, Rodeiro Manuel, Fernández Ezequiel, Ribes Juan, Sastre Vicente, López Castro Ángel, Bernal José, Villa Ramon, González José, Ruiz José⁵⁸. The call-up and demobilization was also reported in a letter from the MOPR Chairman of the Central Committee of the USSR to the Kazakh MOPR, dated July 30, 1943: "Spanish political emigrants were demobilized from the Red Army and were sent to the place of residence of their families. We ask you to get them a job and if their families receive a monthly allowance, remove them from the allowance when their husbands get a job." Demobilized Spaniards González José María, Bedia Generoso, Gómez-Herrera, Plaja Ricardo, Aparicio José, Gironés Jesús, Morales Fernando were sent to Alma-Ata; Villamar Silvio, Bellovi Juan, Funqueriño Francisco, Gómez Alfonso, Osua Zuazua Rafael, Maneja António were sent to Aktyubinsk⁵⁹.

⁵⁶ Red Falcons. Soviet Pilots 1936-1953. García Cano António. 2000-2015, available at: <http://airaces.narod.ru/spane/garcia.htm>

⁵⁷ Elpatyevsky, 2002, p. 181; Voronkova, 2009, p. 154.

⁵⁸ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 122, page 37.

⁵⁹ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 211, page 12.

4. From Kazakhstan to the Crimea

By order of the government of the USSR (Council of People's Commissars of the USSR) from May 29, 1944, all branches of the MOPR were to transfer the Spaniards to the Crimea. The Central Committee of the MOPR sent this order to the Kazakh branch on July 22, 1944. It ordered to make a list of all Spaniards and prepare them for moving:

Passes for all comrades will be sent by the Main Police Department to the regional departments which will directly issue passes to enter the Crimea. I ask you to inform the Spanish comrades that Spanish comrades have been sent from Moscow to the state farms in the Crimea where they will be placed and where they will work to prepare for the reception of the resettled people. You will also receive our representative who will assist you to organize the move. In addition, the representative will accompany the Spanish comrades to their destination. You must pay the cost of train travel for Spanish friends and their families, give them a monthly allowance for a month in advance. Also give them a travel allowance at the rate of 300 rubles for each leaving friend and 200 rubles for each child. I also ask you to make sure that in addition to the transport card, the Spanish comrades receive a month's advance political emigrant rations ... In any case, departure to the Crimea must be made no later than the end of the second decade of August.⁶⁰

The migration of Spaniards to the Crimea was probably connected with certain events in the history of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. According to the resolution of the State Defense Committee "On Crimean Tatars" dated May 11, 1944, the Tatars were evicted from the territory of Crimea and sent to permanent residence as special settlers in Uzbekistan. The implementation of the eviction was entrusted to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) of the USSR, the eviction of the Crimean Tatars was to end by June 1, 1944. In June, there was a decree on the eviction of Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians from the territory of Crimea. As early as July 4, 1944, L.P. Beria reported to J.V. Stalin that 225,009 people were evicted from the Crimea⁶¹. After that, in order to restore and develop the economy of

⁶⁰ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 230, page 5; case 222, page 26.

⁶¹ The Crimea, 2017, pp. 170-171.

the Crimea, the authorities had to relocate people from other regions of the USSR. Apparently, the relocation of Spaniards to the Crimea was also carried out in line with these orders.

The Kazakh branch of the MOPR compiled 3 lists of Spanish emigrants living in Kazakhstan and gathered them in the capital of the Republic. The first list included Spaniards working at the HMPPCD Plant (Heavy Machinery Plant of the People's Commissariat of Defense), the second list included Spaniards working in other cities, and the third list included unemployed Spaniards. By that time, after sending to the front and the result of repressions about 26 Spaniards with their wives and children lived in Alma-Ata, 44-45 people in Tekeli, 6 people in Aktyubinsk, and 3 of them in Karaganda (there was no information for other regions)⁶². Employed Spaniards were included in the list without any additional references but unemployed people filled out questionnaires and wrote their autobiographies. Here is one:

I, Araceli Fernández García, was born in 1917, Spanish, province of Asturias of Oviedo. My parents, Faustino Fernández worked at the factory Metallurgist, socialists, died in 1931. Mother Jocelyn Garena, housewife, died in 1919. Brother José is in America. Brother Faustino is a metallurgist worker in Spain. Brother Aurelio is in prison in Spain. Brother Francisco was shot in 1935. I'm a Komsomol member. When the war broke out in Spain, I voluntarily joined the front. I was there for 13 months. In 1937, I came to the USSR through the Communist party. She lived in Leningrad, worked there as a boarding school teacher, then from 1939 worked at the factory "Red Worker". In the Finnish war, I was a donor without payment. In 1942, I was evacuated from Leningrad to Pyatigorsk, where my documents were lost, and then I moved to Kazakhstan. I lived in the Alakul district of the Alma-Ata region, the village of Ucharal. Currently, I live in Alma-Ata and under medical treatment, as I have a serious nervous disease.⁶³

The arrival of Spaniards from other cities and regions was delayed because in the conditions of mobilization of all forces for the front there were not enough vehicles. On September 29, 1944, the Chairman of the

⁶² CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 233, page 4; case 235, Page1; case 234, page 10.

⁶³ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 194, page 12.

Central Committee of the MOPR wrote a letter to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh SSR:

On the basis of your order to the Narkomtorg [People's Commissariat of Trade] of KazSSR from September 2 of this year, No. 27-46 Narkomtorg instructed the Alma-Ata Gortorgotdel [City Trade Department] to issue a transport card to Spanish political emigrants leaving for the Crimea. Since the departure of the Spaniards was expected no later than September 5-10 which was agreed with the Turksib Administration. On the basis of your order, the Alma-Ata group of Spaniards, and all the other Spaniards were released from work and received payment by September 15. We are only awaiting for the arrival of a Spanish group from Tekelstroy (Taldy-Kurgan region) to Alma-Ata. The representative of the Central Committee of the MOPR of the USSR, comrade Estrella went to Tekelstroy to organize the move. However, due to the lack of cars, the Tekeli group of Spaniards that reached Taldy-Kurgan still cannot leave for Alma-Ata which became the reason of the delay for the sending of all Spaniards to the Crimea. On these days, a car for Spaniards was sent to Taldy-Kurgan, and the arrival of the Tekeli group is expected on 30/1. Meanwhile, the unemployed Spaniards lived all September only at the expense of their transport cards which are now fully used, and there is nothing left for the trip. In this regard, and given that the Spaniards will be able to leave Alma-Ata only on October 4-5, I ask you to allow the People's Commissariat of Trade to instruct the city Department to issue all departing group of Spaniards (54-55 people) transport cards for October and cards for packed lunch instead of the cards which they receive at their place of work.⁶⁴

The SNK of the Kazakh SSR ordered to allocate transport cards for food to Spaniards. Finally, 27 people (21 adults and 6 children) from the Alma-Ata group and 37 people (25 adults and 12 children) from the Tekeli group were ready to be sent to the Crimea. They were to be accompanied by Rafael Estrella and Eduardo Blasco, two representatives of the Central Committee of the MOPR of the USSR for the organization of the move⁶⁵.

At the end of June 1944 a 15-year-old pupil of the Leningrad home for Spanish Children Dora Artaza Balza who worked at the Melange

⁶⁴ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 222, page 19.

⁶⁵ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 194, pages 18-21.

plant in Barnaul, arrived in Alma-Ata city from Barnaul. In Alma-Ata, Artaza accidentally met a former teacher of the Leningrad home, Quirós Álvarez Josefina who brought her to the MOPR to register and assist to get a job. Artaza's father and mother were killed in Spain during the civil war. Her brother and three sisters were in the European part of the USSR but this 15-year-old girl was not registered in the MOPR and so she was not included in the list of Spaniards sent to the Crimea. The Central Committee of the MOPR of the USSR telegraphed to Kazakhstan to send Dora Artaza alone to the Crimea. The Kazakhstan branch of the MOPR considered that such a long move for a teenager was fraught with certain difficulties, and asked the NKVD of the Kazakh SSR to include her in the list of Spaniards moving from Kazakhstan to the Crimea. The archives do not contain a response from the NKVD to this request. On August 25, the Department of Affairs of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh SSR sent an order to all branches of the MOPR to release Spanish emigrants from work⁶⁶. In early October 1944, the main group of Spaniards was sent to the Crimea. Apparently, not all Spaniards managed to arrive in Alma-Ata before the main group left for the Crimea since some Spaniards still lived in Kazakhstan in 1945-1948. In 1947 the Central Committee of the Red Cross of Kazakhstan compiled a list of political emigrants where we found two Spaniards: Rial Formoso Manuel and Álvarez González José Manuel⁶⁷. The funds of the MOPR of Kazakhstan have kept the characteristics of Spaniards signed by the heads of institutions where they worked. The description provides brief information from the biography of emigrants: Rial Formoso Manuel was born in 1884 in Barcelona, in 1938 he emigrated to the USSR, from April 1947 he worked as a fireman in Karaganda city Komsomol Committee, "during his tenure, he has proved to be extremely honest, conscientious, disciplined worker"; Álvarez González José Manuel was born in 1900. From February 1946 he has worked as a collector (draftsman) in company "Kazuglerazvedka" in Karaganda, "systematically exceeds the production quotas for 150-200%. He is honest and careful and actively involved in public work."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 222, page 13, 26.

⁶⁷ CSA RK, Fund 1620, inventory 1, case 29; Fund 1125, case 261, page 15-16; case 193, page 37.

⁶⁸ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 193, pages 37, 114-115.

According to the MOPR documents, groups of political emigrants, including Spaniards, were better supplied. So, in the letter of the MOPR Chairman of the Central Committee of USSR N. Sharonov dated 28 July 1944 to the head of the Kazakh MOPR noted that a small group of former participants of the international brigades in Spain works in Tekeli-plant, these people's financial situation worsened considerably after the departure of the Spaniards in the Crimea⁶⁹. After the liquidation of the International Red Aid in 1948 the Red Cross took responsibility to deal with the problem of political emigrants.

5. The Repressed Spaniards in Kazakhstan

On March 9, 1936, the Politburo of the Central Committee (CC) of the CPSU(b) issued a decree "On Measures Protecting the USSR from the Penetration of Espionage, Terrorist and Sabotage Elements." In accordance with it, the entry of political emigrants into the country was complicated and a Commission was created to "purge" international organizations on the territory of the USSR. In the resolution it was noted that the USSR "has accumulated a large number of political refugees, part of them is direct agents of the intelligence and police agencies of the capitalist states." In this regard, the procedure for obtaining permission to enter the USSR for foreign Communists were tightened and political emigrants were recounted. The Committee under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the CC N.I. Ezhov was formed for "clearing out espionage and anti-Soviet elements" of the apparatuses of the Profintern, the International Red Aid and other international organizations on the territory of the USSR⁷⁰. On August 22, 1937, under the heading "top secret" the NKVD circular "On foreigners" was published. It contained a categorical statement that the vast majority of foreigners who lived in the USSR is the organizing beginning of espionage and sabotage. According to this circular, emigrants were divided into two categories, it was ordered to "unconditionally" stop the extension of residence permits for foreigners belonging to the first category, and for those who belong to the second category – to refuse to extend their residence permit "in the presence of

⁶⁹ CSA RK, Fund 1125, inventory 2, case 212, page 18.

⁷⁰ Lubyanka, 2003, pp.738-741.

compromising materials.” The Spaniards were in the second group. After that, repressive measures against foreigners began.

The repression also affected the Spaniards. In the USSR, there were 157 Spanish pilots who studied at Soviet aviation schools in Kirovabad and Kharkiv, and 69 sailors from nine Republican ships in Soviet ports⁷¹. In January 1940, 8 pilots were tried; in April 1940, 6 officers of the Republican Merchant Navy were convicted; 2 teachers were arrested in early 1941; in June 1941, a group of 48 sailors, 25 pilots and 1 teacher were sent to the Norilsk correctional labor camp (the Arctic circle); in June 1941, 1 pilot and two sailors, one of them with his wife and daughter were also arrested; 17 people, including 4 political exiles, 8 sailors and 5 pilots were caught in a wave of arrests that unfolded in 1944-1949⁷². The uniqueness of this situation was that they were not Soviet citizens.

The fate of many repressed foreign citizens is connected with the camps located on the territory of Kazakhstan. The Karaganda camp (Karlag) was established in 1930 on the territory of three districts of the Karaganda region. Karlag was organized according to the project of the tsarist Russian labor colonies, the administrative and economic center of the camp was located in the village of Dolinka. Karlag was the largest camp of the NKVD system that specialized in agriculture. The entire camp was divided into 29 zones-departments, a reserve fund and an experimental agricultural station. The administrative divisions of the camp included the Balkhash branch, the Karabas transfer point, the logistics base and the central hospital but these zones did not have land. Each department, with the exception of those mentioned above, was divided into a number of economic divisions – plots and farms. The overall scale of Karlag is impressive: 300 km from North to South, 200 km from East to West. Karlag was a part of the GULAG system and was subordinate to Moscow.

Republican and regional party and Soviet bodies had virtually no influence on the camp's activities. It was essentially a state within a state. It had a real power, tools, vehicles with its own post and telegraph offices.

During the World War II the Karaganda region accommodated three large camps for prisoners of war and internees: “Spassk-99”, “Balkhash-37” and “Zhezkazgan-39”. Balkhash and Zhezkazgan camps

⁷¹ Young, 2014, p. 396.

⁷² Iordache and Güell, 2013, p. 262.

operated until 1948 because of repatriation of foreign prisoners of war while the largest Spassky camp continued its work. It was established in July 1941 on the basis of the local branch of Karlag which, in turn, was located on the territory of the former Spassky Copper Smelter plant and became the largest one in Kazakhstan. The Spaniards were held in the camp “99/22 Spassk”. Spassk was a village in the Karaganda region. In 1941, in accordance with the order of the NKVD, camp No. 99 was organized there. Then, foreign prisoners of war were brought [now it is the Spassky Memorial to the Victims of Repression or the Spassky Memorial Cemetery of Camp No. 99 is located 34 kilometers South of Karaganda in the Abay district of the Karaganda region]. Totally, more than 70,000 people stayed in this special camp during the war and post-war years. They were representatives of more than 4 dozen different nationalities.

During the period from 1941 to 1954, 152 Spaniards were imprisoned in the departments of the Karaganda camp. Among them 14 people died in the camp and 138 survivors returned to Spain in 1954⁷³. In 2013, the President of Kazakhstan gave Spain two folders with copies of the personal files of 152 Spaniards (both Francoists and Republicans) who ended up in camps located on the territory of Kazakhstan in the 1940s.

By 1948, 60 Spaniards remained in the camps of Kazakhstan, including 25 pilots, 34 sailors and 1 civilian. Among them 28 were members of the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo, 9 - Unión General de Trabajadores, 1 - Partido Socialista Unificat de Catalunya, 1 - Partido Nacionalista Vasco, 1 - Izquierda Republicana, 1 - Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas, 1 - Partido Comunista Español, 1 - Juventud Comunista Ibérica. 17 Spanish prisoners were not listed belonging to any political parties or groups⁷⁴. In his book, based on documents from Russian archives A.V. Elpatyevsky described the history of Spanish pilots and sailors who were in Karlag. He argues that 15 of the Karlag prisoners managed to return to their homeland in 1954⁷⁵. The Spaniards also survived the second wave of repression in the USSR which began in 1948. For example, a certificate signed by the deputy head of the department for prisoners of war and internees indicates that by March 1, 1952, 305 Spanish prisoners of war were held in Soviet POW camps, 46

⁷³ Memorial, 2015.

⁷⁴ Foster, 2008.

⁷⁵ Elpatyevsky, 2002, pp. 281-284.

of them were convicted by a Soviet court and sent to correctional labor camps⁷⁶.

One of the Spanish emigrants, Domingo Mieites García, born in 1910, worked as a motorist in a grain processing plant located in the Atyrau region of Kazakhstan before his arrest. He was arrested on March 12, 1944 by the Atyrau Department of the NKVD, on April 26, 1945 and then he was sentenced under article 58-10 of the Criminal code of the RSFSR to imprisonment in a correctional labor camp for 10 years. The criminal code of the RSFSR contains the infamous article 58 that was published in November 1926 and entered into force on January 1, 1927. The original version of the article 58 had 18 paragraphs and it was different from the version of 1930-1940's. The first chapter of this article had 14 paragraphs was enacted by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars (VTSIK and SNK) of RSFSR on June 6, 1927. Article 58-10 meant propaganda or agitation with a call to overthrow, undermine or weaken the Soviet power, or for committing certain counter-revolutionary crimes. The criminal code of 1926 became invalid on 1 January 1961. However, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Domingo Mieites García was rehabilitated only on January 14, 1993, based on the Decree of the President of the USSR on August 13, 1990 "On the Restoration of the Rights of all Victims of Political Repression in the 1920-1950s". Thus, the Soviet authorities recognized Domingo Mieites García as a victim of political repression in the USSR in 45 years after the unjust verdict. These people moved to the Soviet Union to escape suppression in Spain but they got into Soviet repression explains why "all Spaniards who came to the USSR remained closed people until the end of their days. Even the closest relatives were not informed about their professional activity. The replies were very brief: "Arrived. Served. Evacuated"⁷⁷.

The history of the Spaniards' liberation from Karlag is described in detail in Luiza Iordache and Casilda Güell's work⁷⁸. Their research focuses on the actions of the Spanish Republican government in France. Based on the analyses of the UN archive materials an American researcher Glennys Young found that Franco government also repeatedly appealed to the UN with a request for the release of Spaniards from the camps of the

⁷⁶ Prisoners, 2000, pp.790-791.

⁷⁷ Coronelli, 2015, p.130.

⁷⁸ Iordache and Güell, 2013, pp. 267-268.

USSR. The part of the repressed victims could return to Spain in 1954. On April 2, 1954, the “Semiramis” brought 286 Spaniards to Barcelona, including 32 Republicans, 12 pilots and 20 sailors. About 1,900 Spaniards returned to their homeland between 1956 and 1959⁷⁹.

A civil war is an ongoing pain of people who are citizens of the same country, representatives of the same people. Civil wars turn many people into refugees who have to leave their homeland and live in a foreign country with atrocities of war in their minds for a long time. The first step towards national reconciliation was the Amnesty Act of 30 July 1976. A decree issued by the king of Spain on 14 March 1977 lifted certain restrictions on pardoning the political prisoners⁸⁰. Spanish Republicans were allowed to return to their homeland. Some of the survivors of the civil war returned to Spain. This Amnesty was intended as a symbolic bridge between Spaniards that happened due to the dramatic civil confrontation in 1936-1939.

6. Conclusion

Spanish emigrants who were evacuated to Kazakhstan during the war suffered from poverty, lack of the basic things, and lived in unsanitary conditions but during the war, almost the entire population of Kazakhstan lived in conditions of strict economy of food and other necessary means of subsistence.

Spanish communists, socialists and all those who fought on the side of the Republic emigrated to the USSR with the hope of receiving sympathy and support from the workers’ and peasants’ state. At first, everything went well, workers got jobs in factories, engineers, doctors and other specialists also found their place in the relevant institutions. However, when the Spaniards arrived, Soviet society changed: the democratic rights of the people were only being declared and power was in the hands of one party. Soviet society which declared its goal to achieve the highest ideals of social justice, in fact degenerated into a society of the highest social injustice, terror and lawlessness – the Stalinist model of socialism. In the 1930s, the Soviet administrative and command system of management was finally formed

⁷⁹ Young, 2014, pp. 413-415.

⁸⁰ Aguilar, 1997, pp.88-109.

under the supremacy of one party in the country. The violent seizure of power by the Bolsheviks led to a deep internal split in the society. Therefore, the political dominance over all spheres of society's life was possible due to a developed punitive system, political terror, total indoctrination of public opinion and manipulation of people's consciousness.

In the 1930s of the 20th century, millions of people became the victims of the Soviet totalitarian regime's tyranny. They were subjected to repression for political and religious beliefs, on social, national and other grounds. Foreign citizens in the USSR – members of the Communist International, political emigrants, anti-fascists, workers and specialists from foreign countries along with Soviet people were repressed. In recent years, Kazakhstani archives of Soviet punitive bodies open their doors that make available to study the documents on the scale of repression. Despite the positive or negative assessment of the USSR's participation in the Spanish Civil War, the life and fate of Spanish emigrants in the Soviet republics, including Kazakhstan, became an integral part of the history of Spain and Kazakhstan.

Now, more than ever before in the new millennium, historians face a professional and moral challenges to reflect the sad experience of civil wars, to sum up the final results, to pay tribute to the victims, to look at the problem of victims of civil wars without any political and ideological clichés of the period of confrontation between totalitarian states and the democratic world.

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