

The Scale and Nature of German and Soviet Repression and Mass Killings, 1930-45¹

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HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND repression and mass killing? Should we even try to understand them? Is it correct that to understand is to excuse? Who would ever dare to claim that they could understand mass killing? This article is written in the belief that historians do have an obligation to attempt to understand serious topics, and that they should not be diverted by the fear of touching something controversial.

One of the major questions facing the historians of both the Soviet Union and of Germany is to explain how the governments of these countries could engage in mass repression and mass killings that arose in both their countries at almost the same time. In one sense it can be argued that these events were caused by totally independent factors that are exclusively related to the internal specifics of these countries. This is the way that we would explain why these events occurred. Hitler was clearly anti-Semitic and we could attempt to ask why; Stalin was clearly impatient of groups that got in the way of his idea of what needed to be done, and we could look at what motivated him and fed his paranoia. But in another sense, when we are trying to explain why these attitudes of these leaders took on the significance that they did, and why they were transformed into events that took on the mass scale that they did, then we need to look at other kinds of causes. These other kinds of causes are related to the nature of society, modern technology, ideology and the bureaucracy. What was it that empowered this anti-Semitism and impatient revolutionary paranoia to an extent that they resulted in mass repression and mass killings on the scale that they did?

Where this article approaches the question of comparisons of causation, it is in this second sense. And in this sense I think that it is legitimate to look for some common links. But of fundamental importance for this is an improved understanding of the scale and the nature of the repression and mass killings that were part of Stalin's Russia and of Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. This article is primarily concerned with providing a better basis for such an understanding. Historians have already written too much on this topic without such a basis of understanding.

Recently, great notoriety has been aroused by several attempts to draw a simplistic causal link between the repression and mass killing in the Soviet Union and in Germany.² These claims (or in the case of Nolte suggestions) are generally based on a poorly defined understanding of the complexities of these phenomena, an inaccurate understanding of their scale and a weak appreciation of their chronology. These

scholars have, with reason, been accused of attempting to 'relativise' the abhorrent nature of Hitler's Germany. But other scholars who have been most careful to insist on the 'singularity' of Nazi crimes against the Jews have nevertheless accepted comparisons in which the Stalinist system is presumed to have killed two or three times as many people as Hitler's regime.³ This article analyses the complex nature of repression and mass killing and will challenge these often repealed but little understood figures.

My main area of expertise is the Soviet Union, and since it is on the Soviet side that many new data have recently become available, I devote most of this article to a more detailed analysis of the data to which we now have access regarding the Soviet case. However, I am also interested to see to what extent an analysis of the German data can improve our understanding of Soviet repression and mass killing. It is to be hoped that an improved analysis of the Soviet data might also be of some value to historians working with the German data.

Definitions

The events we are discussing are sometimes referred to as 'the terror', 'the purges', repression, 'the holocaust', genocide and mass killings. The most neutral of these terms are repression and mass killings. 'Repression' is the broader concept, and although in common Russian usage will certainly include mass killings,⁴ in other languages and in reference to Hitler's Germany would not normally be assumed to cover mass killings. This is the main reason for the rather clumsy title of this article.

The use of the word repression alone would imply that the events in the different countries at different times were uniform and in some aggregate sense comparable. I think that this would be mistaken. For a more detailed analysis we need to distinguish between different degrees of repression at different times. We could begin with the temporary removal of civil liberties, pass through longer-term removal of civil liberties, including forced labour, and end with permanent removal of civil liberties by prematurely induced death. The latter could result from conscious action—killing, or from less conscious action—placing the victims in a situation where they are more likely to starve, or die of diseases or exhaustion, or even of harsh disciplinary action. This would be equivalent to the distinction between murder and manslaughter, between purposive killing and death resulting from criminal neglect or irresponsibility. This distinction between these categories of induced premature mortality is conventionally given great significance, although from the point of view of the victim the distinction may not appear all that great.

In harsh disciplinary regimes the distinction would be even less clear. Harsh disciplinary action could result in deprivation of food, increased exhaustion, and reduced shelter to the point of starvation. It could also result in summary execution of prisoners for stepping out of line or 'straggling'.

The environment in which these different forms of repression took place is also important. The mortality consequences of similar degrees of repression will be very different in different social environments, i.e. in times of war and in times of famine, and in societies which suffered a normally higher level of mortality.

The category of state-organised purposive inducement of death or killing could be

divided into state-organised executions and state-organised murder. However, such a division seems to be largely semantic, since a dictatorial state could effectively give the regime power to legalise action that would otherwise be considered murder. Nevertheless, there probably is a difference in terms of whether the dictator thought he was acting in a legal and defensible way, and in how he recorded and carried out such decisions.

In Russia, where the history and nature of these events was not well known until recently, the word repression was commonly used to signify all forms of restriction of civil liberty with the implication that all arrests resulted in imprisonment in the Gulag, and that the Gulags were death camps which almost inevitably resulted in the death of the prisoners.⁵ In the German case there has tended to be a greater awareness of the distinction between death camps and other concentration camps, but nevertheless a merging of the boundaries does tend to take place and often little attention has been paid to the changing nature of restriction of civil liberties in the German non-death camps over time. To some extent we might better describe the death camps as conscious mass death-inducing camps (killing camps), and the other camps and places of detention as locations which had different degrees of death inducement at different times *and* in different social environments.

Separating the question in this way leads us to ask whether we can get different quantitative indicators of (a) the different types of camps and places of detention, in terms of their scale and mortality rates, (b) the level of mass killings in terms of executions or direct murders, and (c) the mortality rate in similar repressive regimes in different social environments. Unfortunately, as we see, the prevalent currently accepted views on this matter do not always distinguish between these categories of repression and mass killing. Before attempting an analysis in these more detailed terms, I briefly review the currently accepted views and the series of data on which they have been based.

A brief account of currently accepted views of the scale and nature of German and Soviet repression and mass killing

Although many writers have referred to a comparison between Soviet and Nazi repression and mass killings, very few have offered a precise indication of what exactly they are referring to. Auschwitz and the Gulag are often referred to in a symbolic way, with the assumption that the reader will take the symbols to refer to the repression and mass killings in general, but with no attempt to define what is meant. Maier is one of the few authors who has attempted to be more precise in defining what he is referring to and I will present his statement of what I presume is the currently generally accepted position.⁶

Maier's estimates of Soviet victims, 1926-53

- (i) Deaths of 'class enemies' (kulaks) during and as a result of collectivisation and famine in 1932-33: 7 million.
- (ii) Political purges: 1937-39: 7-8 million arrested, with perhaps 1 million of these

sentenced to death and executed in prison or later in camps. 1936-53: perhaps 12 million deaths in camps from mistreatment and hardship.

- (iii) Arrests and deportations of Poles, 1939-42: 1.06 million, of whom 270 000 died.
- (iv) Deportations of ethnic enclaves in the USSR after 1940: 200 000 Balts, 200 000 Bessarabians, c. 1.5 million Volga Germans, Crimean Tartars, etc. Deaths involved unknown; perhaps 500 000.
- (v) Estimated total deaths: c. 20 million or 13 million excluding peasants.

Maier's estimates of Nazi victims, 1933-1945

- (i) Executions following judicial proceedings:
civilians: 16 560; military: 40-50 000.
- (ii) Deaths in concentration camps aside from mass extermination:
Perhaps 1 to 1.8 million deaths. (Kogon/Broszat)
- (iii) Executions by German armed forces and mobile SS *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia, 1941-5: 1-2 million,
- (iv) Execution of Jews, Gypsies and Slavs in conquered and disarmed territories under German control, 1940-45 (i.e. in ghettos and extermination camps): 45 million. (Hillberg)
- (v) Estimated total deaths: 7-8 million.

Death rates assumed amongst Soviet prisoners and German concentration camp prisoners

- (i) Soviet prisoners:
One-third died within first year; 20% mortality per year. (Conquest)
- (ii) German camp population:
33% per year before war; 45+ % per year during war. (Kogon)

Maier notes that his list excludes German executions of alleged partisans or reprisals during the war, the killing of perhaps 2 million German and 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war and up to about 2 million deaths in the expulsions of Germans from East Prussia, the Sudetenland, Pomerania and Silesia at the end of the war. He also notes that it is unclear whether Soviet victims of famine should be included. However, as he points out; 'even without the estimates of the famine, the death toll under Stalin probably outnumbers that of the Nazi camps'.⁷

Whilst Maier's views on this matter are perhaps symptomatic of what most historians think,⁸ he is a little unusual in his insistence that the numbers matter:

No matter how stupefying, the numbers remain important. Too often the issue of numbers is treated slightly. The liberal historian who lives in more peaceful times is troubled by civilian deaths that take a far smaller toll, such as those of My Lai, Beirut, or even Hiroshima. Is not the difference between them and Auschwitz only quantitative? Even were the differences 'merely' quantitative (which is not the fact), numbers matter. Most people accept that murdering upward of a million people is a different order of crime than unjustly executing several hundred.⁹

Criticism of Maier's comparison

The reason why most historians in this debate make comparisons without presenting a detailed survey of the data is no doubt because this enables them to evade having their presentations criticised. Having just commended Maier for presenting a detailed account of his understanding of the problem, I now proceed to discuss what I think is wrong with this.¹⁰

First, there is no attempt to relate these rates to the total populations of the USSR and Germany, which of course were very different in size.¹¹

Second, the data are presented in a way that does not assist chronological comparisons, or even comparisons of the different kinds of repression.

Third, the limited discussion of the mortality rates tends to imply a fairly stable rate over time, with no attention to the different social environments in which repression was occurring.

Fourth, many of the sources used by Maier in his comparison are now out of date and are inaccurate; we now possess far more detailed and more accurate data on many of these aspects. Below I present a more appropriate series of Soviet data, which will also be more detailed and which includes, where possible, a chronological breakdown.

Finally, Maier, and to a greater extent Kershaw, appear to believe that the purposive killing of Jews, because they were Jews, is somehow more 'singular' than the purposive killing of equally large numbers of other people (Jews and non-Jews) selected more randomly.¹² I do not wish to make a moral judgment on this. I simply wish to point it out and note that 'singularity' is itself a relative term.

For the individuals concerned each individual death is always singular, and it is in a way offensive to them to suggest that their individual death is merely a statistic. For the Jewish community of Europe the Nazi Holocaust was singular, and I understand their offence at suggestions that from their point of view it could be compared with other mass killings. However, as a historian trying to assess the social and economic significance of German and Soviet repression and mass killing, prior to looking at its political and cultural significance, I will refrain from stating that the killing of 6 million innocent Jews, *per se*, would be more singular than the killing of 6 million innocent people of other or mixed ethnic backgrounds.¹³ The point that I would prefer to emphasise is that, in the absence of a decision to look at any specific group in particular, it is the scale of the killing—the purposive inducement of death—that makes these mass killings most distinctive, rather than the target of the killing.¹⁴

I think that Maier and Kershaw have been misled by Conquest and others into accepting that Stalin's regime killed many more people than Hitler's. The evidence that I discuss may show that the Stalinist regime may have caused the premature death of more people than Hitler's regime,¹⁵ but it does not show that it purposefully killed more people.

Before looking in more detail at the new Soviet data which support the above statement, I briefly analyse the history of the general series of data on repression and mass killings in Germany and the Soviet Union that have been accepted at different times. The object of such an exercise is to understand more fully why other views on this matter are so prominently held.

TABLE I
ESTIMATES OF THE SCALE OF GERMAN REPRESSION AND MASS KILLING

		Additions		Deaths		Conc. Camp strength	Conc. Camp strength	Month	Deaths	Killed at Auschwitz
		%	number	%	number					
<i>(a) German concentration camp size and mortality</i>										
(i) E. Kogon, <i>The Theory and Practice of Hell</i> (Berkeley, NY, 1981) pp. 253-254 first published in English in 1950; In German as <i>Der SS Stadt</i> (1946)										
1933	50 000	25	12 500	10	6 250	27 000	27 000	July		
1934	56 250	30	16 875	10	7 313		5 000	July		
1935	65 813	20	13 163	10	7 898		3 500	June		
1936	71 078	20	14 216	10	8 529		4 761	Nov		
1937	76 764	20	15 353	10	9 212		24 000			
1938	82 905	100	82 905	20	33 162		60 000	Dec		
1939	132 648	250	331 619	20	92 853		25 000	Aug		
1940	371 413	40	148 565	25	129 995					
1941	389 984	60	233 990	25	155 994					
1942	467 981	60	280 789	30	224 631		100 000			
1943	524 139	70	366 897	25	222 759		88 000			
1944	668 277	70	467 794	30	340 821		525 000	June	500 000 at least	
1945	795 249	20	159 050	40	381 720		714 000	Aug	incl 233 000 in	
Total			2 143 715		1 621 135			Jan	death marches	
<i>(b) Other deaths</i>										
(i) Kogon, (1946)										
Plus deaths in Auschwitz										
Other death camps										
in other places of detention (incl. ghettos)										
a + b)										
total deaths										
1 100 000 ~ 1 500 000										

(ii) M. Broszat (1965)
in H. Krausnick & M. Broszat,
Anatomy of the SS State (1970)

(iii) J. Tuchtel (1995)

(iv) F. Piper
Yad Vashem Studies
vol. xxi (Jerusalem
1991), pp. 56-58

(c) Others

Murdered by <i>Einsatzgruppen</i> and friends	700 000
Death marches, 1945	233 333
Soviet POWs	3 000 000
	5 700 000

C. Streit & W.J. Mommsen, in G. Hirschfeld (ed.)
The Policies of Genocide (London, 1986), p. xi.7.

*(d) Calculated from demographic data**Estimates of deaths for Jews only*

Jacob Robinson, <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> , 1972	5 820 960
Raul Hillberg, <i>The Destruction of European Jews</i> , 1985	5 100 000
Y. Bauer & R. Rozet, I. Gutman (ed.) <i>Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust</i> , vol. 4, 1990	5 596 000 ~ 5 860 000

A brief survey of the general series of data on repression and mass killings in Germany and the Soviet Union that have been accepted at different times

Tables 1 and 2 provide in summary form the main estimates of the repression and mass killing in Germany and the USSR in the 1930s and 1940s that have been made at different times. They are grouped into different categories with as much chronological detail provided as possible. It should be borne in mind that until 1939 the population of the USSR was about three times that of Germany. After 1939 it is difficult to estimate as the borders of German-occupied Europe expanded and then contracted.

German repression and mass killings

For a student of Soviet repression it is quite clear that the study of German repression and mass killings began on a much firmer and more sophisticated basis than did the study of Soviet repression. Although much material was destroyed in the final stages of the war, great efforts were made to assemble as much material as was available and to record the testimony of many witnesses for the trials that followed the war.¹⁶ A military intelligence team working on a report on German concentration camps for the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAFF) co-opted a camp inmate from Buchenwald, Eugen Kogon, to complete one of the first overviews of the German system of repression and mass destruction. Kogon's study was subsequently published in German in 1946 as *Der SS Staat*, and in English in 1950 as *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, and, although it suffers from some inaccuracies, it does provide a useful comparative and chronological quantitative overview. Kogon's data are listed in Table 1 and his estimates still play an important role in the provision of overviews on this subject.

Kogon identified the deaths from the 'normal' German concentration camp system between 1933 and 1945 and then the additional deaths from Auschwitz and the other Eastern death camps and from other places of detention in the East—the ghettos. According to Kogon, the population in the normal concentration camps, i.e. excluding the Eastern death camps (Auschwitz, Treblinka, etc), grew from 50 000 in 1933 to 133 000 in 1939 and to almost 800 000 at the beginning of 1945. Their death rate, according to Kogon, grew from 100 per thousand per year in 1933 to 200 per thousand in 1938-39, 250 per thousand in 1940-43 and then 300 per thousand in 1944 and 400 per thousand in 1945. Overall, these rates of mortality would account for over 1.6 million deaths in the normal camps between 1933 and 1945 with over 1.4 million in the war years 1939-45. On top of these figures, deaths at Auschwitz were presumed at first to have been 3.5—4.5 million, with another 1.5-2 million deaths in the other Eastern camps (chiefly Maidanek, Treblinka, Skarzisko Kamienno, Belzec, Chelmno) and 0.5 million in the ghettos of Warsaw, Lemberg and Riga.

The distinction between death camps and non-death camps has been maintained by later academic studies of the camp system, but in popular views the distinction is often lost. Much work has also been carried out to assess the scale of losses to the European Jewish population in these years from calculations of the Jewish populations in each European country before the Holocaust and after.¹⁸ The conscious killing operations in these death camps have rightly been centrally associated with these

losses, even though they were not quite as dominant a share as had earlier been assumed. Nowadays, experts in the area claim that the scale of deaths in Auschwitz was much lower than earlier believed and probably between 1.1 and 1.5 million inmates were killed in Auschwitz.¹⁹ Killings in other death camps are now believed to have been in the order of 1.5 million rather than 2-3 million. Deaths in the ghettos were probably higher than the 500 000 indicated by Kogon. In addition to these elements it is now believed that there were at least 700 000 killings by *Einsatzgruppen* and their accomplices,²⁰ which were not mentioned at all by Kogon. Much emphasis is now placed on the very large number of deaths resulting from the forced evacuation marches in 1945—probably 233 000.²¹ These figures may appear in Kogon's estimates of concentration camp or death camp mortality, but it is not clear which or where. Finally Christian Streit has shown that there were as many as 3 million deaths among the 5.3 million Soviet prisoners of war captured by the Germans. Some of these unfortunate prisoners were transferred to the concentration and death camps and died there, but others died in the special camps for prisoners of war (*Kriegsgefangenenlager*). This is a difficult category to assess; in Table I they have been assigned to deaths in places of detention rather than to deaths in places of consciously induced mortality, but this is rather arbitrary as very little was done to ensure that many of these POWs survived.

Later studies have also indicated that Kogon had overestimated both the scale of the 'normal' concentration camps and their level of mortality.²² Overall, however Kogon's figure of 7.1 million for total deaths from repression and mass killing is on a scale that would still generally be accepted, with the proviso that it excludes deaths of Soviet prisoners of war. The figure is of an order which is quite comparable with one that includes the level of Jewish deaths now accepted for the Holocaust, i.e. about 5.6-5.9 million.²³

As mentioned above, it is now accepted that the level of German repression in the pre-1938 period was much lower than presented by Kogon. At this time the repression was largely directed against domestic communists and socialists. Following *Kristallnacht* (November 1938) more attention was paid to targeting the Jews.²⁴

From the invasion of Poland in 1939 repression began to intensify for the Poles and especially Polish Jews (who had far less chances of migrating). Many Polish Jews were forced into ghettos. In 1941, with the invasion of the USSR, much greater emphasis was placed on Soviet prisoners, and again especially the Soviet Jewish population. *Einsatzgruppen* moved into the Soviet Union and began their mass killing operations, which were later extended to cover the West European Jews who were brought to the death camps in the East and killed.

In terms of our distinction between purposive killing and deaths from criminal neglect and irresponsibility, it would appear that most of these deaths were purposive. This certainly applies to the Auschwitz deaths, the other death camp deaths and the *Einsatzgruppen* deaths (1.1 million + 1.5 million + 0.7 million = 3.3 million). And it arguably applies to the deaths in the ghettos and the POW camps for Soviet prisoners (3.5-4 million). It is probably only among the 0.5-1 million deaths in the concentration camps that we might feel inclined to use the category of death by criminal neglect and irresponsibility rather than purposive killing. But even here the 233 000 deaths as a result of the death marches of 1945 would certainly have contained a large number of shootings of 'stragglers'.

(iii) Mortality rate	Conquest		Gulag archives		min	max
	min	max	min	max		
1929						57%
1930						21%
1931					7%	32%
1932			4%		14%	11%
1933	10%		16%		4%	3%
1934			4%	11%	2%	13%
1935			4%	7%	2%	6%
1936			2%	7%	2%	3%
1937			3%	12%	2%	2%
1938			8%	4%	2%	2%
1939	20%		4%	8%	2%	2%
1940			3%	11%		
1941			7%	22%		
1942			21%	27%		
1943			20%	9%		
1944			9%	12%		
1945			7%	5%		
1946			4%	9%		
1947			4%			

Sources

- (1) D.J. Dallin & B.I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia* (London, Hollis & Carter, 1948), pp. 52-86.
- (2) R. Conquest, *The Great Terror* (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 454 and appendix pp. 699-713.
- (3) Gulag archives; See other tables in this article.
- (4) Other executions in 1940 include 21 857 executions of Polish Officers and prisoners by decision of special *troiki* of NKVD (USSR) carried out on basis of decree of TsK KPSS of 5 March 1940. See *Voemye Arkhivy Rossii*, vyp. 1, 1993, p. 124-127.

Kogon's figures also have the effect of creating more continuity between the 1930s and the 1940s, and between the 'normal' concentration camps and the death camps. In a way, he presents a view which is more sympathetic to the intentionalists and adherents of the totalitarian school. Later work has not denied the latent possibilities of the system to develop, but has allowed us to see the process in greater historical detail. The disjuncture caused by the war in 1941 and the enormous problems involved in the occupation of the East emerge more clearly.²⁵

Views on repression and mass killing in the Soviet Union

Let us now turn to repression in the Soviet Union, where, by contrast, it must be pointed out that until very recently our understanding of the scale and the nature of Soviet repression has been extremely poor. There has generally been little distinction made between places of detention and places of consciously induced mortality and, in Solzhenitsyn's words, the Gulag has become recognised as a network, of destructive labour camps.²⁶ Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* is a fine literary masterpiece, a sharp political indictment against the Soviet regime, and has had tremendous importance in raising the issue of Soviet repression in the Russian consciousness. In the Soviet Union there was no serious study of the Soviet repression until after the XX congress (1956), and even then there were enormous limitations on the level of discussion. Roy Medvedev ran foul of the authorities when he continued working on his political study of Stalinism. But even Medvedev's study, published abroad, paid very little attention to the scale of repression.²⁷ Officially in the Soviet Union the line was that 'thousands' had suffered something that was described as 'repression'. When Solzhenitsyn wrote and distributed his *Gulag Archipelago* it had enormous political significance and greatly increased popular understanding of part of the repression system. But this was a literary and political work; it never claimed to place the camps in a historical or social-scientific quantitative perspective, Solzhenitsyn cited a figure of 12-15 million in the camps. But this was a figure that he hurled at the authorities as a challenge for them to show that the scale of the camps was less than this.²⁸

In the West Solzhenitsyn's arrival on the scene did not immediately lead to an increased objective evaluation of the phenomena of the camps. In fact his presence tended to support a series of high evaluations of the scale of the camps, just at a time when increasing knowledge of Soviet society was indicating that the population in the labour camps had to be substantially lower than estimated earlier by Dallin & Nicolaevsky.²⁹ Now, more than two decades later, the release of materials from the Soviet archives is lending to support the scale of camps earlier proposed by Timasheff, Jasny and Bergson & Eason and supported by Wheatcroft, rather than the higher figures of Dallin & Nicolaevsky, Schwartz and Avtorkhanov supported by Conquest, Solzhenitsyn and Rosefielde (see Table 3).

Some specialists on Soviet history are finding it difficult to adapt to the new circumstances when the archives are open and when there are plenty of irrefutable data; they prefer to hang on to their old Sovietological methods with round-about calculations based on odd statements from emigres and other informants who are supposed to have superior knowledge.

Conquest, for instance, rejects the archive data because of such reasoning as that

they contradict a statement made by Mikoyan's son, who is presumed to have access to his father's materials, where he is presumed to have read a secret NK.VD report prepared for the Politburo.³⁰ It is unclear how Conquest will respond when he sees that we now have access to the rehabilitation reports prepared for the Politburo which produce figures ten times lower and totally compatible with the voluminous direct accounting data upon which these reports were made.³¹ Laqueur is equally disinclined to accept the new archival materials.³² We will return to this below.

Given the uncertainty about the scale of the camps, it is not surprising that knowledge of their conditions (in terms of a tendency to shorten life) was also poorly understood, and that in general little distinction was commonly made between the Gulag, other forms of detention and forms of consciously induced mortality. As in the German case there has clearly been a tendency for early non-archival based estimates to greatly exaggerate the scale and mortality in the general concentration camps. And the level of this exaggeration has probably been much greater for the Soviet than for the German case."

Conquest claimed in 1994 that 'generally speaking, over the whole period, Western "high" estimates overestimated camp populations partly because we underestimated executions and other deaths'.³⁴ But the figures in Table 3 indicate that this is not the case. Conquest did not underestimate the scale of executions. As is noted below, he provided a closer estimate than most of us expected, although it is still probably a little high. Conquest also did not underestimate the scale of mortality in the camps (except for the exceptional year of 1933). His estimate of camp mortality of 10%, rising to 20% in 1938, is far too high even in comparison with my maximum variant. We return to this question in more detail below.

In a way similar to Kogon's estimates, the early estimates of the population in the Soviet labour camps and the level of mortality in them rose remorselessly in these early estimates and formed a natural progression. The archival data indicate that while the size of the forced labour force grew, its condition and level of mortality improved considerably from the early 1930s, deteriorated a little in 1938, improved again, and then deteriorated sharply during the war. It was predominantly social-environmental factors that caused these high levels of mortality, i.e. it occurred when there was a general state of famine in the countryside, or when the camps were faced with extreme overcrowding.

Concerning the scale of executions, it has to be admitted that Conquest's figures for 1937 and 1938 were much closer to reality than many of his critics (including myself) had presumed. Though his figure of 1 million executions in 1937 and 1938 is probably still a little high, we now have an official report that 680 000 were sentenced to execution on political grounds. There would certainly have been more executions, possibly hundreds of thousands more. These would include executions on non-political grounds and executions amongst groups not included in the above figures.³⁵ But on the other hand it is not certain that all death sentences were carried out, even in 1937.

The clearest indication of a major omission is the execution of 21 857 Poles, Belorussians and West Ukrainians in 1940 following the Soviet occupation of parts of Poland as a result of the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact. We now know that, on the advice of Beriia, the Politburo ordered NKVD troikas to examine the cases of 25 700 detained Poles, Belorussians and West Ukrainians and to shoot them.³⁶ If the NKVD

Sources:

- (1) D.J. Dallin & B.I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia*, London (Hollis and Carter, 1948) pp. 52–86.
- (2) H. Schwartz, 'A Critique of "Appraisals of Russian Economic Statistics"', *Review of Economic Statistics*, XXX, 1948, pp. 38–41.
- (3) N.S. Timasheff, 'The Post-war population of the Soviet Union', *The American Journal of Sociology*, 54, 1948, pp. 148–155.
- (4) A. Ouralov (Avorkhanov), *The Reign of Stalin* (London 1953) first published as *Staline au pouvoir* (Paris 1951), p. 185.
- (5) N. Jasny, 'Labour and output in Soviet Concentration Camps', *The Journal of Political Economy*, 59, 1952, pp. 415–416, and 'Comments', 60, 1952, p. 340.
- (6) US State Dept., *A Red Paper on Forced Labour* (Washington, 1952), p. 4.
- (7) P.J. Wiles, 'Preliminary, unfinished draft study of the Economics of Soviet Forced Labour', (Work ceased about 1959), unpublished, p. 35 and appendix 2, p. 1.
- (8) A. Bergson, *The Real National Income of Soviet Russia since 1928*, (Harvard UP 1961), p. 443, see also 'National Income' in A. Bergson & S. Kuznets (eds.) *Economic Trends in the Soviet Union*, (Cambridge, 1963), p. 16.
- (9) S. Swianiewicz, *Forced Labour and Economic Development: An enquiry into the experience of Soviet Industrialization* (Oxford 1965) p. 38 and Appendix A, pp. 699–713.
- (10) R. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 454 and Appendix A, pp. 699–713. (First published in 1965).
- (11) A. Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, vol. 1, p. 595, vol. 2, p. 203.
- (12) S. Rosefield, *Soviet Studies*, January 1981, pp. 51–87.
- (13) S.G. Wheatcroft, *Soviet Studies*, April 1981, April 1983 and 1988.
- (14) Ger P. van den Berg, *The Soviet System of Justice: Figures and Policy*, no. 29, *Law in Eastern Europe*, F.J.M. Feldbrugge (ed.), Dordrecht 1985; and 'The Stalinist System of Justice & Terror', in no. 34, *ibid.*, 1987, p. 139.
- (15) V.N. Zernskov, 'Arkhipelag Gulag: glazami pisatelya i statistika', *Argumenty i Fakty*, 1989, 45, pp. 6–7; A.N. Dugin, 'Gulag: Otkryvsvya arkhivy', *Na boevom postu*, Moscow, December 27, 1989, pp. 3–4.
- (16) R. Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, Oxford 1990, p. 486.
- (17) R. Conquest, 'Comments', *Soviet Studies*, 43, 5, 1991, p. 951.
- (18) W. Laqueur, *The Dream that Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union*, Oxford, 1994, p. 139.

felt that it needed formal Politburo permission for these killings, we may assume that they would have requested Politburo permission for others. The scale of such additional killings awaits the opening of the Presidential archives.³⁷

In this survey I am not including the famine deaths as part of mass killings. They were certainly the result of the regime's criminal neglect and irresponsibility, but I have come across no evidence to support the charge that they were part of a purposive killing policy. This is a major subject that is being dealt with elsewhere. The only famine deaths which are considered here are those amongst the repressed population, i.e. those in the labour camps and places of exile. For these unfortunate groups the criminal neglect and irresponsibility of the regime during a time of famine was truly deadly, but still not purposive. The major category of purposive killings were the executions.

The Stalinist regime was consequently responsible for about a million purposive killings, and through its criminal neglect and irresponsibility it was probably responsible for the premature deaths of about another two million more victims amongst the repressed population, i.e. in the camps, colonies, prisons, exile, in transit and in the POW camps for Germans. These are clearly much lower figures than those for whom Hitler's regime was responsible.

The nature and scale of Soviet repression in more detail utilising new data

This section will briefly survey the new data on the nature and scale of repression and mass killing in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s in more detail. First I review the available data on arrests and sentences (including sentences to execution) of cases handled by the Soviet Internal Secret Police. Next I consider the available data on population movement in the camps, colonies and prisons, and then data on exiles and forced migrants. After this I consider in more detail some of the worst cases of camps, executions and exile, and finally provide a summary regarding mortality levels in these different categories of repression.

The victims of the Soviet secret police

Although the main archives of the state security organisations are still unavailable for general scholarly investigation, a few researchers have been given access and have published some general figures from these archives. These released figures provide the following indications. In the period 1921 to 1945 3.6 million people are reported to have been victims of the Soviet secret police (ChK, GPU, OGPU, NKVD, MVD). Of the 3.6 million sentences initiated by the secret police just under 800 000 were death sentences (referred to as VMN—the highest form of punishment), 2.2 million were sentences to deprivation of freedom in prison or camp and just under 400 000 were sentences to exile. A final group of just over 210 000 listed as 'other' included non-custodial forced labour which was effectively a line.

Of those sentenced between 1921 and 1938 about 30% were for non-political offences. The scattered data that are available for the number of arrests by the security forces in the late 1930s are very low in comparison with the number of sentences in these years, even after deducting non-custodial sentences. This could indicate that

many of (he sentences in these years were of prisoners arrested earlier or not necessarily arrested by the security forces. The annual breakdown of these figures is given in Table 4.

Apart from these victims of repression listed above there were other categories of victims, which included those whose trials and sentences were not initiated by the secret police and other groups, including the very large group of forced migrants and exiles, which were not included in the above lists.

The labour camps included a large number of common criminals who were sentenced through the normal legal mechanisms. In as much as the conditions of their forced labour were inhuman, they were victims of Soviet repression as well. But there were also a large number of individuals whom we would not normally consider criminals who were arrested and tried through the normal legal agencies without the active involvement of the secret police. The laws against speculation and theft of socialist property would have produced victims whom we would not normally consider criminals. Many of these would have ended up repressed in the camps or executed, but would not have appeared in Popov's list.

We should also note that the large number of exiled kulaks and deported nationalities are not included in the above list.

Our understanding of the scale of these executions and imprisonments is now much better than it was a few years ago when much ill-informed debate raged about these figures. It seems unlikely that there were more than a million executions between 1921 and 1953. The labour camps and colonies together never accounted for more than 2.5 million prisoners. The total number of exiles appears to have remained below 2 million before World War II.³⁸

Despite the undoubted improvement in our understanding of the scale of repression many problems remain and our understanding of the conditions of repression, and the politics that lay behind it and the mass killings, is far too primitive and is still based largely on anecdotes and on subjective literary sources.

Labour camps, colonies and prisons

Table 5 presents the available series of data on the populations in the camps, colonies and prisons for different years from 1930 to 1944. Several of the detailed figures for the populations in prisons, colonies and colonies plus prisons seem to have been wrongly listed. And although we are informed that these figures have been checked by Zemskov, further checking is clearly required. Nevertheless the main outlines of the developments are clear.

There was a growth in the main Gulag camp population from under 200 000 in 1930 to about 1 million in 1937 and 1.5 million in 1941. This population then fell to under 700 000 in 1944. The population in the forced labour colonies remained more stable at about 400 000 from 1937 to 1942, before growing to over 700 000 in 1945. The forced labour colonies were those run by the Republican NKVD before their merger with the OGPU system in 1934 when the centralised structure was transferred to the newly created NKVD(USSR). The colonies retained part of their separate existence and were normally less harsh than the camps and contained shorter-term, less serious 'offenders'. The prisons were transit points, after arrest and on the way

TABLE 4
SENTENCES AND PUNISHMENTS INITIATED BY SOVIET SECRET POLICE

	(a) Numbers				(b) Index per thousand of the total population							
	Arrests	sentences	VMN executions	Prison & camp	Exile	Other	Total popln ADK ('000)	VMN executions	Prison & camp	Exile	Other	
1921		35 829	9 701	21 724	1 817	2 587						
1922		6 003	1 962	2 656	166	1 219						
1923		4 749	414	2 336	2 044							
1924		12 425	2 850	4 151	5 724							
1925		15 905	2 433	6 851	6 274	437						
1926		17 804	990	7 547	8 571	696						
1927		26 036	2 363	12 267	11 235	171	148 656	0.016	0.083	0.076	0.001	
1928		33 757	869	16 211	15 640	1 037	151 622	0.006	0.107	0.103	0.007	
1929		56 220	2 109	25 853	24 517	3 741	154 687	0.014	0.167	0.158	0.024	
1930		208 069	20 201	114 443	58 816	14 609	157 432	0.128	0.727	0.374	0.093	
1931		180 696	10 651	105 683	63 269	1 093	159 841	0.067	0.661	0.396	0.007	
1932		141 919	2 728	73 946	36 017	29 228	161 851	0.017	0.457	0.223	0.181	
1933		239 664	2 154	138 903	54 262	44 345	162 902	0.013	0.853	0.333	0.272	
1934	68 415	78 999	2 056	59 451	5 994	11 498	156 797	0.013	0.379	0.038	0.073	
1935	104 716	267 076	1 229	185 846	33 601	46 400	158 167	0.008	1.175	0.212	0.293	
1936	85 530	274 670	1 118	219 418	23 719	30 415	160 134	0.007	1.370	0.148	0.190	
1937	770 056	790 665	353 074	429 311	1 366	6 914	162 500	2.173	2.642	0.008	0.043	
1938	593 336	554 258	328 618	205 509	16 842	3 289	165 492	1.986	1.242	0.102	0.020	
1939	33 924	63 889	2 552	54 666	3 783	2 888	168 524	0.015	0.324	0.022	0.017	
1940	87 109	71 806	1 649	65 727	2 142	2 288	192 598	0.009	0.348	0.011	0.012	
1941		75 411	8 011	65 000	1 200	1 210	195 392	0.042	0.344	0.006	0.006	
1942		124 406	23 278	88 809	7 070	5 249	189 000	0.123	0.470	0.037	0.028	
1943	690 843	78 441	3 879	68 887	4 787	1 188	189 000	0.019	0.364	0.025	0.006	
1944		123 248	3 029	73 610	649	821	189 000	0.016	0.389	0.003	0.004	
1945		123 294	4 252	116 681	1 647	668	189 000	0.022	0.617	0.009	0.004	
1921-1945		3 605 329	791 570	2 165 486	391 152	211 991						
1934-45		2 442 929										

Sources: *Vestnik Arkhiva Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, 1, 1995; *Izobchik*, 1, 1995, p. 120.

Arrests:

Sentences: V. P. Popov, 'Gosudarstvennyi Terror v Sovetskoi Rossii, 1923-1953 gg (istochniki i ikh interpretatsiya)', *Otechestvennye Arkhivy*, 1992, 2, p. 28.

Table prepared by Col. Pavlov of 1st Special Dept of MVD, dated 11/12/1953 and sent by General Kruglov (head of MVD), to Malenkov & Khrushchev on 5/1/1954.

Population: Andreev, Darsky & Kharkova, *Istoriya naseleeniya SSSR 1920-1959gg* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 141-142.

Note:

The figure of 168 524 refers to the boundaries of the USSR before September 1939. The equivalent figure for the boundaries after this date is 188 794. Subsequent figures for 1940 and 1941 refer to this enlarged area. Indices for 1924-1925 are calculated approximately from the 1939 figure.

to other locations. However, in 1933 there was major concern as the court system was becoming overloaded and the prison population was building up. The famous May 1933 secret decree found in the Smolensk archives warned about this situation and demanded that the prison population be quickly reduced.³⁹ We can see from the figures in Table 5 that it was in fact quickly reduced.⁴⁰

The available data on annual population movement in the labour camps are given in Table 6. The number recorded on 1 January each year is given in column one; subsequent columns present movements (deaths, liberations, arrivals, net runaways, disappearance in transit, etc.) calculated as a rate per thousand of the camp population. A maximum camp death rate is calculated which includes recorded deaths, uncaptured runaways and disappearances in transit. Not all of these categories would cover deaths, but many would. The data are fairly systematically presented for the period after 1934, when the camps were placed under the control of NKVD, but before 1934 during the OGPU period, when the level of mortality and losses through runaways was much higher, the data are far less complete. Basic data for minimum death rates are also available for 1932 and 1933.

Exiles

A new category of forced labour was established by decree of VTsIK and SNK(RS-FSR) on 10 January 1930. This was the category of exile combined with compulsory labour which was devised specifically to handle the flood of peasants arrested in connection with forced collectivisation and dekulakisation.⁴¹ This system was originally administered by GUITU and NKYust until GULAG OGPU took over in July 1931.

Despite recent archival revelations there remains some uncertainty about the scale and condition of the special exile population in 1930 and 1931. Zemskov has cited data to the effect that in 1930-31 381 026 families or 1 803 392 people were sent to the places of kulak exile, but that according to the accounting data only 1 317 022 (73%) were registered as located within places of exile on 1 January 1932. Zemskov claims that 'the main reason [for this reduction] was the high level of mortality of exiled peasants during transportation, in the first years of life of the special exile settlements, and mass runaways'.⁴² Khlevnyuk agrees with this assessment.⁴³ However, as explained above, in 1931 charge over the labour of these exiles was transferred to OGPU GULAG, which appears at first to have transferred part of this population into the labour camps. Hence their inclusion in the GULAG 1931 conjuncture report. As early as 13 July 1931 Fushman (deputy chairman of VSNKh) was reporting to Molotov that GUITU OGPU was supposed to have transferred to Soyuzlesprom 125 000 families of special exiles, or 530 325, and had actually transferred 625 000.⁴⁴ As we see the condition of these unfortunates transferred to the timber industry was most wretched, and this is the group that experienced the highest degree of mortality.

The available data on the exiled kulaks are given in Table 7. Fairly comprehensive data sets are available from 1932 covering the famine period but, as will be described below, mortality from famine amongst the exiles was probably at its most severe in 1931—and for this year only partial data are available.

TABLE 5
POPULATION IN LABOUR CAMPS, COLONIES AND PRISONS ON 1 JANUARY
(UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

	<i>Camps</i>	<i>Colonies</i>	<i>Prisons</i>	<i>1944 OGPU ITL&ULAG</i>
1930	179 000			200 000
1931	212 000			
1932	268 700			
1933	334 300	440 000	800 000	
1934	510 307	400 000	575 000	
1935	725 483		240 259	
1936	839 406	457 088		
1937	820 881	375 488		
1/2/1937	1 127 000	340 000	545 000	
1938	996 367	361 555	548 756	
1939	1 317 195	355 243	350 538	
1940	1 344 408	315 584	190 266	
22/6/1941	1 500 524	429 205	487 739	2 300 000
1942	1 415 596	361 447	277 992	
1943	983 974	500 208	235 313	
1/7/1944	663 594	516 225	155 213	1 200 000
1945	715 505	745 171	279 969	

Sources: Camps and colonies: A. Dugin, *Soyuz*, 1990, 9 (February), p. 16. Camps, colonies and prisons: V.N. Zemskov, *Sotsial'noe issledovanie*, 1991, 6, p. 11.

Note: There is some uncertainty over the category colonies and prisons. The main Dugin and Zemskov series are the same, but the Dugin series claims that the 240 259 figure for 1935 refers to prisons only and that the 457 088 figure for 1936 covers both colonies and prisons. Zemskov makes no references to prisoners held in prisons before 1939.

The 1933 figure of 800 000 in prisons refers to May 1933 when a secret TsK decree warned that 800 000 inmates were held in places of detention excluding camps. From the context this would appear to exclude colonies. See Smolensk Archive, *WKP* 178, 134.

A 1938 figure of 910 307 refers to all places of detention excluding camps, and of these 548 756 were listed as in prisons. GARF, F. 9414, op. 1, d. 1139, 1.88 cited here from Getty, Rittersporn & Zemskov, p. 1019. These figures clearly cast some doubt on the figure of 885 203 for colonies in 1938 given by both Dugin and Zemskov. 1/2/1937 from GARF, F. 9414, op. 1s, d. 1138, 1. 21, and since they make more sense than the Dugin/Zemskov figures I have used them here.

The 1944 OGPU series comes from A.I. Kokurin's introduction on Camps and Colonies reported by Nasedkin to Beriia 17/8/1944. GARF, F. 9414, op. 1, d. 68, 11.1-61, in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1994, 3, pp. 60, but their precise sources are not given.

The 1934 figure for colonies of NKYustR is 212 000. It is therefore assumed that the figure for NKYust of all Republics would be almost double this i.e. ~ 400 000; see O. Khlevnyuk, *Svobodnaya Mysl'*, 1992, 13, p. 77. This could be compatible with Kokurin's series if the latter covered January 1934 before the formation of NKVD(USSR) when NKYust colonies were excluded.

The 1941 figure as given for prisons should probably refer to colonies and prisons.

The 1944 and 1945 figures exclude POW camps and camps for interned foreigners.

TABLE 6
GULAG ITL MOVEMENTS PER THOUSAND GULAG POPULATION

	Number present on 1 January	Rate per thousand camp population							
		Death rate minimum	Liberations	Arrivals	Disappearances	Net runaways	Net other	Net change	Death rate maximum
1930	179 000								
1931	212 000								
1932	268 700	- 43							
1933	334 300	- 159							
1934	510 307	- 43	- 238	693	- 4	- 60	0	348	- 107
1935	725 483	- 36	- 270	487	- 6	- 27	- 1	146	- 69
1936	839 406	- 25	- 445	491	- 16	- 27	- 1	- 22	- 68
1937	820 881	- 28	- 401	652	- 3	- 25	- 2	193	- 55
1938	996 367	- 78	- 242	646	- 33	- 9	- 8	277	- 120
1939	1 317 195	- 38	- 168	232	- 1	- 2	- 5	20	- 41
1940	1 344 408	- 33	- 223	413	- 46	- 2	0	110	- 81
1941	1 500 524	- 69	- 428	484	- 35	- 3	- 7	- 58	- 107
1942	1 415 596	- 206	- 422	296	- 5	- 6	- 2	- 344	- 217
1943	983 974	- 203	- 408	262	- 32	- 4	- 4	- 389	- 239
1944	663 594	- 88	- 221	417	- 23	- 3	- 8	75	- 114
1945	715 506	- 67	- 518	448	- 57	- 2	- 6	- 203	- 126
1946	600 897	- 26	- 164	514	- 14	- 2	- 13	295	- 42

Sources: Calculated from data in V.N. Zemskov, *Sotsial'noe issledovanie*, 1991, 6, pp. 14-15; V.P. Popov, *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, 1992, 2, p. 28; A. Dugin, *Soyuz*, 1990, 26, pp. 12-13.

Note: Mortality minimum refers to mortality registration figures given as mortality in tables; mortality maximum refers to given mortality registration plus all disappearances in transit plus all uncaptured runaways. Rates per thousand have been calculated from population estimated at mid-year.

The archives contain considerable data on the locations from which and to which kulaks were deported, but so far no data have been found to cast more light on the discrepancy between the 1 803 392 people sent to places of exile in 1930-31 and the 1 317 022 registered there on 1 January 1932.

Later this category of special exiles was extended to cover the so-called 'repressed nationalities'. The first group amongst these were probably the Koreans who were forcibly removed from the Russian Far East in 1937.⁴⁵ A few years later the category was greatly increased to include deportations and executions associated with the occupation of the Baltic States and Eastern Poland between 1939 and 1941. At the beginning of the war, on 28 August 1941, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ordered the ethnic Germans from the Volga area to be forcibly exiled to the Novosibirsk, Omsk and Altai regions and to Kazakhstan.⁴⁶ Later during the war other nationalities were deported from newly liberated areas; these included the Kalmyks (26 359 families of 93 139 persons in October 1943), the Karachai (14 774 families of 69 938 persons in November 1943), the Chechen and Ingush (450 000 persons in February 1944) and the Tartars from Crimea. The main nationalities still held in the places of special exile in October 1946 are listed in Table 8.

Unfortunately, so far data have not been made available to allow mortality rates amongst these later, primarily ethnic, *spetspereselentsy* to be calculated.

TABLE 7
POPULATION MOVEMENT IN PLACES OF SPECIAL MIGRATION—KULAK EXILE

Present on 1 January	Movements per thousand exiles						
	Net transfers	Net runaways	Births	Deaths		Other	
				min	max		
1930							
1931		240		12		- 572	?
1932	1 317 022	54	- 138	15	- 73	- 211	0
1933	1 142 084	205	- 146	15	- 137	- 283	0
1934	1 072 546	- 6	- 41	14	- 39	- 80	15
1935	973 693	68	- 10	26	- 22	- 32	6
1936	1 017 133	- 90	- 3	29	- 21	- 24	6
1937	916 787	- 16	- 12	32	- 19	- 31	5
1938	877 651	77	1	35	- 18	- 18	1
1939	938 552	61	1	35	- 17	- 17	14
1940	997 513	6	0	33	- 16	- 16	86

Source: 1932-40: V.N. Zemskov, 'Spetspereselentsy', *Sotsial'noe issledovanie*, 1990, 11, p. 6.

Note: *Spetspereselentsy* population on 1 January 1931 assumed arbitrarily to be 1 803 392, which is the total number exiled in 1930-31. The true January 1931 figure would clearly be less. The mid-year figure of 1.6 million is probably reasonable.

Note: mortality minimum refers to mortality registration as listed; mortality maximum refers to mortality registration plus uncaptured runaways.

Rates are calculated from estimated mid-year population.

The worst cages of Soviet repression: Soviet citizens in Kolyma, Poles at Katyn and Germans in Karelia

In this section I consider in more detail three special cases amongst the different categories of repressed which were in their way the worst examples of these different categories and which had the highest mortality levels: (i) the Kolyma contingent of the labour camps (1932-53); (ii) the group of interned Polish Army officers and political activists who were all executed at Katyn and other places in March 1940; and (iii) the German civilians who were mobilised in early 1945 and are listed in the ethnic special exiles category above.

Kolyma.

Kolyma constitutes, it is true, only one section of the 'Archipelago' (as Solzhenitsyn has so aptly named it) of the NKVD's penal empire, scattered throughout the vast territories of the South, North and East. But, just as Auschwitz has come to stand for the Nazi extermination camps as a whole, so Kolyma remains fixed in the imagination of the Soviet peoples as the great archetype of the sinister system under which Stalin ended, by hunger, cold and exhaustion, the lives of so many of his subjects.⁴⁷

Until recently our knowledge of the scale of the forced labour population and the level of extraordinary deaths in Kolyma was small. Conquest was correct in arguing that it was demographically significant, but again his estimates of the scale of the camps in this region and the levels of mortality had a very insecure basis and have

TABLE 8
MAIN ETHNIC AND OTHER GROUPS HELD IN PLACES OF SPECIAL
EXILE IN OCTOBER 1946

Chechen and Ingush	400 478
Karachai	60 139
Balkars	32 817
Kalmyks	81 673
Crimean Tartars, Bulgarians and Greeks	193 959
Germans	774 178
Mobilised Germans	121 459
Former Kulaks	577 121
Turks, Kurds, Khemshims	84 402
Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)	29 351
Völkdeutsch	2 681
German collaborators	3 185
Orthodox Christians	1 212
Lithuanians	5 246
Vlasovites	95 386
Total listed	2 463 940

Source: N. Bugai, 'The Devils Come at Dawn: from Stalin's Special File', *Moscow News*, 1990, 43, p. 11.

now been shown to be greatly exaggerated. This is contrary to his own assumptions concerning the reliability of data in this area:

In Kolyma, millions died: and it is possible, owing to the special circumstances of the area, to obtain reasonable estimates of the numbers. The point here is that Kolyma was supplied by sea; and we have some knowledge of the number of ships in service, their capacity, and the number of trips they made a year.⁴⁸

Conquest's argument here was a mixture of truths combined with unwarranted assumptions. It is true that Kolyma was supplied by sea, and that we do have some knowledge of the ships in service, their capacity and the number of trips that they could have made a year, but we do not know whether all the ships used all their capacity to convey prisoners non-stop for all the time that they were in the area, and it seems highly unlikely that they would. Far from offering us a conservative estimate of the numbers of prisoners conveyed to Kolyma, Conquest is offering us a series of figures that are the maximum limits of the numbers that could have been so conveyed.

We thus find ourselves with 5 main ships each carrying an average of 4 000 prisoners and each making 10-11 trips a year, with 200 000-220 000 prisoners being transported annually.... If we now take these reasonably conservative figures, and omit for the moment the years 1932-6 and 1942-3 as cases to be considered separately, in the period from 1937 to 1941 and 1944 to 1953, we reach a figure of 3 150 000. If we take the much lower figure of 50 000 per annum for the years up to 1937, and 1942-3, we must then add another 350 000, giving a grand total of 3 500 000.⁴⁹

Archival data are now available for both the number of prisoners arriving per year in Kolyma in 1932-42 and the scale of employment (both free and prisoners) in Dalstroï in 1932-53. Both sets of data indicate levels of labour camp inmates significantly lower than estimated by Conquest.

TABLE 9
PRISONERS ARRIVING AT NAGOEVO: ARCHIVAL DATA IN COMPARISON
WITH CONQUEST ASSUMPTIONS OF TRANSFERS BY BOAT TO KOLYMA

	<i>Archive reports</i>	<i>Conquest assumptions</i>	<i>Conquest as % of archives</i>
1932	9 928	50 000	504%
1933	27 390	50 000	183%
1934	32 304	50 000	155%
1935	44 601	50 000	112%
1936	62 703	50 000	80%
1937	80 258	210 000	262%
1938	93 978	210 000	223%
1939	163 475	210 000	129%
1940	176 685	210 000	119%
1941	148 301	210 000	142%
1942	126 044	50 000	40%
1932–41	839 623	1 300 000	155%
Total 1932–42	965 667	1 350 000	140%

Sources: Archival data: 'Pokazateli po truda', from NKVD GULAG archives in Magadan, published by A. Kozlov, curator of Magadan Historical Museum in 1992, and cited here from J.J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford, CA, 1994), pp. 226, 228, 230.

Conquest assumption: R. Conquest, *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camps* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 227.

The data on the number of prisoners arriving per year at Nagoevo (the port for Magadan) from 1932 to 1942, in comparison with Conquest's figures, are given in Table 9.⁵⁰

With the exception of 1936 and 1942 Conquest's estimates of the scale of transfers of prisoners to Kolyma are greatly exaggerated, and for the whole period 1932–41 probably 50% larger than indicated by the archival data.

I have not seen any series of data on the total labour camp population in Kolyma, but we do have a good series of data on the employment of free and prison labour in Dalstroi trusts, which will enable us to get a rough picture of developments there. These are presented in Table 10.

Although Dalstroi was the administration responsible for running all the Kolyma camps, it is a little difficult to compare these figures directly with Conquest's estimates of the total camp population in Kolyma. Conquest ignores the civilian population or assumes that they were minimal (50 000 out of 300 000 in 1944⁵¹), and attempts to compute the entire camp population, not just the employed camp population. Nevertheless, since it is accepted that most of the camp population was employed it is clear that Conquest's estimates of about half a million labour camp inmates in Kolyma in the late 1930s are significantly higher than the figures implied from Table 10.

At its full development, then, Kolyma must have contained at any rate 120 full-scale camps. Of these at least 80 must have been mining camps proper, with from 2 000 to 10 000 inmates, with a probable average of around 5 000. The remainder were fishing, agricultural and similar camps of around 1 000 inmates each, plus the 80 000-capacity transit camp and

TABLE 10
EMPLOYMENT OF POPULATION BY DALSTROI TRUSTS ('000)

	<i>Archival data</i>			<i>Conquest (all)</i>
	<i>Free labour</i>	<i>Prisoners</i>	<i>All</i>	
1932	14.0			
1933	27.0			
1934	5.9	31.8	37.6	
1935	5.9	42.8	48.7	
1936	10.6	56.9	67.5	
1937 ^a	11.7	63.0	74.7	150
1938	22.6	122.0	144.6	
1939	65.3	132.0	197.3	250
1940	94.9	142.4	237.3	
1941	97.3	149.6	246.9	
1942	82.0	126.0	208.0	
1943	92.8	90.6	183.4	
1944	94.3	82.3	176.6	300
1945	101.6	87.5	189.1	
1946	113.0	91.6	205.2	
1947	112.0	95.5	207.6	
1948	111.0	105.8	216.8	
1949	112.0	120.3	232.7	
1950	115.3	142.0	258.1	
1951 ^a	105.1	128.0	233.6	500
1952 ^a	93.2	113.5	206.7	
1953	74.7	89.7	164.4	

Source: A.N. Pilyasov, *Dinamika promyshlennogo proizvodstva v Magadanskoj oblasti (1932–1992gg.)*, Part 1 (Magadan, 1993), p. 225.

Conquest from sources cited in text.

Note: ^aindicates years for which the data have been estimated.

the other camps of Magadan itself. Thus, on these rather conservative figures, we reach a total of approximately half a million, four-fifths of them in the mines, in the later period of Kolyma's history.⁵²

Conquest's estimates for the wartime period, where he accepts such figures as those given by the Soviet authorities to the American Vice President Henry Wallace in 1944, are easier to reconcile with the archival data cited in Table 10. However, Conquest presumes that the prisoner to free proportions of the population will be in the order of 80% (250 000 to 300 000), whilst the archival data indicate that in 1944 less than half the employed population in Dalstroi were prisoners, and so presumably a much smaller proportion of the entire population were prisoners.

From collation of the Polish evidence it appears that in 1940 to 1942 (when the Poles were released) the Kolyma prison population was usually in the range of 300 000–400 000 Henry Wallace in 1944 was told that the population was 300 000 presumably with about 250 000 of them prisoners. This was certainly near the lowest point and thenceforward there was a continual increase. In general, if (from 1937) we take a figure of 150 000, increasing to 500 000 or more in the post-war expansion, we shall hardly err by exaggeration.⁵³

But the greatest error that Conquest makes is probably in his assumptions concerning mortality rates.

We are told, for the labour camp system as a whole, that at this period about a third of the new intake—already physically exhausted, and quite unprepared for heavy manual labour on a minimal ration—died in the first year. In Kolyma, notoriously one of the very worst areas, the proportion must have been higher still—and such is the evidence.⁵⁴ ... If we allow, as all reports imply, an average [death] rate of some 30-35 per cent for miners, we may accept a much-quoted figure of 25 per cent per annum for Kolyma as a rough average, though the total must depend on each year's numbers and conditions.⁵⁵ ... if we go by camp population and death rate, take a population of 150 000-400 000 for the years 1937-41, of 200 000-300 000 for 1942-3, and of 300 000-500 000 for 1944-53, and apply to each case death rates ranging from 20 to 35 per cent according to the reported rigours of particular years, we arrive at a death toll of about 3 000 000, after including the lesser casualties of 1933-6. Thus, and it should once again be stressed that this is based on conservative assumptions at every point, we may take it that Kolyma cost 3 000 000 lives.⁵⁶

Conquest's presumed mortality rates are significantly higher than those provided by the Russian historians Pilyasov and Biryukov, who had access to the Magadan archives and who argue that the rates cited by Conquest should apply to the entire life of the Kolyma camps, rather than to every year.

In the late 1930s on average one-quarter to one-third of all prisoners in Dalstroï died. For the entire period 175 000 to 250 000 died of a population of 700 000 to 750 000.⁵⁷

This would be equivalent not to 25-33% per year but to something like 3-6% per year. These figures given by Pilyasov involving a quarter of a million innocent deaths are still monstrous, but we should be aware that this is a different order to that claimed by Conquest (3 million), which would have been of the order of magnitude that Auschwitz was once believed to have been.

Soviet repression against the Poles, 1939-41. The number of Poles arrested between 1939 and 1941 is unknown for sure, but from the evidence presented below it must have been over 410 000, and official Polish sources give a figure of 600 000.⁵⁸ The area of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia occupied by Soviet forces in September 1939 contained about 11.5 million people of whom 4.2 million were Polish. Total Soviet deportations from the area numbered 1.5 million or 13%. Soviet deportation of Poles from this area was 0.6 million from 4.2 million Poles, i.e. 14%.

We now have reliable information on the fate of 21 857 Poles who were shot as a result of the Politburo resolution of 5 March 1940. The resolution was based on Beriya's petition to sentence and shoot 14 700 former Polish officers held in prisoner of war camps and 11 000 civilian 'counter-revolutionary' Poles held in other prisons in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. The Politburo unanimously decided by the procedure known as '*opros*' to approve Beriya's proposal and all members of the Politburo formally signed the resolution.⁵⁹ From subsequent information related to the cover-up of these operations and the destruction of the files, we know that 21 857 of these 25 700 were in fact shot.⁶⁰

In August 1941, following the German attack on the USSR and the dramatic change in Soviet/Polish relations, Beriya informed Stalin that at that time 389 382 former Polish citizens were in captivity in the USSR; these included 120 962 in prisons, camps and places of exile; 243 106 in settlements for special exiles and

25 314 in prisoner of war camps.⁶¹ Of these all but 341 were subsequently amnestied, 119 855 were evacuated to Iran with General Anders' army, which subsequently fought alongside the Allies in Libya and Italy; 36 510 were transferred to the Polish Army which fought with the Red Army on the Eastern Front and 11 516 are reported to have died in 1941-43.⁶²

These figures leave at least 180 000 Poles unaccounted for in the period 1941-43, and if we accept the current official Polish figure of 600 000 Poles deported in 1939-41, it leaves another 210 000 Poles unaccounted for at the time of Beriya's August 1941 count. We now know that 21 857 were shot as a result of the Politburo resolution of 5 March 1940, and it is highly likely that many more Poles died in this early period.

The rate of deportation of Poles from Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland at 14% was not much higher than the rate of deportation of the entire population of this area. But the level of mortality amongst this group, including the mass killings of 21 857 officers and political opponents following the March 1940 Politburo resolution, and the uncertainty concerning the fates of hundreds of thousands of the 410 000 to 600 000 Poles arrested, do make this experience exceptional.

Soviet repression against German civilians, 1945-46. It is far more difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the fate of the German and German allied civilian population repressed at the end of World War II.⁶³ Between February and April 1945 97 500 German civilian nationals captured behind Soviet lines were interned and set to work in special internment camps.⁶⁴ In Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Upper Silesia another 189 572 Germans were mobilised, interned and transferred to the Soviet Union.⁶⁵ Thus a total of over 287 000 German civilians were mobilised at this time.⁶⁶ These prisoners were divided into 221 work battalions of about 1 000 prisoners and worked under extremely difficult conditions.⁶⁷ Recently a detailed study has been made of just one of these Soviet internment camps for Germans—NKVD camp 517, which covered two work battalions and which does indeed present a picture considerably worse than Kolyma.⁶⁸

The history of the 2 000 victims of NKVD camp 517 is briefly described below. In April 1945 the field prison of the 3rd Belorussian Front at Istenburg held 2 000 Germans or German allied civilians,⁶⁹ who had been captured in the recently occupied area. Of these 2 000 most—1 303—were women and only 697 were men. Between 9 and 17 April 1945 these prisoners were transferred from Istenburg to the two sections of NKVD Camp 517 at Virandozero and Padozero villages in Karelia. Sixteen deaths were reported in these transports, which over an eight-day period averages a death rate equivalent to 365 per thousand per year.

Of the survivors 983 were placed in Virandozero village, where 342 or 35% died in the four and a half months between 17 April and 26 August 1945. This was equivalent to a rate of mortality of at least 1 044 per thousand per year, i.e. had the surviving inmates not been transferred they would all have died within a year. On 24 July 1945 271 inmates were transferred to a section of the Belomorstroi NKVD camp at Medvezhegorsk. On 15 August another 267 were transferred to Poznan in Poland, and on 17 October a final 67 were transferred to the Belomorstroi camp and the Virandozero section of camp 517 was closed down.⁷⁰

The fate of the 1 001 prisoners transferred to Padozero village was slightly better, but only just so, and they faced a horrifically high rate of death, with 180 dying in five and a half months. This is equivalent to an average rate of 540 per thousand per year. 598 of the survivors were transferred to the Medvezhegorsk section of Belo-morstroj on 20 July 1945 and 159 to other Soviet camps in the Far North on 7 October 1945 when the Padozero village section of camp 517 was closed down.⁷¹

These extremely high mortality rates were partly the consequence of the weak and unhealthy state of the prisoners after their transportation when a typhus epidemic broke out amongst them.⁷² But they were also to some extent the consequence of the criminal neglect and dishonesty of the corrupt first camp administrator, Viktor Solovyanov, and his thieving partner, Anlis Safonova. The corruption of Solovyanov was so great that he was eventually removed from his command and sentenced to ten years imprisonment for his activities as camp commandant.⁷³

At Medvezhegorsk camp in Belomorstroj mortality rates would still be considered high by average Soviet labour camp standards, but were significantly lower than in the two sections of camp 517. There were 26 deaths recorded between July 1945 and July 1946 amongst the 869 prisoners of camp 517 who had been transferred here. Since 258 of these prisoners had been transferred to Frankfurt on Oder at the end of September 1945, this mortality probably represented a rate of about 177 per thousand per year. As indicated in previous sections, this is significantly higher than the maximum average rate of 126 per thousand in 1945 and 42 per thousand in 1946 recorded for the general Gulag population at this time in Table 6.

The fate of these groups was truly tragic and these are among the groups of population that experienced the highest level of mass killing, which was more equivalent to the mass shootings of 1937-38. Here, directed at the non-Soviet population, more than at Kolyma, which contained mainly Soviet citizens, we see something more resembling Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

Comparison of death rates.

Table 11 lists the recorded mortality rates for Gulag inmates, interned Germans in NKVD Camp no. 517, and for special exiles in comparison with the rates for the civilian population. The data for the civilian population, from uncorrected registration data, are presented in a crude series referring to the entire civilian population, but also in a specially selected age and sex-specific series which is based on estimating the mortality of the civilian population that has the same age and sex structure as the Gulag population. This has been calculated in two variants: one using the 1926/27 mortality tables and the other the 1938/39 mortality tables.

The picture that emerges from these figures is striking. Mortality in the camps was normally four or five times higher than for the civilian population of the same age group, but rose to over ten times as high during the famine of 1933, the year of Ezhovshchina 1938, and during the desperate war years of 1942-43. By contrast, mortality in the places of exile was 3.5-4 times as high as among the civilian population during the famine years of 1932 and 1933 and then fell sharply to normal levels by 1937. Mortality in Kolyma on average may have been slightly higher than in other camps. In certain years it certainly was much higher, but overall, on the basis of Pilyasov's figures, it does not appear to have been very much larger. Mortality in

TABLE 11
COMPARISON OF RECORDED AND ESTIMATED MORTALITY IN SOVIET CAMPS AND PLACES OF SPECIAL EXILE IN COMPARISON WITH CIVILIAN MORTALITY

	GULAG		SpP		Civilian		Indices		Indices		
	min	max	min	max	aged 20/7	aged 38/9	min	max	min	max	
1931				300		19.6					
1932	43	?	73	142	8	20.5	7.5		356%	1 667%	
1933	154		137	210	14.8	37.7	13.8	1 116%	363%	693%	
1934	43	107	39	60	7.8	19.8	7.3	5 89%	1 466%	303%	
1935	36	69	22	27	6.9	17.6	6.5	5 54%	1 062%	153%	
1936	25	68	21	22	7.1	18.2	6.7	3 73%	1 015%	121%	
1937	28	55	19	25	7.5	18.9	6.8	4 12%	809%	132%	
1938	78	120	18	18		17.5	7	1 114%	1 714%	103%	
1939	38	41	17	17		17.3	7.5	507%	547%	98%	
1940	33	81	17	16		18	7.9	418%	1 025%	94%	
1941	69	107									
1942	206	217									
1943	203	239									
1944	88	114									
1945	67	126		792							
1946	26	42		190							
1947	37	73									

Sources:

Gulag: see Table 6

Spets-persecutents: see Table 7

Interned Germans in NKVD Camp 517, see text.

All Civilian crude mortality from S.G. Wheatcroft, *Soviet Studies*, April 1990, p. 361.

Adjustments: based on age structures in Getty *et al.*, p. 1025, and mortality tables.

camp 517 for interned Germans was more than three times higher than the highest annual average for GULAG in 1942-43. The mortality in camp 517 was certainly at the extreme end of the level of all mortalities amongst German internees and so should not be accepted as being typical of all such camps. Nevertheless, it does provide a well documented example of an extraordinary level of mortality amongst a large group of population.

Conclusions

The nature of Soviet repression and mass killing was clearly far more complex than normally assumed. Mass purposive killings in terms of executions were probably in the order of one million and probably as large as the total number of recorded deaths in the Gulag. In this narrowest category of purposefully caused deaths, the situation is exactly the opposite to that generally accepted. Hitler caused the murder of at least 5 million innocent people largely, it would appear, because he did not like Jews and communists. Stalin by contrast can be charged with causing the purposive death of something in the order of a million people. Furthermore the purposive deaths caused by Hitler fit more closely into the category of 'murder', while those caused by Stalin fit more closely the category of 'execution'. Stalin undoubtedly caused many innocent people to be executed, but it seems likely that he thought many of them guilty of crimes against the state and felt that the execution of others would act as a deterrent to the guilty. He signed the papers and insisted on documentation. Hitler, by contrast, wanted to be rid of the Jews and communists simply because they were Jews and communists. He was not concerned about making any pretence at legality. He was careful not to sign anything on this matter and was equally insistent on no documentation.

It is only when we get into the broader categories of causing death by criminal neglect and ruthlessness that Stalin probably⁷⁴ exceeds Hitler, but here we have to remember that the USSR was much larger than Germany and that death rates in the best of times had always been significantly higher in Russia than in Germany,

The Gulag was neither as large nor as deadly as it is often presented, it was not a death camp, although in cases of general food shortage (1932-33 and 1942-43) it would suffer significantly more than the population at large. There were not 12 million deaths in the camps as suggested by Maier; and it seems highly unlikely that there were as many as 7 million deaths between 1935 and 1941 as claimed by Conquest citing Mikoyan's son. With a maximum number of inmates of 1.5 million in 1941 the Gulag was nevertheless of demographic significance and more than twenty times as large as the prewar Nazi concentration camp system at its peak following Kristallnacht. But all the same, twenty times as large as pre-war Nazi concentration camps does not make anything like Auschwitz.

Auschwitz as a centre for mass killing should be compared with the mass shootings⁷⁵ of the NKVD throughout the 1930s, and not with the Gulag or the famine.⁷⁶ These Soviet mass shootings did indeed precede the German mass killings, but since there was so little understanding of what happened in 1937 and 1938 it is difficult to imagine the Nazis being greatly influenced by them. What was undoubtedly far more relevant and important to the Nazis was the Soviet mass killings and

repression in the occupied parts of Poland, West Ukraine, West Belorussia, the Baltic and Bessarabia in 1940 and early 1941. The execution of over 21 000 Poles in March 1940 is likely to be far more relevant to this story than what happened in Russia years earlier. Any German historian who seriously wanted to study the possible effect that the Soviet policy on mass killing had on the German leadership could do well to start here.⁷⁷ We know full well what effect it had on the attitude of the local populations of these areas.

While it is true that the German occupying forces began behaving atrociously as soon as they occupied Poland, it is nevertheless sobering to note that in 1939 and 1940 the official Polish Report on German war crimes held Germany responsible for 445 mass executions in Poland in which 9 607 people were killed. Or in other words the average mass execution involved the shooting of 22 people.⁷⁸ This is quantitatively and qualitatively very different from the shooting of 31 000 Jews in Babi Yar, or even the burning of 700 Jews in Bialystok synagogue. Between 1940 and 1941 the meaning of mass execution underwent a change and it would be rash to rule out of court the effects on the Germans of Soviet action in their newly occupied areas.

The problem of explaining why Hitler was antisemitic and why Stalin was intolerant of opposition and paranoid is a less important problem than that of explaining how the personal idiosyncracies of these individuals (and the groups around them) could be translated into action which involved the state in a scale of mass killings that was hitherto unprecedented.

In the Soviet Union the move from mass repression (1929-36) to mass killings (in 1937-38 and again in 1940) was preceded by a level of criminal neglect and irresponsibility concerning keeping perceived hostile groups alive in a state of repression. The differentiation of the nature of the mass deaths associated with this mass repression helps in some way to explain the background from which mass killing was to develop. This article does not provide an explanation for this incremental move between the different stages of repression, but it does attempt to clarify the nature of the problem, which is the first step towards understanding what happened.

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¹ This article is based on a paper that was originally prepared for a conference on 'Lager, Zwangsarbeit, Vertreibung und Deportation: Dimensionen der Massenvemichtung in der Sowjetunion und in Deutschland 1931-1945' organised by Forschungsstelle für Geschichte und Kultur der Deutschen in Russland, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg and the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Mülheim/Ruhr, February 1995. A German version of the original paper will be published in a volume edited by Dittmar Dahlmann & Gerhard Hirschfeld under the title of the conference. I am grateful to them for allowing me to cite material from the conference paper. I am grateful to Johannes Tuchel and Christian Streit for discussions with them in Mülheim. I am also grateful for comments from my colleagues Jacques Adler and Steven Welch in Melbourne, Oleg Khlevnyuk, Viktor Zemskov and Arsenii Roginsky in Moscow, Alain Blura and Gabor Rittersporn in Paris and of course Bob Davies in Birmingham. None of these are responsible for any misunderstandings or errors that I might have included in my text.

² In particular the writings of Ernst Nolte in Germany, e.g. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 June 1986 and Richard Pipes in America. R. Pipes, *The Russian Revolution. 1899-1919* (London, 1990), pp. 832-837. For a good selection of the documents on the *Historikerstreit* in English see *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?': Original documents of the Historikerstreit, the controversy concerning the singularity of the Holocaust* (New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1993).

³ See Ian Kershaw, 'Totalitarianism Revisited: Nazism and Stalinism in Comparative Perspective', in *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, Vol. XXIII, 1994, p. 35 and Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 73-75.

⁴ In fact it is sometimes assumed to be synonymous with mass killings. This is a point to which I will return.

⁵ One of the main reasons for this confusion was that the authorities consciously misled many relatives of those executed by describing their sentences as ten years labour in Gulag without the right of correspondence. We now know that those described in this way were all executed without ever getting to the Gulag. See *Istochnik*, 1993, 1, pp. 83-84.

⁶ Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, pp. 73-75. ⁷ From the figures he gives it would be about twice as large.

⁸ Maier's comparison is quoted by Kershaw, p. 35.

⁹ Maier, p. 75. Note a certain ambiguity in the last sentence, when it is not just the scale, that is compared, but when there is a slippage in concept from 'murder' to 'execution'.

¹⁰ It should be pointed out that this is not a criticism of Maier, who has accurately portrayed the conventional view of the secondary literature; it is rather a criticism of this conventional view.

¹¹ If Stalin killed twice as many people as Hitler, but was ruling over a population that was three times as large, what does it show? While this question is difficult to answer, we can assume that it shows something different to what the case would have been if Germany had possessed three times the population of the USSR.

¹² Maier is very careful in the way that he expresses this: 'What sets apart the National Socialist crime—not necessarily making it "worse" but making it different, and appalling and unassimilable—is ultimately the murder of Jews'. Maier, p. 75.

¹³ It would certainly be more 'singular' from a Jewish point of view, but if we are looking at it from a more general point of view the question of singularity changes.

¹⁴ In Nazi Germany the victims of the mass killings were primarily Jewish because of the anti-Semitism of the Nazis. Anti-Semitism in general is, unfortunately, not singular. The scale of the killing that warrants the description mass killing is comparable with other mass killings. From the point of view of looking at the fate of the Jews the mass killings of Jews under Hitler were unique (singular) and warrant the use of the terms genocide and holocaust.

¹⁵ Although I think that this is in itself questionable. It largely depends on whom you blame for the war.

¹⁶ Some German materials that were captured by the Soviet forces, and which were not handed over to the investigators, might now appear and could substantially change our understanding of the German situation, but by and large the position there is fairly stable. The situation with the Soviet data is subject to much greater upturns.

¹⁷ Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell* (New York, 1981), pp. 253-254.

¹⁸ Many of these calculations use the famous Korherr SS reports (see the convenient reprint of these in S. Klarsfeld (ed.), *The Holocaust and the Neo-Nazi Mythomania*. (New York, 1978), pp. 177-188) supplemented by detailed studies of rail transport of Western and Central European Jews to the death camps, e.g. G. Reilhnger, *The Final Solution* (London, 1971) and R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* (New York, 1985).

¹⁹ See Franciszek Piper, 'Estimating the Number of Deportees to and Victims of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp', *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol. XXI (Jerusalem, 1941).

²⁰ R. Hilberg, 'The Statistic', in F. Furet (ed.), *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews* (New York, Schocken Books, 1989), pp. 167-168.

²¹ Martin Broszat, 'The Concentration Camps, 1933-1945' in H. Krausnick & M. Broszat, *Anatomy of the SS State*, (Paladin, 1973), p. 249. 'Probably at least a third of the more than 700 000 inmates recorded in January 1945'.

²² Kogon's figures for deaths in Auschwitz coincided with those of the Extraordinary Soviet State Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes of the German-Fascist Aggressors, and the later Polish Commission (Piper, pp. 56-58) However this order of magnitude was challenged by a number of Western scholars: Gerald Reillinger (1953), who estimated the number of victims at Auschwitz to have been roughly 800 000 to 900 000; Hilberg; Wellers (1983), whose estimate was 1.6 million. And recently Franciszek Piper from the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum has indicated that the Poles too have now accepted a revision from 4 million to 1.1-1.5 million as the scale of likely deaths in Auschwitz (Piper, pp. 89,95). Kogon's figures for both the scale of the normal concentration camps and their levels of mortality now appear to be far too great. The figures given in Table 1 aii) are derived from Broszat's 1965 study of German concentration camps, and from personal communications with Johannes Tüchel (1995) at the conference. Broszat also claims the level of mortality

in the camps to have been significantly lower apart from the murderous death marches of 1945, when he estimates that one-third of the 700 000 prisoners of January 1945 died i.e. 233 000, and with probably more than half a million (including these 233 000) dying from weakness and disease throughout the war. This appears to be considerably lower than the figure of over 1.3 million for deaths in the German non-death camps given by Kogon. Tuchel points out that the deaths in concentration camps in 1933 were far less than 6 250 and probably less than 100 and that at this time they frequently resulted in investigations and trials.

²³ This is similar to the magnitude indicated in the most authoritative German assessment; see W. Benz (ed.), *Dimension des Volkermords: die Zahl der jüdischer Opfer des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich, 1991).

²⁴ 30 000 Jews were detained after Kristallnacht, but must have been released within two months and encouraged to emigrate.

²⁵ Some of the details in Kogon's book clearly refer far more to the regular camps like Buchenwald, where Kogon was a prisoner, than to the death camps of the East. A reference in the chapter on food emphasises the differences between the camps. 'During the final phase of the camps, there was virtually no jam' (Kogon, p. 116).

²⁶ Part 3 of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* is titled 'The Destructive-Labour Camps'; this is in part a play on words: *Istrebitel'no-Trudovye Lagerya* instead of *Ispravitet'no-Trudovye Lagerya* (Corrective Labour Camps).

²⁷ R. Medvedev, *Let History Judge* (New York, A. Knopf, 1971). In subsequent publications Medvedev has offered figures that are similar to those given by Conquest; see R. Medvedev, *Moscow News*, 48, 27 November 1988, pp. 8-9 and R. Medvedev, *Argumenty i Fakty*, 1989, 5, pp. 5-6.

²⁸ A. Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, Book 3 (Collins, 1978), p. 28. A few pages earlier Solzhenitsyn had written, 'Mankind is almost incapable of dispassionate, unemotional thinking. In something which he has recognised as evil man can seldom force himself to see also what is good'. (p. 23).

²⁹ One of the major revisionist articles of this time by Rosefielde clearly set out his intention to reinterpret 'Soviet Economic History in the light of "Gulag Archipelago"'. Steven Rosefielde, 'The First Great Leap Forward Reconsidered: the Lessons of Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago', *Slavic Review*, 39, 4, December 1980, pp. 159-587.

³⁰ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (OUP, 1990), p. 487, cites approvingly 'Sergo Mikoyan, son of the Politburo member, has recently given from his father's unpublished memoirs a figure reported to the Politburo by the KGB on Khrushchev's orders in the 1960s of, between 1 January 1935 and 22 June 1941, just under 20 million arrests and 7 million deaths' as part of his justification for ignoring the new archival data.

³¹ See Shvernink to Khrushchev 18/2/1963 where it clearly states that there had been 2.44 million arrested between 1934 and 1945 with less than 800 000 executed, *Istochnik*, 1995, 1, p. 120.

³² It is a sad reflection on the state of the study of Soviet society that someone of the stature of Walter Laqueur could as late as 1994 still entertain a range of possibilities that was only just ruling out the possibility of there being 20 million in the camps: 'It is quite likely that some of the earlier estimates of the killings and the gulag population (20 million and up) were too high'. W. Laqueur, *The Dream that Failed: Reflections on the Soviet Union* (Oxford, 1994), p. 139.

³³ The quality and quantity of testimonies regarding Soviet labour camps is significantly inferior in comparison with those for the German camps. They were collected without the assistance of the Soviet government, and primarily from the few people who were able to escape to the West.

³⁴ R. Conquest, 'Communications to the Editor', *American Historical Review*, June 1994, p. 1039.

³⁵ Solzhenitsyn, basing himself on the reports of high and middle-ranking Ezhov men who in 1939-40 are reported to have admitted that 'during those two years of 1937 and 1938 half a million political prisoners had been shot throughout the Soviet Union, and 480 000 *blatnye* (habitual thieves) in addition'. A. Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, Vol. I, 1974, p. 438.

³⁶ Beriia's request to Stalin (undated) and the formal Central Committee (Strictly Secret) resolution of 5 March 1940 from the Osobyie papki of the Politburo materials of the Presidential archive have been published in *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*, vyp. 1, 1993, pp. 124-125 and 126. Shelepin's report to Khrushchev dated 3 March 1959 indicating that 21 857 were shot is published in the same collection, pp. 127-128.

³⁷ The leading Russian specialists in this area, Oleg Khlevnyuk, Viktor Zeniskov and Arsenin Roginsky, when independently consulted on this issue, all agreed that the official figures for executions might require some correction from 800 000 to possibly 1 million. None of them were prepared to accept the 1.5 million figure currently being advocated by Conquest.

³⁸ See A. Getty, G. Kiltersporn and V. Zernskov in *American Historical Review*, October 1993, pp. 1017-1049 for a more detailed consideration of these data.

³⁹ See *Stolenski Archives*, WKP 178, p. 134. For a discussion of the incorrect use made of this evidence by Conquest see S.G. Wheatcroft, 'Towards a Thorough Analysis of Soviet Forced Labour Statistics', *Soviet Studies*. XXXV, 2. April 1983, pp. 224-225.

⁴⁰ When this was the only secret decree known, it was accepted by Conquest who assumed (incorrectly) that the Soviet prisons in the late 1930s would be holding at least 1 million people as they had in 1933, and used this to help calculate his figure of a population of 8 million in the camps.

⁴¹ See *Sbornik dokumentov po istorii ugovnogo zakanodatel'stva SSSK i RSFSR, 1917-1952*, ed. I.T. Golyakov (M. 1953). pp. 348-350, cited in P.H. Solomon, 'Soviet Penal Policy, 1917-1934: a Reinterpretation', *Slavic Review*, 39, 2, 1980, pp. 210-211.

⁴² V. N. Zemskov, *Sotsial'noe issledovanie*, 1991, 10, p. 3.

⁴³ Khlevnyuk, p. 77.

⁴⁴ See *Neizvestnaya Rossiya*, Vol. I, p. 234.

⁴⁵ See M. Gelb, 'An Early Soviet Ethnic Deportation: The Far Eastern Koreans', *Russian Review*, 54, July 1995, pp. 389-412.

⁴⁶ N. Bugai, 'The Devils Come at Dawn: from Stalin's Special File'. *Moscow News*. 1990, 43, p. 11.

⁴⁷ R. Conquest, *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camps* (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 13.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁰ While all transfers by boat to Kolyma had to pass through the port of Nagoevo, the concept here is slightly different since Conquest could claim that his figures included those who died on the voyage. Although the numbers who died in transit were undoubtedly high, they could not account for much of this difference, and for current purposes may be ignored.

⁵¹ Conquest, p. 216.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp 215-216.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 216. Conquest follows this with another approach to support his figures, based on further dubious presumptions: 'Another—very approximate approach—1939 census population of 172 988 for Magadan province. If we assume that this was only the free population and that the proportion of prisoners to guards was 20:1 this would give us roughly 400 000 prisoners', *ibid.*, pp. 216-217.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁵⁷ A. N. Pilyasov, *Dinamika promyshlennogo proizvodstva v Magadanskoi oblasti (1932-1992 gg.)*. Part 1 (Magadan, 1993), p. 206, citing evidence from A. Biryukov and the Magadan archives (GAMO, f. 23, d. 454,455,476,531, 3515,3455, 3456, and f. 23s.s., d. 1,9,10,11,12.).

⁵⁸ Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Historia Polski w liczbach; Ludność, terytorium* (Warsaw, 1994), p. 197.

⁵⁹ These materials were removed from the party archives and placed in the far more secret 'Presidential archive'. They were released by President El'tsin to Lech Walesa on the occasion of El'tsin's visit to Poland in October 1992 and have been duly published by the Polish Academy of Sciences. Wojeiech Materski (ed.), *Katyn: Documents of genocide* (Warsaw, 1993), pp. 11, 18-23. Scribbled on Beriia's letter following the word 'za', meaning 'for', are the signatures of Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and Mikoyan. Kalinin and Kaganovich were apparently absent when this matter was discussed and in a separate smaller handwriting it is noted that Comrades Kalinin and Kaganovich later indicated that they were also 'for' the proposal.

⁶⁰ In March 1959 the KGB chief A. Shelepin wrote to Khrushchev requesting permission to dispose of the files concerning the 21 857 Poles who were shot as a result of this Politburo resolution. See Materski (ed.), pp. 26-28. Shelepin indicates that of the 21 857 Poles executed 4 421 were executed near Katyn Forest in Smolensk *oblast'*, 3 820 in Starobelsk in Kharkov *oblast'*, 6 311 in Ostashkov in Kalinin *oblast'* and 7 305 elsewhere. Since the Germans claim to have discovered 10 000 bodies in Katyn, it remains unclear who the other 5 500 victims in Katyn were.

⁶¹ See V. S. Parsadanova, 'Deportatsiya naseleniya iz zapadnoi Ukrainy i zapadnoi Belorussii v 1939-1941gg.', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1989, 2, p. 37. For reasons which remain unclear the figures which Vyshinsky subsequently passed on to the Polish Ambassador, S. Kot, were a little lower at 387 932 instead of 389 382.

⁶² E. Taranova, 'Beriya-Stalinu: "Nastoyashchim dokladyvayu.."', in *Kniga istoricheskikh sensatsii* (Moscow, Raritet. 1993), pp. 90-91.

⁶³ The death of German prisoners of War in the USSR is not considered here. It is generally considered that there was an extremely high level of mortality experienced by German POW's after they had been captured, but before registration in permanent POW camps. There may have been over 1 million deaths at this time. Subsequently, official Soviet reports indicate that 356 687 German soldiers died in captivity out of 2 388 443 registered as captured, i.e. 14.9%. The figures for all captured soldiers allied with Germany were 518 480 deaths amongst 3 486 206 registered captured soldiers, i.e. 14.9%. See Stefan Karner, "Die Sowjetische Hauptverwaltung für Kriegsgefangene und Internierte", *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, July, 1994, p. 470.

⁶⁴ GARF, f. 9401s. op. 2, d. 95, II. 36-8 (Stalin's special files from NKVD 1945).

⁶⁵ GARF, f. 9401s. op. 2, d. 136, 1.199.

⁶⁶ This is somewhat larger than the figure of 208 239 mobilised Germans given by Karner, p. 470.

⁶⁷ See Karner. pp. 464-466. Karner suggests that the conditions in these camps were in many instances considerably worse than in the normal labour camps or even than the permanent prisoner of war camps.

⁶⁸ The following account is taken from Ivan Chukhin, *Internirovannaya yunost': Istoriya 517-go lagerya internirovannykh nemok NKVD SSSR* (Moscow-Petrozavodsk, Memorial, 1995).

⁶⁹ In fact 1940 Germans, 36 Poles, 11 French, 7 Russians, 5 Italians and 1 Luxemburgian; see Chukhin, p. 3.

⁷⁰ These figures fail to account for 36 of the earlier detachment, whose deaths or disappearance went unrecorded.

⁷¹ Again the figures reveal a gap of 64 unaccounted for prisoners.

⁷² See Chukhin, p. 11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

⁷⁴ He certainly wins out if we include (as seems appropriate) deaths from the non-declared famines of 1931-33 and exclude (as seems more doubtful) war losses.

⁷⁵ Valentin Kovalev quotes a statement from Isaiah Davidovich Berg, the former head of the administrative economic department of the Moscow *oblast'* NKVD, that he had participated in the construction of gas-vans (*'dushegubki'*) in 1937 in order to gas to death those sentenced to be shot. Further confirmation is needed concerning this sensational claim. See Valentin Kovalev, *Dva Slalinskikh Narkoma* (Moscow, Univers, 1995), p. 241.

⁷⁶ Although the total number of deaths in Auschwitz is probably comparable with the total number of executions carried out by the Soviet secret police, it should be noted that from the point of view of the victims there is an enormous difference. 1.1 million represents over 10% of European Jewry, but less than 1% of the Soviet population.

However, care should be taken not to jump to too hasty conclusions concerning possible NKVD and Gestapo collaboration in this area. The incautious claim recently made concerning the 1940 Krakow protocols between the NKVD and Gestapo has been shown to be unjustified, since these materials were concerned with minor matters of repatriation rather than with agreements concerning mass killings. See O. V. Vishlev, "'Krakovskii proloko!" 1940g. bylo li "antipol'skoe soglashenie" mezhdru NKVD i Gestapo? iz Germanskikh Arkhivov', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1995, 5, pp. 104-112.

⁷⁸ See *The Polish Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland* (Warsaw, 1947), Vol. 2, pp. 49-50.