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Contemporary Russian Historiography of the Problem of «Women in Kazakhstan's Gulag Camps»

This article explores contemporary Russian historiography of women in Kazakhstan's Gulag camps. Within this historiographic context, it analyzes the female population of Soviet forced labor camps in the Kazakh SSR. ALZHIR was the only penitentiary institution of its kind in the republic. The importance of studying the historiography of women in Kazakhstan's Gulag camps is determined by the specific nature of the Soviet penal system's treatment of women. This research contributes to the restoration of historical justice and the perpetuation of the memory of women who suffered in Kazakhstan's prisons. Historiographical sources comprise three groups of works. The first group encompasses studies dedicated to women of the GULAG in general, providing a methodological framework applicable to researching women in Kazakhstani camps. The second group is formed by works on the history of the GULAG containing specific data on women in Kazakhstani corrective labor camps. The third group consists of works focusing directly on women held in the Kazakhstani camps of the GULAG. Specialized studies examine the daily lives and detention conditions of the female contingent in Stalinist camps of Kazakhstan. The researchers focus on the daily life of women in the camps, survival strategies, motherhood in inhumane conditions, and the specific nature of «women's memory.» The identification and classification of specific female models of survival strategies in the camp environment, as examined in contemporary Russian research, complements the overall picture of the functioning of the Gulag. The contributions of Russian scholars who have published their works since 1991 to this topic are systematized and characterized. The key parameters of the study's analysis are presented. Post-Soviet Russian historiography has evolved from institutional studies of the penal system, which laid the statistical foundation for the female camp population, to a contemporary anthropological turn. Along with archival documents, Russian specialists are widely drawing on personal sources. It is concluded that, despite the theoretical and methodological breakthrough in the study of women's camp issues, women's experiences in Kazakhstan's Gulag camps have not yet been adequately understood.

Key words: GULAG, Stalinism, Kazakhstani GULAG camps, women in the GULAG, modern Russian historiography of the GULAG, historiography of the problem of «Women in the GULAG», women prisoners, women's camps, forced labor camps, women's camp everyday life.

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«ГУЛАГ-тың қазақстандық лагерлеріндегі әйелдер» мәселесінің қазіргі ресейлік тарихнамасы

Мақалада «Қазақстандағы ГУЛАГ лагерлеріндегі әйелдер» мәселесі бойынша қазіргі заманғы ресей тарихнамасы қарастырылады. Тарихнамалық контексте Қазақ КСР-інің кеңестік лагерлік мәжбүрлеу мекемелеріндегі әйелдер құрамы талданды. АЛЖИР республикадағы осы типтегі жалғыз пенитенциарлық мекеме болды. «Қазақстандағы ГУЛАГ лагерлеріндегі әйелдер» мәселесінің тарихнамасын зерттеудің маңыздылығы кеңестік жазалау жүйесінің әйелдерге қатысты ерекшелігімен айқындалады. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы қамау орындарында зардап шеккен әйелдер мәселесі бойынша тарихи әділеттілікті қалпына келтіруге және олардың тарихын мәңгілікке сақтауға ықпал етеді. Тарихиографиялық дереккөздер еңбектердің үш тобын қамтиды. Бірінші топ жалпы ГУЛАГ әйелдеріне арналған зерттеулер. Олар қазақстандық лагерлердегі әйелдерді зерттеуге қолданылатын әдіснамалық базаны ұсынады. Екінші топты ГУЛАГ тарихы бойынша қазақстандық еңбекпен түзеу лагерлеріндегі әйелдер туралы жеке мәліметтерді қамтитын жұмыстар құрайды. Үшінші топ — ГУЛАГ қазақстандық лагерлеріндегі әйелдер туралы жұмыстар. Арнайы зерттеулер Қазақстандағы сталиндік лагерлердің әйелдер контингентін ұстау жағдайларын, күнделікті өмірін қарастырады. Зерттеушілердің басты назарында — әйелдердің лагердегі күнделікті тұрмысы, өмір сүру стратегиялары, адам үшін ауыр жағдайлардағы аналық өмірі және «әйелдер жадысының» ерекшелігі. Қазіргі заманғы ресейлік зерттеулерде қаралған лагерь ортасында өмір сүру стратегиясының ерекше әйелдер модельдерін бөлу және жіктеу ГУЛАГ-тың жұмыс істеуінің жалпы көрінісін толықтырады.

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1991-жылдан бастап еңбектерін жариялаған ресейлік ғалымдардың тақырыпты игерудегі үлесі жүйеленіп, сипатталды. Зерттеуді талдаудың негізгі параметрлері көрсетілді. Посткеңестік ресей тарихнамасы лагердегі әйелдерді статистикалық зерттеулердің негізін қалаған жазалау жүйесін институционалдық зерттеулерден, қазіргі заманғы антропологиялық бетбұрысқа дейін дамыды. Архивтік құжаттармен қатар ресейлік мамандар жеке шығу тегі бар деректерді кеңінен таратады. Лагердегі әйелдер мәселесін зерттеудегі теориялық-әдіснамалық деңгейдегі жаңаша бағыттардың болуына қарамастан, ГУЛАГ лагерлеріндегі қазақстандық әйелдерді зерттеу әлі де тиісті деңгейге жетпегені жайлы қорытынды жасалды.

Кілт сөздер: ГУЛАГ, сталинизм, ГУЛАГ-тың қазақстандық лагерлері, ГУЛАГ әйелдері, қазіргі ресейдегі ГУЛАГ тарихнамасы, «ГУЛАГ-тағы әйелдер» мәселесінің тарихнамасы, тұтқын әйелдер, әйелдер лагерлері, еңбекпен түзеу лагерлері, лагерьдегі әйелдердің күнделікті өмірі.

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Современная российская историография проблемы «Женщины в казахстанских лагерях ГУЛАГа»

В статье освещается современная российская историография проблемы «Женщины в казахстанских лагерях ГУЛАГа». В историографическом контексте проанализирован женский состав советских лагерных принудительных учреждений Казахской ССР. АЛЖИР являлся единственным в республике пенитенциарным учреждением подобного типа. Значимость изучения историографии проблемы «Женщины в казахстанских лагерях ГУЛАГа» определяется спецификой советской карательной системы по отношению к женщинам. Данное исследование способствует восстановлению исторической справедливости и увековечиванию памяти женщин, пострадавших в казахстанских местах заключения. Историографические источники включают три группы трудов. Первая группа охватывает исследования, посвященные женщинам ГУЛАГа в целом. Они предоставляют методологическую базу, которая применима к изучению женщин казахстанских лагерей. Вторую группу формируют работы по истории ГУЛАГа, содержащие отдельные сведения о женщинах казахстанских исправительно-трудовых лагерей. Третья группа — работы о женщинах, находившихся в казахстанских лагерях ГУЛАГа. Специальные исследования рассматривают повседневность, условия содержания женского контингента сталинских лагерей Казахстана. В центре внимания исследователей — повседневный женский лагерный быт, стратегии выживания, материнство в нечеловеческих условиях и специфика «женской памяти». Выделение и классификация специфических женских моделей стратегий выживания в лагерной среде, рассмотренных в современных российских исследованиях, дополняют общую картину функционирования ГУЛАГа. Систематизирован и охарактеризован вклад российских учёных, опубликовавших свои труды с 1991 г. в освоение темы. Отражены ключевые параметры анализа исследования. Постсоветская российская историография эволюционировала от институциональных исследований карательной системы, заложивших статистический фундамент женского лагерного населения, до современного антропологического поворота. Наряду с архивными документами российские специалисты широко привлекают источники личного происхождения. Сделан вывод, что, несмотря на теоретико-методологический прорыв в изучении женской лагерной проблематики, пребывание женщин в казахстанских лагерях ГУЛАГа пока не получило соответствующего осмысления.

Ключевые слова: ГУЛАГ, сталинизм, казахстанские лагеря ГУЛАГа, женщины в ГУЛАГе, современная российская историография ГУЛАГа, историография проблемы «Женщины в ГУЛАГе», женщины-заклучённые, женские лагеря, исправительно-трудовые лагеря, женская лагерная повседневность.

Introduction

Kazakhstan was one of the main regions hosting the Gulag (Main Administration of Correctional Labor Camps) camp complexes from 1930 to 1959. The phenomenon of the tragically infamous Gulag system has been studied by Russian scholars for over 30 years. However, many subjects remain unresolved, while others remain controversial. For example, the topic of «Women in Kazakhstan's Gulag Camps» remains underresearched in both Kazakh and Russian historiography. Existing research is fragmentary and requires more thorough examination, synthesis, and a reconsideration of established views. These circumstances convincingly demonstrate the relevance and scholarly novelty of this publication's topic.

Contemporary Russian historical scholarship is undergoing an «anthropological turn,» shifting its focus from the study of state institutions to human history. Kazakhstan's forced labor camps occupy a special place

in the Soviet penal system, serving as a unique testing ground for studying the life trajectories of women subjected to repression. The relevance of this work stems from the need to critically examine how contemporary Russian scholarship has developed a new perspective on the tragedy of women in the Gulag, moving from dry statistics to microhistory.

Research into the issue of «Women in Kazakhstan's Gulag Camps» is relevant in the context of preserving historical memory and developing an objective perspective on the mechanisms of state violence and strategies for individual resistance to dehumanization. The Gulag made no distinctions: its victims included women from all walks of life, ethnicities, and religions. All of them, regardless of their past, swelled the ranks of Stalin's camp prisoners. Studying women's experiences in the camps makes it possible to identify the specific impact of the totalitarian system on the institutions of motherhood and family.

The scientific novelty of this work lies in the fact that it is the first historical analysis of contemporary Russian historiography on the issue of «Women in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps,» highlighting the contribution of Russian scholars to the study of the «female» specificities of Kazakhstani camps. A comprehensive systematization of contemporary Russian research on the Gulag has revealed a shift from a descriptive (factual) method to an anthropocentric analysis of women's memories of the camps in Kazakhstan.

The purpose of this article is to review and assess the extent to which the topic of «Women in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps» has been explored in the works of Russian scholars. The objectives of this study include systematizing and characterizing the contributions of Russian scholars to the study of this topic.

The contemporary period of studying this issue began in 1991 and continues to the present day.

Materials and Methods

The research was based on a body of scholarly works by Russian researchers published in the modern period. Historiographic sources include memoirs, scientific articles, collective generalizing works, conference materials, dissertations, electronic databases, which reflected the problem of «Women in Kazakhstan's Gulag camps.»

Websites are of great significance as a type of historiographical source in this context: «Victims of Political Terror in the USSR,» «Open List,» «Memoirs of the Gulag and Their Authors,» the Sakharov Center's online resources «Memoirs of the Gulag and Their Authors,» as well as «Women in the Gulag: Memoirs,» hosted on the website «Historical Memory: The 20th Century.» Civil society organizations independently develop and maintain a database of victims of political repression without receiving any state funding.

Historiographic sources on the topic of research are divided into three groups. The first includes generalizing works about women in the GULAG system, laying the methodological foundation for analyzing the specifics of Kazakhstani camps. The second group consists of studies on the general history of the Gulag, which touch upon certain aspects of women's stay in forced labor institutions in Kazakhstan. The third group is represented by works focused directly on the female contingent of Kazakhstani camps.

G.M. Ivanova's seminal work [1] laid the methodological foundation for the study of the repressive system, including its Kazakhstani branches.

The research methodology is based on historiographical analysis, a comprehensive approach, and methods of gender history.

The methodological foundation of this work is the principle of historicism, which involves examining the issue within the context of specific historical circumstances and the evolution of scientific knowledge. In the process of preparing this article, the method of historiographical analysis and synthesis was applied, which made it possible to systematize the contributions of contemporary Russian authors and identify the key characteristics of the exploration of the topic: from the collection of primary data to in-depth anthropological analysis. A problem-chronological approach was employed to trace the evolution of scholarly interests in Russian historiography regarding the status of women in Kazakh camps.

A comparative method was applied to analyze and compare various theoretical approaches (institutional, gender, and anthropological) to the study of women's daily life in camp conditions. Content analysis and discourse analysis were employed in the study of texts by contemporary Russian historians. Their application made it possible to identify and analyze key concepts actively used in historiography, such as «women's experience,» «traumatic memory,» and «survival strategies.»

The use of this set of materials and methods has made it possible to ensure a strictly objective approach and a comprehensive overview, to assess the current state and prospects of research on the topic of «Women

in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps» in contemporary Russian scholarship, and to formulate a well-reasoned conclusion.

The use of an interdisciplinary approach to the issue of «Women in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps» within the context of contemporary Russian historiography is not only promising but also methodologically sound, possessing significant scientific and practical value.

To systematize the body of Russian historiographical sources, the most effective approach appears to be the use of a subject-thematic principle, which will allow for a comprehensive assessment of the issue under study and determine the extent to which it has been scientifically explored.

Results

A review and assessment of the extent to which the issue of «Women in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps» has been explored in contemporary Russian historiography, along with a systematization and characterization of Russian scholars' contributions to this topic, reveals several key trends and findings.

The study has shown that, in the development of Russian historiography on this issue, it is reasonable to identify three distinct phases: the factual, the institutional, and the anthropological. Contemporary Russian researchers have made significant progress in studying the mechanisms of mass political actions against women, as well as the dynamics of the size and composition of the female contingent in the Gulag's correctional labor camps. Attention is focused on the specific conditions of detention in the ChSIR and the fates of the ALZHIR inmates.

A number of studies have emerged that make a significant contribution to the exploration of this issue and its various aspects. These studies are distinguished by their academic rigor and a commitment to in-depth analysis of archival materials and the memoirs of women who survived the Gulag. Contemporary Russian historical scholarship is no longer confined to a narrow, self-contained theoretical and methodological framework; instead, it is characterized by a marked interdisciplinary synthesis.

A key achievement in recent years has been the integration of oral history methods and the sociology of trauma. The use of «first-person documents» (letters, diaries, memoirs) has allowed Russian historians to supplement archival statistics with vivid testimonies, transforming the history of the camps from a «dry» official chronicle into women's history.

Despite the progress made, the research on the situation of women in Kazakhstan's Gulag camps presented in Russian historiography remains fragmented and requires further elaboration, systematization, and reinterpretation.

Discussion

General studies of women's experiences in the GULAG applicable for methodological adaptation to Kazakhstani material.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, interest in the history of the Gulag became the focus of intense attention from both Russian scholars and the general public. Publications began to appear on the formation and development of the Soviet penal system based on declassified archives from the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF). In the 1990s, archival materials began to supplement women's narratives.

The question of the number of camp inmates holds particular significance in Russian historiography. V.N. Zemskov shifted the focus on this issue from journalistic opinions to a scholarly, archival, and statistical analysis. In his work «The Gulag (Historical and Sociological Aspects),» the researcher, drawing on declassified archival documents, presents statistical data characterizing the gender composition of camp inmates from 1934 to 1948, the number of children and pregnant female prisoners in the Gulag from 1947 to 1953 (as of January 1 of each year) [2].

Despite ongoing debates regarding the size of the camp population (A.N. Dugin, V.P. Popov, V.V. Tsaplin, M. Yu. Morukov, N.V. Petrov, and others), statistical and analytical calculations have convincingly demonstrated that women were not a marginal group among camp inmates. They constituted a significant proportion of those subjected to repression and possessed specific characteristics.

In her article «Women in Prison: A Historical and Legal Perspective,» G.M. Ivanova examined the situation of women in the camps [3]. In examining the fate of female prisoners, the researcher addressed issues of motherhood and pointed to the relatively high birth rate, despite the inhumane conditions of detention.

By the mid-1990s, interest in the history of Stalinism and the Gulag had declined significantly among the Russian public, a phenomenon that, according to N.V. Upadyshev, can largely be attributed to people's

fatigue from the barrage of negative news that had overwhelmed society in the late 1980s and early 1990s. [4; 170]. Other researchers point to the state's deliberate policy of silencing and denying what took place in the Gulag. Thus, starting in the mid-1990s, some of the state archives' collections were transferred to closed storage under the pretext of protecting state and personal secrets, which seriously complicated the work of researchers [5; 225].

Since the 2000s, the history of the Gulag has once again become the subject of professional study. The partial declassification of Russian archival materials, combined with international academic collaboration, has contributed to the renewal of methodological approaches to the study of the Gulag as a historical phenomenon and to an improvement in the quality of published works. Fundamental, comprehensive works have been published on the repressive policies of the USSR and on specific aspects of the institutional history of the Gulag (G.M. Ivanova, O.V. Khlevnyuk, V.N. Zemskov, M. Yu. Morukov, A.I. Kokurin, N.V. Petrov, S.A. Kropachev, E.F. Krinko).

Exploring this issue entails the development of the conceptual framework necessary for formulating and validating scholarly theories. In Russian historiography, the definition of the term «GULAG» has sparked intense debate. Some authors (G.M. Ivanova, M.I. Khlustov, I.V. Pavlova) view the Gulag within the context of a totalitarian concept, as a punitive institution. Others (S.I. Kuzmin, A.S. Smykalin) present the Gulag solely as a system of correctional labor institutions where criminal elements served their sentences. There are other interpretations of the term «GULAG» that broaden its meaning, using it to refer to the entire repressive apparatus that functioned during the Soviet era. A balanced approach to understanding the GULAG seems to be a comprehensive one, encompassing its repressive, penitentiary, and economic components.

In Russian historiography, the presence of women in Kazakhstani correctional labor camps is often considered within the context of the general history of the Gulag. During this period, the process of developing a new understanding of women's life in the camps shifted from the data-collection stage to a phase of in-depth analysis and the publication of research findings.

G.D. Zhdanova conducted a statistical analysis of Order No. 00447 of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), «On the Operation to Repress Former Kulaks, Criminals, and Other Anti-Soviet Elements.» She identified the reasons why the proportion of repressed women in all regions of the former USSR was small in 1937–1938. G.D. Zhdanova noted the following reasons: «1) The low social status of women in Russia—they were not taken seriously in a political sense; 2) Gulag enterprises required primarily male labor; 3) a campaign against street children was underway in the country; 4) according to the letter of Order No. 00447, it was assumed that the families of those sentenced were not to be repressed» [6; 733].

Kochetkova, N. A., and Obukhov, L. A., examined the patterns and characteristics of political repression directed against women during the «Great Terror» of 1937–1938. The authors drew attention to gender asymmetry: «Despite formal equality in rights with men, women were still perceived as a dependent and passive group within the structure of Soviet society. Furthermore, it was more expedient to use male prisoners as a labor force at industrial sites within the Gulag, as they were better suited to performing heavy physical labor» [7; 89].

P.P. Pirogov analyzed the Soviet state's penal policy toward women in the prewar period. Based on a study of the practical activities of correctional institutions and statistical data, conclusions were drawn regarding the specific nature of the legal status of convicted women in 1917–1941 and the influence on it of the social and political transformations characteristic of the USSR at that time [8].

A.L. Litvin, examining the investigative files and the methods used to falsify them using the example of the judicial investigation into the case of E.S. Ginzburg, concluded that the wording of the charges at that time was formulaic. The only thing that changed in them were the surnames of the accused [9]. Other researchers (B.V. Ananich, V.M. Paneyakh, V.V. Polikarpov, and A.B. Suslov) shared the view that archival investigation files can be interpreted as «scripted» texts.

Russian researchers have examined such an important aspect of women's daily life in the camps as the experience of motherhood in captivity. O.A. Omelchenko, adopting a legal approach, conducted a scholarly study of the issue of pregnant women and women with young children serving their sentences in Gulag institutions [10]. Based on archival documents, the author highlights high mortality rates, a lack of food and medical care, as well as the specific conditions of these categories of prisoners and the detention of young children alongside their mothers in camp conditions. Another article by O.A. Omelchenko [11] is devoted to the study of documentary evidence revealing the critical condition of pregnant women and women with young children in the Gulag. It notes that women accounted for up to 26 % of all convicts in the country and were subjected to ruthless exploitation by both the state and camp officials [11; 42]. The author traces the

path from the extremely dire situation of female prisoners to a gradual, albeit insignificant, improvement in the conditions of their confinement and the legal regulation of their status.

L.A. Maksimova examined women's experiences, the contradictions, and the tragedy of motherhood in the Gulag camps [12]. By analyzing the complex female experience of motherhood in captivity, the researcher identified the reasons that led women to pregnancy and childbirth. Some women sought to achieve a relaxation of camp conditions. Other women gave birth in order to create a complete family with the child's father after their release. In some cases, pregnancy resulted from forced prostitution in the absence of contraception or from sexual violence (rape) [12; 271, 272].

V. Gritsenko and G. Kalinin identified the impact of the long prison sentences imposed on most female Gulag prisoners after the end of World War II on the rise in pregnancies in camps and penal colonies. According to the authors, women hoped that pregnancy would lead to more favorable treatment and even early release from imprisonment [13].

O. Yu. Kichina described the organization of the execution of punishment in the form of imprisonment for women with young children in Russia and abroad during various historical periods. Unlike other authors, O. Iu. Kichigina identifies child care and assisting the mother in upbringing as the primary focus of the penitentiary system [14; 106]. The work lacks scholarly criticism and aligns with the Soviet paradigm.

A number of Russian researchers have focused their studies on the memoirs of women in the Gulag. In her article «The Map of Memory of the Gulag: Problems and Gaps,» I.L. Shcherbakova addresses the challenges of working with personal sources, particularly regarding the dating of memoirs and the generational, social, and gender-specific characteristics of these memoirs [15; 115]. D.S. Shirokova and M.I. Miroshnichenko, drawing on the memoirs of Y.A. Ilzen-Titkova, sought to shed light on the main aspects of women's daily lives in the camps of the Gulag system and to identify the vital characteristics of the relationships between female prisoners [16]. V. Pocheptsov, drawing on materials from the memoirs of Zoya Dmitrievna Marchenko, convincingly demonstrated that victims of Soviet political repression in the 1930s–1950s were characterized by a specific type of social identity—an alternative prison identity that was simultaneously a general Soviet civic identity [17].

A study by D.D. Podlednov and E.D. Kazantseva [18] analyzes the therapeutic potential of Evfrosiniya Kersnovskaya's memoirs. The authors substantiate the thesis that the visualization of personal experience through the creation of illustrations became an effective mechanism for Kersnovskaya's psychological rehabilitation and overcoming the traumatic experience gained within the GULAG system.

Based on women's memoirs, E. Sidorenko conducted an anthropological analysis of the specific camp experience and survival strategies under isolation [19].

The central theme of B. Minaev's publication is the unique survival strategies employed by women in Stalinist labor camps, examined through the lens of specific museum artifacts and the personal stories of female prisoners [20]. The author explores how women maintained their human dignity amid violence, unsanitary conditions, and grueling physical labor.

In her work «Women's Experience of the Gulag in Soviet History, 1930s–1950s,» O.I. Chesnakova raises the question of the role of women's voices in preserving the historical memory of Stalin's camps. The author draws attention to the need to interpret women's experiences in the Gulag not only from a historical-political perspective but also from a philosophical one [21; 190].

Works on the history of the GULAG containing specific data on women in Kazakhstani camps.

A significant achievement by Russian historians is the publication of the seven-volume *History of the Stalinist Gulag*, funded by the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace. As part of a special issue, archival documents from the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) have been published. Of particular value to our research is the fourth volume of the series —«The Population of the Gulag: Numbers and Conditions of Detention» [22]. It should be noted that research into the history of the Gulag does not receive state support. According to A.L. Litvin, this situation is due to the fact that in contemporary Russian reality, there is a re-interpretation of the past, a return to the paradigm of «the glorious history of a strong state» through the rehabilitation and normalization of the role of I.V. Stalin» [23; 400–401, 408].

I.M. Garskova and Ye. M. Simonzhenkova, based on a study of women's memoirs available on the Sakharov Center's website, described a collective portrait of the women who authored these memoirs and conducted an analysis of the entire corpus of women's memoirs. They used a range of analytical methods and computer technologies to create a collective portrait of women's memoirs (a prosopographic database) and conduct its statistical analysis, as well as a content analysis of the full-text database of memoirs. The data revealed allowed historians to move from general indicators to a detailed study of women's unique

experiences under camp conditions. The authors argue that in the memoirs of women who survived the camps, the focus is not on human emotions—which were particularly painful to think about—but on the daily struggle for survival in inhuman conditions, which became routine in the camp [24].

Ye. M. Goretskaia [25], [26], [27] published a series of articles on the gender characteristics of the perception of the Gulag based on comparative content — an analysis of the memories of prisoners. The researcher also used memoirs of women in Kazakhstani camps in her work. Women's camp memoirs, interviews, and letters constitute a vital element of the penal system's legacy.

Ye. M. Goretskaya's dissertation is devoted to a formalized analysis of memoir texts and to identifying the lexical and semantic characteristics of how former male and female prisoners recount the dramatic episodes associated with their experiences within the Gulag system. Among the gender-specific features of the perception of camp life, the author notes women's tendency to narrate what is psychologically closer to them, as well as a higher frequency of the categories «Children» and «Family,» which are almost absent in men's memoirs [28]. Researchers from the Memorial Society note that there are many women among the authors of camp memoirs, even though far more men passed through the Gulag. However, the percentage of women who survived the camp and lived long enough to write memoirs is higher than that of men [29; 5]. Historians have refuted the notion of repression as a process directed exclusively at the party and intellectual elite, revealing gender asymmetry. Women were repressed less frequently; among them, there was a higher percentage of family members of «enemies of the people» and those prosecuted on social or religious grounds.

The primary historiographical innovation of the book by A. Artemieva and E. Rogacheva lies in the simultaneous recording of memories from both sides of the camp's barbed wire [30]. The authors publish testimonies from both prisoners and Gulag personnel, including guards, investigators, escort officers, and dog handlers. Based on these accounts, the book sheds light on the tragic fates of women in Karlag and ALZHIR.

In the work of M. Mikhanteva [31], handicraft (sewing, knitting, embroidery) is viewed as a significant adaptive mechanism that provided women in the GULAG system with psychological resilience and social integration. This creative activity helped women in Kazakhstani camps maintain their personal identity and allowed them to express their individuality.

Studies devoted to women in Kazakhstani correctional labor camps.

The traumatic experiences of the Kazakhstani Gulag are described in the memoirs of T.K. Okunevskaia [32], E.A. Mamaeva [33], R.M. Tamarina [34], G.A. Semenova [35] and other women. Thus, an extensive archive of oral historical sources was formed, representing a unique resource on recent history, consisting of interviews and audio recordings. Published archival and investigative files show that some women's camp memoirs align with the investigation records, while others sometimes contradict them. Most Russian researchers characterized the materials in the OGPU–NKVD investigative files as unreliable and falsified

In their study, A. Saltykov addresses the issue of women's dignity in Stalinist camps of Kazakhstan. Women who were subjected to unjustified repression typically recall their arrest, transport, prisons, and camps, as well as their release and rehabilitation; few of them dare to speak about the humiliations they had to endure [36].

Russian researchers (V.M. Grinev, V.V. Goretskii, G.N. Karsakova [37], N.S. Cherushev [38]) focused on the history of ALZIR (the Akmolinsk Camp for Wives of Traitors to the Motherland) as a gender-oriented component of the Soviet penitentiary system. In 2003, the International «Memorial» and the Heinrich Böll Foundation conducted joint research on the topic «The Fates of Women in the Stalin Era.» The initial result of this work was the publication: «Prisoners of 'ALZIR': A List of Female Prisoners in the Akmolinsk and Other Branches of the Karagandy Labor Camp.» It included brief biographical notes on 7,259 women in the Karagandy camp during the 1930s and 1940s [37].

Women were repressed on the same charges as men; they fell into the same categories of prisoners—with the exception of the «Great Terror» period, when a special category was created for them: «family members of 'traitors to the motherland.'» V.M. Grinev, V.V. Goretskii, G.N. Karsakova cite tragic statistics: «In less than a year and a half, according to incomplete data, more than 43,000 wives and children of 'spies' and 'saboteurs' were arrested across the country» [37; 22, 24].

These figures likely do not reflect the full scale of the repressions. It was established that about 6,500 women — ChSIR — served their sentences in Karlag in 1938–1946. More than 4,500 of them passed through ALZHIR, one of the largest Soviet women's camps [37; 153].

N.S. Cherushev's book contains a list of female prisoners at the Akmolinsk camp for the wives of «traitors to the motherland»—members of the families of high-ranking commanders and senior officers of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. It contains detailed records of their biographical data, the circumstances of their sentencing, the chronology of their stay in ALZIR, as well as information about the status of their husbands [38].

The publications of V. Selizarova [39] and E. Shmaraeva [40] serve a media popularization function, adapting the history of ALZHIR into the language of modern journalism for a broad audience.

The article by A. Kozlova [41] examines the methodological features and results of the implementation of two major research projects of Memorial in the genre of oral history. «Prisoners of Algeria» is a project to collect the memories of women who have served time in the Akmola camp of the wives of traitors to the Motherland. «Daughters of Algeria» — a project focused on the children of repressed women who grew up in orphanages or raised by relatives, their specific historical memory

Conclusions

In contemporary Russian historiography, the topic of women in labor camps is examined within the broader context of studies on the repressive policies of the USSR, gender history, and the history of everyday life. The study of the issue «Women in Kazakhstani Gulag Camps» in contemporary Russian historiography is evident in the research interests of scholars across various academic disciplines. The works of Russian scholars provide a detailed analysis of the legal framework that legitimized the creation of specialized camps for «family members of traitors to the Motherland.» The author of the article notes a shift in contemporary Russian historiography from the accumulation of facts regarding women's camp issues to a deep theoretical understanding of the «female narrative» in the history of repression, as well as the evolution of scholarly approaches from institutional studies of the penal system—which laid the statistical foundation—to the contemporary anthropological turn. Contemporary Russian researchers are studying «everyday life behind barbed wire,» where female prisoners have unique social and psychological experiences. Scholars are focusing on the daily lives of women in the camps, survival strategies, motherhood in the ITL, and the distinctive features of «female memory.» The study describes forms of physical and psychological pressure on female prisoners: separation from children, domestic instability, and forced labor in the camps. It has been demonstrated that the system used motherhood and the severing of family ties as tools of physical and psychological oppression.

The names and fates of the women of the Akmola camp of wives of traitors to the motherland (ALGERIA) and the Karaganda camp (Karlaga) have been established. Russian historiography has evolved from a political-legal description of repression to a socio-anthropological analysis. Contemporary Russian scholarship examines the specific nature of women's fates in the camps as a distinct, most tragic segment of Gulag history. The primary value of Russian scholars' contributions today lies in the development of a methodology for studying «women's memory.» The works of Russian historians help overcome stereotypes about the «insignificance» of women's participation in the history of repression by integrating the topic into the context of the history of the Soviet repressive system.

The analysis conducted suggests that Russian historiography still lacks a comprehensive study of the issue of «Women in the Kazakhstani Gulag Camps,» although certain aspects of it have already been addressed in individual works. This underscores the need for further research in this area. However, it is evident that the ideological and political climate in Russia has influenced and continues to influence the study of this issue.

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