

Refugee Haven or Dumping Ground?

A Comparative Study of Displaced Persons in Central Asia During World War II

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During World War II, Central Asia became a place for displaced people from across the Eastern Front including, Ukrainians and Russians. The Soviet Union sought to evacuate civilians and creatives from Ukraine and the western Oblasts to the rear in Central Asia. The forced deportations of people under Soviet rule also increased dramatically during this time, including ethnic Germans, Chechens, Crimean Tatars, and Poles. Polish and German Jews also fled to the Soviet Union and found their way to Central Asian cities as refugees. Evacuees, deportees, and refugees found themselves in every Soviet Socialist Republic in Central Asia. Displaced people could be found in Tashkent, Samarkand, Kokand, Ashgabat, and Alma-Ata.

Conservative estimates place over a million displaced people in Central Asia during World War II all facing different experiences and levels of support. This research paper seeks to understand the experiences and identify the similarities and differences of the groups that went into Central Asia. Each group faced distinct challenges based on their origins and status. Evacuees, deportees, and refugees alike faced harsh conditions even in the relative safety of the Central Asian rear.

There are three major categories of displaced people in Central Asia during World War II discussed in this paper: evacuees, deportees, and refugees. To simplify the basic differences the categories could be described as follows; evacuees were “displaced but not stateless”¹; deportees were forcibly displaced by their own state; while refugees could be described as displaced and stateless or away from state support. This paper will further investigate the complexities of these categories and compare their individual and common experiences.

¹ Manley, *The Perils of Displacement: The Soviet Evacuee between Refugee and Deportee*, (Contemporary European History, 2007) 1.

Manley estimates that 100,000 “Soviet citizens found a temporary refuge.”² According to estimates by Stronski, Tashkent went from approximately 600,000 residents before the war, to somewhere between 700,000 to 750,000 by 1942, and by 1944 the number was closing in on 1 million.³ Manley estimates that 16.5 million soviet civilians, 40% of the population of the USSR, were evacuated but, it is unclear if all those civilians went to Central Asia or how many of these people evacuated without permission.⁴ The number of civilian evacuees unauthorized and authorized is greatly debated. Similarly it is difficult to estimate the number of deportees, this will be discussed further later in this paper. Additionally, it is extremely difficult to properly estimate the populations of the Central Asia SSRs and the Western Oblasts prior to World War II because of the way the 1939 census was conducted. The 1939 census data was drastically inflated to match Stalin’s wishes and actually over counted certain ethnicities. For example, the census showed that Russians were the ethnic majority in Kazakhstan, however, Mark Tolts showed that Kazakhs were the ethnic majority in 1939.⁵ The unreliability of this census makes it extremely hard to estimate how many evacuees and refugees, let alone locals were in Central Asia during World War II.

Evacuees were Soviet citizens not crossing international borders and evacuating due to the direct threat of war. Evacuees were as Rebecca Manley referred to them in her article *The Perils of Displacement*, “displaced but not stateless.”⁶ Evacuees can be further broken up into two groups: ‘organized’ and ‘unorganized.’ The “organized” or authorized evacuees were ordered

² Manley, *To Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009) 2.

³ Stronski, *Tashkent*, 96.

⁴ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 1.

⁵ Tolts, “Ethnic composition of Kazakhstan on the eve of the Second World War.” (Central Asian Survey, 2006.)

⁶ Manley, *The Perils of Displacement*, 498-499.

to evacuate by the Soviet government and were assigned destination cities. The “unorganized” or unauthorized evacuees chose to evacuate on their own and left without permission from the Soviet government. The unauthorized evacuees did not officially have permission to use evacuation trains or enter destination cities. The majority of both authorized and unauthorized evacuees were Russians and Ukrainians from the western Oblasts. The majority of authorized evacuees were from cities like Leningrad, Stalingrad, and Kiev.

There is plenty of evidence to show a hierarchy within the authorized evacuees. Many of these privileged and authorized evacuees were actually evacuated as a group with their industry. The hierarchies on display during evacuation are closely analyzed by both Manley and Stronski. Manley noted how historian Militsa Nechkina later recalled a conversation on a train where a term that fits the privileged evacuees quite nicely appears. Nechkina recalled how a filmmaker lamented about being a refugee and a fellow filmmaker responded saying they were “...an honorary evacuee....”⁷

This concept of a special or honored evacuee is quite fitting for the party members, writers, filmmakers, other official creatives and intellectuals, and factory workers evacuated with defense factories. The entirety of the Russian film industry was moved into Central Asia, and the writer’s union of Tashkent were taken over by evacuees from the western oblasts.⁸ Several notables are included in this group of honored evacuees including Anna Akhmatova, Alexie Tolstoi, and Dmitri Shostakovich, the composer of the Leningrad symphony.⁹ These elites often

⁷ Manley, *The Perils of Displacement*, 508.

⁸ Charles Shaw, “Making Ivan-Uzbek: War, Friendship of the Peoples, and the Creation of Soviet Uzbekistan 1941–1945,” (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2015), 113.

⁹ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 6. Shoshana Keller, *Russia and Central Asia: Coexistence, Conquest, Convergence*, (University of Toronto Press. Kindle Edition.) 206.

had easier access to official and often better quality housing and often had moved with their industries and never lost their jobs.

Access within the Soviet Union to government resources was highly dependent on permanent residence. For unauthorized evacuees who didn't officially have permission to evacuate this dependence was even more important. For those without permission, or even those with permission who arrived at different cities than they were supposed to, access to state resources and official networks disappeared. The biggest challenges for both unauthorized and authorized evacuees stemmed from a lack of support networks as pointed out by both Manley and Stronski. Both authors describe how the problems of food access, housing, and job connections were all dependent not just on support from the state but the support of extended family and community networks.¹⁰

When researching, these networks had seemed unimportant, however, Isabelle Ohayon demonstrated how similar family and community networks were the key to maintaining religious and cultural traditions from the 1960s to 1980s. Ohayon discussed how these networks were geared towards cultural preservation rather than procuring food or other necessities.¹¹ However, if similar networks were key to survival in early socialism then the true danger in evacuation was the removal of these support networks as discussed by both Manley and Stronski.

While evacuees can be described as the simplest and most straightforward of the categories, that being said complexities abound. Overcrowding sometimes lead both authorized and unauthorized evacuees were forced to remain in defined areas, this was controversial among

¹⁰ Stronski, *Tashkent*, 124. Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 149.

¹¹ Isabelle Ohayon, "Ritual Economy Under Late Socialism" (Class Guest Lecture, Havighurst Colloquium: Central Asia under Khans, Tsars, and Commissars, Miami University, October 19, 2020).

authorities as this was standard deportee treatment. Even more controversial was the expulsion of authorized evacuees from the overcrowded cities when they could not secure jobs.¹² Even privileged evacuees didn't always get provided for in the ways they expected.

Deportees are fundamentally different from evacuees and arguably the most vulnerable group discussed in this paper. Technically they cannot be called stateless but they were forcibly moved by their own state. Many if not all deportees were Soviet citizens they were often from recently annexed Soviet territory, such as Poland, long disputed or 'unstable' border regions, or from regions recently retaken from the Germans, like Crimea. This makes this particular category difficult in that it is extremely wide, complex, and most of the movement discussed takes place later in the war. Most of the deportees were actively deported to Central Asia after the German Army was removed from their homelands. Many deportees were labeled as traitors or Nazi collaborators and thought of as "Fifth Columnists."

Deportees were a wide-ranging and complex group. Chechens, Ingush, Meskhetian Turks, Koreans, Poles, ethnic Germans and Finns, Crimean Tatars, and Prisoners of War all fall into the category of deportees. Since it is difficult to look at the overall experience of all of these deported groups, as each had their own experiences, this paper will focus more strongly on the experiences of Chechen and Ingush deportees. It is important to note the very nature of mass deportation destroys traditional support networks even more so than evacuation does.

When looking at the deportee category it is important to understand that a policy of removing and deporting undesirable populations from their homelands deeper into the Soviet Union was a policy started much earlier in the 1930s and had a wide range of victims. Nicolas

¹² Manley, "Survival on the Tashkent Front", in *To Tashkent Station*, 148-195.

Werth gives a concise explanation for the thought process of the Soviet Union in moving these ‘problematic’ groups and why they were deemed problematic in his article “The ‘Chechen Problem’ ”. The main features of these ‘problematic’ groups were that they had been seen as problematic by Imperial Russia; were from borderlands that were extremely diverse linguistically, religiously, and ethnically; were connected to large ethnic communities, or previously established nation-states, such as Poland and Estonia; and were viewed as not conforming to Soviet ideas or culture.¹³ As a result of being deemed problematic these groups were often targeted for forced resettlement or deportations, and actions like Operation Lentil that can only be described as ethnic cleansing.

Operation Lentil was the code name for the NKVD operation, under the direction of Lavrentiyy Beria, specifically designed to remove “undesirable” people from the Caucasus to Central Asia. The NKVD, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, was general law enforcement, secret police, the precursor to the KGB rolled into one. The NKVD was also generally responsible for ethnic cleansing operations and official evacuations.

Reading Beria’s reports to Stalin it would seem like Chechens were traitors by their very nature and were constant rebels. In one report Beria lists off how many Chechens and Ingush ‘deserted’ the Red Army and claims, “more than 200 people evade military service.”¹⁴ Stalin uses similar language in Decree No. 5859ss declared on May 11, 1944, when discussing Crimean Tatars. The decree starts with a list of supposed crimes committed including desertion, “siding with the enemy,” joining volunteer German units to fight the Red Army, and “savage reprisals

¹³ Nicolas Werth, “The ‘Chechen Problem’: Handling an Awkward Legacy, 1918–1958.” (Contemporary European History 2006), 348-349.

¹⁴ Lavrentiyy Beria, “Chechen Traitors,” *From the Report of the NKVD Department of Special Settlements. September 5, 1944.* trans. James von Geldren. 2015. Seventeen Moments in Soviet History.

against Soviet partisans”. The most heinous accusation would be the claim that the Crimean Tatars helped the Nazis enslave and exterminate Soviet people. The punishment for such crimes was harsh, “All Tatars are to be banished from the territory of the Crimea and resettled permanently as special settlers in the regions of the Uzbek SSR.” The decree also put the NKVD and Beria in charge of the ‘resettlement.’¹⁵ Note beyond the claims of Beria and Stalin there is little, if any, evidence that Chechens, Ingush, or Crimean Tatars committed any of these supposed crimes.

According to Beria’s report to Stalin in July of 1944, the NKVD had deported 602,193 people from the Northern Caucasus to the Kazakh and Kirghiz SSRs. Of those 496,460 were Chechens and Ingush. Notably, this number is higher than the estimated number of Chechens and Ingush that arrived in Central Asia. Approximately only 480,000 were actually deported and 80,000 of those individuals never arrived in Central Asia. The missing 80,000 and additional 16,000 that Beria counts most likely died in transit or were murdered by the NKVD.¹⁶ In another report to the State Defense Committee in March of 1944, Beria notes that “650 thousand Chechens, Ingush, Kalmyks and Karachai were relocated to the eastern regions of the USSR.”¹⁷ These numbers may not give a full picture of the number of individuals deported.

Isaac Scarborough cites the number of over 2 million in total across all border areas and includes those sent to Siberia.¹⁸ It is unclear if Polish deportees, later classified as refugees, are

¹⁵ Iosef Stalin, “Decree No. 5859ss,” *On the Crimean Tatars. May 11, 1944*. Seventeen Moments in Soviet History.

¹⁶ Isaac Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence: Chechen and Ingush Deportees and the Development of State–citizen Relations in Late-Stalinist Kazakhstan (1944–1953).” (Central Asian Survey 2017), 96. Jeffrey Burds, “The Soviet War against ‘Fifth Columnists’: The Case of Chechnya, 1942–4.” (Journal of Contemporary History, 2007), 305.

¹⁷ Lavrentiyi Beria, “Beria Reports to the Defense Committee” *To the State Defense Committee. March 7, 1944*. trans. James von Geldern. Seventeen Moments in Soviet History.

¹⁸ Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence”, 96.

included in this number. Additionally, James von Geldern estimates one million people were deported from the Caucasus and Crimea into Central Asia.¹⁹ I suspect that both numbers may be too low. If both numbers are accepted, then that means there was only one million Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, ethnic German, and Finnish deportees sent to Siberia. This number also feels like an underestimate and does not account for Korean deportees or other groups of deportees going to Central Asia or Siberia. Just as it is difficult to estimate the true number of evacuees it is extremely difficult to estimate correctly the number of deportees.

15% of Chechen and Ingush deportees died within a year of resettlement.²⁰ This death rate can be attributed to multiple factors including starvation, disease, and even violence from locals.

Deportees were often dumped in the countryside away from major cities. Deportees were forced to remain in defined areas known as ‘komendatura’ defined by Scarborough as “...an artificially defined space surrounding a kolkhoz or other place of work, which the deportees were forbidden to leave.”²¹ Often deportees were forced into hard labor despite former jobs and even party positions or heads of kolkhoz in their homelands. One of the deportation reports stated, “428,948 people were moved into kolkhozes [collective farms], 67,403 into sovkhozes [state-owned farm].” The report also ominously stated that “429 Special NKVD Commendants have been created to watch over the living regime of the special settlers, to prevent fugitives from fleeing....”²²

¹⁹ James von Geldern, “Deportation of Minorities”, *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*.

²⁰ Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence” 96.

²¹ Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence” 97.

²² Lavrentiyi Beria, “Beria Report on the Deportation” *From the Report of L. B. Beria to I. V. Stalin, V. M. Molotov and A. I. Malenkov. July 1944.* trans. James von Geldern. *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*.

Dependent on the state in most cases, help from the state was unreliable or non-existent for deportees. Chechens only started receiving reliable aid after 1948.²³ Many Chechen deportees had trouble dealing with the kolkhoz they were assigned to, often not receiving aid, food, salaries, or even building supplies as they were supposed to. There are several instances of kolkhoz chairmen not wanting them or to provide for them.²⁴ That being said the deportee were a wide ranging group with huge variation in experience, an internee from Vienna that was held in Kazakhstan, maintained that they were always feed, but this could be an outlying case.²⁵

Some deportees faced violence upon arrival in Central Asia from locals. There were instances of local Uzbeks stoning recently arrived deportees, including children, for being ‘Nazi Collaborators’ and traitors. Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan faced beatings murder at the hands of local Uzbeks.²⁶ This is ironic as Uzbekistan is known for being accepting to outsiders and gained this reputation by accepting evacuees and adopting war orphans during World War II. The Shamakhmudov family in Tashkent became a war tale told throughout the Soviet Union for adopting 14 orphans of war.²⁷ Additionally, the Crimean Tatars and Uzbek are Muslim groups, meaning that the idea of being a traitor to the Soviet Union usurped any potential connection via a shared religion.

The last main category of displaced people is refugees. Refugees were effectively stateless or far away from the support of their state or nation. These individuals were not Soviet citizens, crossed international borders, and cannot be easily described as being forcibly moved.

²³ Werth, “The ‘Chechen Problem’”. Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence” 101.

²⁴ Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence” 98.

²⁵ Atina Grossmann, “Jewish Refugees in Soviet Central Asia, Iran, and India.” *Shelter from the Holocaust :Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union.* 186.

²⁶ Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930–1966*, 132-133.

²⁷ Keller, *Russia and Central Asia: Coexistence, Conquest, Convergence*, 206.

Many refugees were Polish Jews, German Jews, or even Christian Poles that fled the threat of the Nazis.

Notably, a large portion of the Polish refugees that ended up in Central Asia had been deported by the USSR out of Poland. This complicated group ceased to be deportees as defined by this paper following the July 1941 Sikorski-Maiskii Agreement that created a formal relationship between the USSR and the Polish government-in-exile.²⁸ The agreement led to the release of Polish deportees and prisoners of the Soviet state, and allowed for their movement within the USSR and to leave the USSR.

The refugees were particularly vulnerable having no support networks with the Soviet government, and being deep inside a foreign country. After the Sikorski-Maiskii Agreement aid from the Polish government-in-exile could be directed towards Polish refugees. This support lasted from at least 1941 to 1942 and was largely funded by the British government, and private British and North American donations. Some Jewish refugees received aid from American Jewish Organizations like the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.²⁹ However not every refugee had effective support networks with far away governments and the aid from the Polish Government in exile did not exist before 1941. Manley mentions an incident when Polish refugees were labeled as “deportees” by Soviet authorities and were denied aid.³⁰ It is not beyond belief that this was an isolated occurrence.

Without effective official support networks and no community networks, there were several cases of homelessness in cities like Tashkent. Manley notes several accounts of refugees

²⁸ Wojciech Stanisławski, “The Sikorski-Maisky Agreement: A Tactical Success but a Strategic Defeat,” Trans. Alicja Rose & Jessica Sirotnin. Polish History, Muzeum Historii Polski, Warsaw. 2020.

²⁹ Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 186.

³⁰ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 191.

begging on the streets in horrible conditions.³¹ Additionally, refugees didn't have official standing within the Soviet Union as they were not citizens. This meant refugees were subject to arrest by the Soviet government. Manley describes the refugees who stayed in Tashkent as "... liv[ing] the life of illegals..."³²

Because of this precarious situation and illegal status, many refugees in cities were rounded up and were forced into labor on collective farms. Jack Pomerantz, a Jewish Polish refugee, used this common practice to escape the NKVD when they suspected him of "capitalist activities."³³ However, he later found himself among a group of other Polish refugees being forced onto labor camps in Siberia.³⁴

Danuta Batorska was originally deported from Poland to the Urals in 1940 and was able to travel to Kazakhstan after the Sikorski-Maisky Agreement. By the fall of 1941, her family was issued papers allowing free travel within the USSR and to leave the USSR.³⁵ This makes Batorska and many other Polish deportees turned refugees difficult to categorize. By the time her family was in a Central Asian kolkhoz her family was officially refugees and were allowed to leave the immediate area of the kolkhoz. Whereas deportees were confined to 'komendatura' as previously explained. Batorska's family was able to leave the USSR in 1942, evacuating into Persia where they were able to receive British, Polish, and American Red Cross aid.³⁶

³¹ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 191-192.

³² Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 192.

³³ Jack Pomerantz, Lyric Wallwork Winik, "Taškent" in *Run East: Flight from the Holocaust.*, 59-60.

³⁴ Pomerantz, Winik, *Run East*, 63-66.

³⁵ Danuta Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, *The Polish Review*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2018), 59.

³⁶ Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, 61.

Multiple authors point to the fiction book *Tashkent, City of Bread*, originally published in 1923, as a reason so many evacuees and refugees attempted to enter Tashkent.³⁷ A single book cannot be completely blamed for the massive overcrowding, resulting epidemics, and general humanitarian disaster that resulted within the city. Other factors probably contributed more, like the fact most official evacuees were from urban environments³⁸ and didn't plan to or relish the idea of evacuating to unknown rural areas. Similarly, if a refugee expects to have to move again or plans to flee to other areas, or in the case of many Polish refugees post-July 1941 flee to other countries, why would you leave the city and go further away from a train station?

Whatever reason sent displaced people into Tashkent and other Central Asia cities; it did not turn out to be the perfect evacuation zone imagined by many evacuees. Unauthorized evacuees and refugees alike found themselves stuck at train stations in Tashkent and other cities unable to enter the city itself.³⁹ Pomerantz observed this scene while at the Tashkent train station, "The gray concrete train station was packed, but it was nothing compared with the streets outside. There, stretching before me, in the hot sun was an enormous human camp." Pomerantz recalled the lice and open untreated sores of the sick laying on the ground among the hundreds of people on the street.⁴⁰

Those unauthorized evacuees and some refugees who did manage to get into Tashkent might be subject to sudden evictions from the city to collective farms later due to the rapidly changing and confusing regulations. At one point it was simply about papers. To get papers to stay you had to have a job and to have a job you had to have a residence. Then as cities became

³⁷ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 141. Grossmann, *Shelter from the Holocaust*, 186.

³⁸ Manley, "Evacuations in Practice", in *To Tashkent Station*, 48-76.

³⁹ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 150.

⁴⁰ Pomerantz, Winik, *Run East*, 55.

more crowded you had to have relatives in the city with a residence.⁴¹ Pomerantz recalled how “The local police and NKVD would conduct sweeps, trying to disperse the human mass...” these sweeps undoubtedly were evictions.⁴² These sudden evictions were common in Tashkent after November 1941.⁴³

With the massive influx of people into Tashkent alone, attempts to remedy housing concerns had varying success. People were forced to live in any structure they could including mud structures, storage sheds, outdoor tents, schools, factories, stables, and even bathrooms.⁴⁴ Locals faced the possibility of having to share homes with evacuees or being forced out of their homes to accommodate evacuees. Some locals were even forcibly removed to the country.⁴⁵ Even with these measures homelessness was still an extreme issue contributing to other problems.

An almost immediate result of overcrowding was disease outbreaks. Many evacuees arrived in evacuation cities already sick from horrendous traveling situations that often involved sleeping at overcrowded train stations while waiting for trains or entry into cities. Typhus, dysentery, and other diseases associated with human misery ran rampant. Overcrowding in the cities meant that disease was not exclusive to refugees and evacuees. Stronski details a local Tashkent family that suffered from pellagra, a horrendous disease common in Gulags and across Tashkent during the war, that couldn't receive aid from any authorities. As a result, two children and a parent died.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 151-158.

⁴² Pomenrantz, Winik, *Run East*, 55.

⁴³ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 151.

⁴⁴ Stronski, *Tashkent*, 73, 129.

⁴⁵ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 173.

⁴⁶ Stronski, *Tashkent*, 141.

Disease outbreaks were not contained to the cities. Danuta Batorska described in her firsthand account, "Forgotten Childhood" how her sister sick with dysentery, managed to survive without medical care in a kolkhoz in Kazakhstan. However, not everyone in her group of Polish deportees turned refugees were so lucky. "Nearly all of us were ill, mainly with dysentery and typhus... a large number of us, adults and children died from either starvation or disease."⁴⁷

Batorska further recalled life at a kolkhoz in Kazakhstan describing the "... commune with a settlement or a village, distant from towns."⁴⁸ and the mud one-room hut her family lived in. She further recalled:

"... our only source of water for either cooking, washing, or bathing, was a muddy crater-like depression, from which animals also drank.... There were no berries to be collected nor flower petals. Yet, we the children searched for the roots of unknown plants, careful not to disturb the numerous, most venomous snakes."⁴⁹

While Batorska was a deportee turned refugee, her account of life in a kolkhoz helps conceptualize the experiences of displaced people that found themselves in Central Asian kolkhoz and illustrates the common challenges that displaced people faced.

With conditions like this in both cities and the country kolkhoz, it's little wonder death was just as rampant disease. Inside Tashkent, death was so common both the European and Jewish cemeteries had to be expanded.⁵⁰ Death rates among deportees, in particular, was

⁴⁷ Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, 60.

⁴⁸ Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, 59.

⁴⁹ Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, 60.

⁵⁰ Manley, *To Tashkent Station*, 193.

extremely high 15% of the Chechen and Ingush deportees died in the first year of resettlement.⁵¹ Batorska simply said, “Few managed to leave the USSR.” about the deaths of Polish deportees and refugees she knew.⁵²

Further research into this topic will undoubtedly continue to reveal paradoxes and complexities not discussed in this paper. The inability of the author to read or understand Ukrainian, Turkish, Russian, and other Central Asian languages limits what primary and secondary sources were discussed and analyzed in this paper. Additionally, the author is aware of a few French language secondary sources but does not possess enough command over the French-language to fully utilize those sources. The author is also aware that she did not discuss the prisoners of war brought into and held in Central Asia during World War II as understanding the civilian situation was the primary goal of this paper. The author also chose to focus on understanding the distinct differences of largely adult groups and acknowledges the experiences of unaccompanied children are drastically different in many cases from the adults.

The experiences of evacuees, deportees, and refugees in Central Asia varied drastically but shared several common hazards, including housing concerns, job access, disease, starvation, and in many cases, death. Each category of displaced persons encountered specific obstacles to survival and had varying government support or hindrance. The Soviet Union was ill-prepared and didn't have the support structures necessary to move this many people. Further, they exasperated these problems with deportations and poor handling of refugees. Ultimately, during World War II, Central Asia became an evacuee sanctuary, a refugee containment area, and a dumping ground for deportees.

⁵¹ Scarborough, “An Unwanted Dependence” 96.

⁵² Batorska, *Forgotten Childhood*, 60.

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