

The Great Terror in Soviet Georgia (1937–1938). Repressions against Poles in the documents of the Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

On July 30, 1937, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR, Nikolai Yezhov, passed order No. 00447, 'on the repressions of former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements' that started the Great Terror in the USSR. Subsequently, subsequent orders from Yezhov were issued, ordering the repression of individual nationalities, including Poles. On August 11, 1937, Yezhov passed the order No. 00485, which ordered the discovery and liquidation of local organizations of the Polish Military Organization as well as of subversive, espionage and insurgent cadres of Polish intelligence. Its ultimate goal, however, was the ruthless, through extermination, elimination of Poles from all spheres of life in the Soviet Union. The extensive operation, referred to in the literature as the "Polish operation", began on August 20, 1937, and was completed at the end of 1938. It covered Poles throughout Soviet Russia. According to estimated data, about 135,000–140,000 (this was the number that could be established by 2014) people of Polish nationality were murdered during the operation. Scientific research into the course of the operation and the scale of repression is ongoing.

Repressions against people of Polish nationality as part of the Great Terror and the "Polish operation" also took place in Georgia. Some documents from its course have been preserved in the Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (in December 1991, during the civil war, the building of the former NKVD/KGB was burnt down in Tbilisi and about 70% of the archives were destroyed). Documents preserved in the Archives of the Ministry of the Interior of Georgia concerning the repression of Poles during the years of the Great Terror can be divided into four groups: investigative cases, protocols of the *troikas* and protocols of the *dvoikas*, orders to execute the death sentence and acts of executing the death sentence.

It was found that in the discovered *troikas* protocols, 121(100%) people of Polish nationality were repressed under order No. 00447, of which: 82(67.5%) were shot (including 8 women), 38(31.4%) were sentenced to prison or *ITL* and 1 (0.8%) person was released.

According to the nationality operation criteria (order No. 00485), in total 99 people were repressed in the protocols of the *dvoikas* and the *special troikas*, of which 53 (53.5%) were shot (including 2 women), 41 (41.4%) were sentenced to imprisonment or *ITL* and the fate of 5 (5.1%) people could not be determined.

In total, as part of the Great Terror in the GSSR, documents confirmed the shooting of 141 people of Polish nationality and imprisonment or *ITL* for 90 people. In addition, out of the 16 cases that have survived, 40 people whose fate has not been determined have been listed. Considering the fact that a large part of the archival resources was burned down and that in the case of many people it

is impossible to establish their nationality, it should be assumed that these are not final numbers and the issue requires further research.