

From the Nazi Captivity to the Soviet Filtration Camps: To What Extent Does the Personal History of Lavrentiy Kalichava Illustrate the Broader Patterns of Double Persecution and the Erasure of Memory in the Soviet Postwar Military and Political System?

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Abstract:

In order to investigate the phenomena of "double persecution" in the USSR after World War II, this article looks at the life of Lavrentiy Kalichava, a Georgian Soviet soldier and Buchenwald survivor. Utilizing archival documents and intergenerational oral testimonies, the paper examines Kalichava's case to illustrate how Soviet filtration camps criminalized survival, categorizing returning prisoners of war as traitors instead of heroes. Utilizing theories of communal memory (Halbwachs), trauma (Caruth), and disciplinary power (Foucault), the article contends that Soviet authority obliterated alternative war narratives via institutionalized distrust and suppression. Although discussions continue over whether filtration constituted selective or blanket repression, Kalichava's experience exemplifies the systematic nature of postwar punishment and memory regulation. The paper enhances the historiography of Soviet military justice and trauma studies by emphasizing how personal narratives, particularly those influenced by Nazi and Soviet violence, provide essential understanding of the dynamics of repression, erasure, and the enduring impact of authoritarian governance.

Keywords:

Soviet prisoners of war, Stalinism, filtration camps, microhistory, Soviet Georgia, Buchenwald, repression, memory politics.