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FAMILIES SPEAK: THE SURVIVAL OF POLISH DEPORTEES AND SOVIET EVACUEES IN KAZAKHSTAN DURING THE WORLD WAR II

The years of the Second World War saw mass population displacement and resettlement in the USSR. During the war, Kazakhstan became home to hundreds of Polish citizens who were forcibly deported from eastern Poland and to millions of Soviet civilians who were evacuated from the western part of the USSR in the wake of Nazi invasion. To survive under harsh living conditions in the sites of resettlement, Soviet evacuees and Polish deportees[1] deployed family and personal connections as a way to access resources, as well as a channel through which to demand state services from local authorities. In tandem with the evacuees' and deportees' reliance on family and personal networks, the Soviet state adopted a practice of deporting Polish citizens and evacuating Soviet citizens not primarily as individuals but instead as members of family and personal networks, including the families of servicemen, military officers and party members.

This paper will explore how family and personal networks complemented or challenged state institutions in shaping the experiences and survival strategies of evacuated populations and Polish deportees in Kazakhstan during the Second World War. Kazakhstan was one of the major recipients of deportees and evacuees during the war. By comparing state policies towards Polish deportees and Soviet evacuees in this republic, I will argue that from the lens of the state

[1] Polish deportees were amnestied in April 1941, and thereafter might be called "refugees." However, this paper will refer to them as "deportees" even after the amnesty in order to differentiate them from Soviet evacuees who could be also depicted as refugees in some cases. The term "refugee" will be used to indicate both Soviet evacuees and Polish deportees.

identities were not individuated; the Soviet regime identified people according to their kinship or professional affiliations and thus tended to deport or evacuate individuals as groups, according to their familial or other bonds. In addition, by comparing the experiences of Polish deportees and Soviet evacuees, this paper will demonstrate the similarities in the operations of deportation and evacuation and explore how the relationship between individuals (citizens and non-citizens) and the state was determined by their familial and personal networks. While much of the scholarship on Soviet modernization focuses on individual relations with the state and on the logic of bureaucracies and their failings, new scholarship points to the importance of family and personal networks, how they were shaped by and interacted with these bureaucracies, and how they also framed people's strategies for survival, with relative success. This paper pursues this same vein of inquiry but goes further in offering a comparative study of Polish (deportee) and Soviet (evacuee) experiences, asking questions about the degree to which experiences differed and, pursuant to this, some of the motives for and logic behind the Soviet state's decision to embrace the family as an institution with which to partner in organizing mass population movements. Even more, it offers a third dimension of comparison by discussing Jewish refugees—who might be Polish or Soviet and whose experience as an ethnic group thus breached any potential divide between these two categories. The experience of war at the home front not only pushed individuals to rely on their family and personal networks to survive, but it also highlighted their alternative (religious and ethnic) identities under changing socio-economic conditions, as I will illustrate in the case of Polish and Soviet Jews. Presenting a comparative analysis of the experiences of evacuees and deportees through utilizing state reports and personal testimonies, this paper will provide insights into the emergence of new categories of belonging and the redefinition of existing identities in a period of uncertainty.

Historiography:

Scholarship on population displacement in the Second World War has proliferated rapidly, driven by new scholarly interest in migration, ethnicity, anti-Semitism, and memories of the Second World War—a matter of contention throughout East Central Europe. The first full-scale account of evacuation on the home front came with Rebecca Manley's *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* in 2009, which explored the ways by which evacuation was conducted by the Soviet officials and the experiences of evacuees during the time of displacement.[2] Manley argues that operation of evacuation provides insight into the nature of Soviet state, hierarchies within the Soviet system, and the place of the individual within the Soviet society. In the last decade the topic has continued to attract the attention of other Western scholars with the publication of new articles or dissertations focusing on encounters between local populations and evacuees in the home front, anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and hierarchies within the Soviet bureaucracy by examining the relations between central and local authorities.[3]

In their recent study, *Broad is My Native Land: Repertories and Regimes of the Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century*, Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch provide a new perspective on the operations of evacuation.[4] Framed in terms of repertoires and regimes of migration, they highlight family-state interactions in the process of evacuation. They argue that

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[2] Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2009)

[3] Kiril Feferman, "A Soviet Humanitarian Action? Center, Periphery and the Evacuation of Refugees to the North Caucasus, 1941-1942," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61 no.5 (2009): 813-831; Larry Holmes, *War, Evacuation, and the Exercise of Power: the Center, Periphery and Kirov's Pedagogical Institute*, 1941-1952 (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012); Natalie Belsky, "Encounters in the East: Evacuees in the Soviet Hinterland During the Second World War" (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2014)

[4] Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch, *Broad is My Native Land: Repertories and Regimes of Migration in Russia's Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

both Soviet authorities and evacuees depended on the institution of family to facilitate survival in the time of displacement. In their study Siegelbaum and Moch provide insight into the logic behind the state's embrace of the family as an institution through which to manage migration, particularly the evacuation of Soviet citizens; however, they do not explain why the state opted to deploy family in this way in various types of population movements, including forced deportations. This paper will pursue the same vein of inquiry but goes further in exploring the similarities between the operations of deportation and evacuation and identifying the state's motives behind relying on family as an institution in mass population movements.

Despite a general interest in evacuees, the experiences of evacuees or deportees in the sites of resettlement has long been ignored, as have their comparative dimensions. In 1994, Keith Swope presented the first study in English of the deportation of Poles with his book, *Deportation and Exile: Poles in the Soviet Union, 1939-48*.[5] Swope argues that there was a continuity between the exile policies of Tsarist regime that targeted the ethnic Poles and those of the Stalinist regime during WWII. Shifting the scholarly focus from the forced migration of Soviet citizens to foreign nationals, Swope explores the operation of deportation and the experiences of Polish deportees on Soviet soil during and after the war. Another important contribution to the scholarship came with Katherine Jolluck's *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union During the World War II*. In this study, Jolluck examines the experiences of Polish women who were deported solely as a consequence of their kinship ties to persons arrested by Soviet authorities. Jolluck argues that Polish female deportees who lost their families and homes tried to preserve their traditional female and Polish identities to survive under the Soviet regime.[6] In the

[5] Keith Sword, *Deportation and Exile: Poles in the Soviet Union, 1939-48* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1994).
[6] Katherine L. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during the World War II* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg, 2002).

last two decades more monographs have been published, and the experiences of Polish Jews have begun to take on greater attention insofar as they had been perceived the survivors of the Holocaust.[7] In a recent edited book, *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, scholars have explored the experiences of Polish Jewish deportees and refugees in the Soviet soil insofar as they focus on border crossing, anti-Semitism, the numbers of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust in the USSR, and encounters between the Polish and Soviet Jewry.[8] However, even though Soviet evacuees and Polish deportees lived in the same or similar geographies and shared many similar experiences and difficulties under the Soviet regime, most of the scholars tend to examine their experiences separately.[9] This paper will analyze the experiences of Polish deportees and Soviet evacuees and their relationship with Soviet authorities to explore the role of the institution of the family in the mass population movements.

Historical Context:

Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the territory of Poland was partitioned between two occupying powers, Germany and the USSR, from September 17, 1939 until June 22, 1941. In this period, the Soviet Union imposed drastic political, economic, and demographic changes on the occupied territories, as it forcibly deported hundreds of Polish citizens into the eastern or northern parts of the USSR. There is no consensus among scholars on the number of those who were deported to the Soviet Union. The traditional estimations are that 980,000 people were

[7] Albert Kaganovitch, “Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities during the World War II,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 30, no.2 (2010): 85-121; Vadim Dubson, “Toward a Central Database of Evacuated Soviet Jews’ Names, for the Study of the Holocaust in the Occupied Soviet Territories,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26, no: 1 (2012).
[8] Atina Grossmann, Mark Edele, and Sheila Fitzpatrick ed. *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017).
[9] An exception to this: Natalie Belsky, “Fraught Friendsahips: Soviet Jews and Polish Jews on the Soviet Home Front” in *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, ed. Mark Edele et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017).

deported, while revisionists argue that it was around 300,000 people.[10] Those were listed as "socially undesirable" and "anti-Soviet" elements by the NKVD, and they included Polish military personals, university processors, government officials, wealthier peasants, merchants, the whole forestry service, craftsmen, and certain categories of people.

Family bonds played an important role even in the initial phase of the deportations from eastern Poland. In most cases families were deported as a whole.[11] For the Soviet Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) the families of these targeted groups were responsible for the crimes of their family members and needed to be deported. [12] This is part of the Russian tradition of *krugovai poruka* which is often translated as "joint responsibility" attaching collective responsibility to a group for a crime of individual members.[13] Similar to the previous deportation operations of Soviet regime, Polish citizens were deported through their kinship ties as a crime of one individual attached to all members of the family.

There were four main waves of deportation in which Polish citizens were either deported because of kinship relations or professional affiliation. The first one took place in February 1940, and the largest group of victims were Polish military colonists (*osadniks*) and their families, as well as forestry workers.[14] It also included civil servants, local government officials, police officers, and farmers. The NKVD deported this first group as special settlers, and they were sent to the remote northern and central regions of the Soviet Union and put to work in natural

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[10] Bronislaw Kusnierz, *Stalin and the Poles*: *An Indictment of the Soviet Leaders* (London: Hollis&Carter, 1949), 80; Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, 10-13; for traditional estimations see Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, 26.
[11] Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, 13.
[12] Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, 15.
[13] Alena Ledeneva, "The Geneology of Krugovaya Paruka: Forced Trust as a Feature of Russian Political Culture," in Ivana Markova, ed., *Trust and Democratic Transition in Post-Communist Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 85-108. Be consistent in using Chicago style
[14] Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, 15. Forestry workers were perceived as a threat by Soviet authorities because of their knowledge of the terrain and navigation which might help a possible underground resistance. See Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*, 294.

resource extraction industries, such as mining, forestry, and agriculture without freedom to leave the site to which they were deported.[15] The second major deportation took place in April 1940, removing the families of those who were previously arrested (by Soviet authorities), taken prisoners of war, or who had previously escaped capture. In this group there was a preponderance of mothers and children. They were sent to an area of northern Kazakhstan bordered on the west by the Urals and on the east by the Altai mountains. They were employed in *sovkhozes* (state farms) and *kolkhozes* (collective farms) in rural districts. The third major deportation occurred at the end of June 1940. This group consisted of the refugees (*bezhenty*) who fled the western and central parts of Poland in the wake of Nazi invasion. This group escaping to the eastern part of Poland had a high proportion of Jews and sought transfer to the German zone.[16] Those who could not be repatriated and remained in eastern Poland were deported as entire families because they were seen as "anti-Soviet" elements. In their new destinations, the climate was often harsh, the living conditions were primitive and unfamiliar, and their work required hard physical labor. The final deportation took place June in 1941 and removed similarly targeted groups from the Baltic states incorporated into the USSR in 1939-40.[17]

Family ties determined the destiny of many female deportees. In her study of Polish women in exile in the Soviet Union, Katherine R. Jolluck points out that nearly half (46 percent)

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[15] Keith Sword, "The Welfare of Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1941-43; *Relief Supplies and their Distribution in Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR 1939-1946"* ed. Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 145.

[16] After the partition of Poland between Germany and Soviet Union, the respective governments made an agreement in December 1939 to repatriate refugees from their occupied territories. The German repatriation mission began to register those who were willing to be repatriated to the German zone. There were a high number of Jews who wanted to go back to Germany, but German authorities could not repatriate all applicants. After their operation ended in June, drawing on these applications, the NKVD decided to deport the refugees who sought to register for transfer to Germany but were not accepted by German authorities.

[17] Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, 18.

of the deported women attributed the cause of their deportation either to an alleged act or the social position of a male family member. Of those women offering this explanation, 37 percent were deported because of the arrest of their male family members and 58 percent because of such relatives' occupation or social status."[18] Thus, the children and wives of the groups of men who had been arrested by the Soviet authorities were deported after the arrest of their male family member, even though the reason for the arrest was not clear in some cases. Even though the women and children of these families did not commit any acts or hold positions considered criminal and suspect, they were perceived as unreliable by Soviet occupiers. Only 6 percent of the women attribute their deportation to an act of their own, most commonly for their desire to return to west Poland, the German zone.[19]

After the German invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941, the status of Polish deportees in the Soviet Unions changed dramatically, as the Soviet and Polish governments signed the Sikorski-Maiskii Pact in 30 July of 1941. With this agreement, the Soviet regime allowed the formation of a Polish army on Soviet territory under the command of General Wladyslaw Anders, who was appointed by the Polish government. This agreement also granted "amnesty to all Polish citizens who are at the present deprived of their freedom on the territory of the USSR either as prisoners of war or on other adequate grounds."[20] In addition, the Soviet regime agreed that Polish government could deliver relief supplies to its citizens after the amnesty through the appointed delegates of the Polish Embassy.[21] However amnesty did not reach all deportees at the same time, as some Soviet local authorities did not provide necessary documents to Poles for their departure. Many Poles were never informed of the amnesty, others were not released from

[18] Jolluck, *Exile and Identity,* 23.
[19] Jolluck, *Exile and Identity,* 23.
[20] Sword, *Deportation and Exile*, 31.
[21] Sword, "The Welfare of Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR," 146-147.

confinement.[22] A young Polish deportee from Lwow, Jadwiga O., who was deported to Kazakhstan with his mother and brother, reported that after the amnesty Soviet authorities did not release them from the labor camps and that their treatment towards deportees did not change. Jadwiga saved his family from further suffering by escaping from the camp while others continued to work under harsh conditions.[23]

Despite various obstacles imposed by Soviet local authorities, Polish amnestied deportees began to flow to the south of the USSR, mainly to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from Siberia and other regions in the north. According to data for a single day, September 30, more than 10,000 freed former Polish citizens began their journey to these destinations.[24] They had several motivations for moving south. First, they wanted to find food and reach warmer climates. Second, they hoped to find the outpost of the newly-formed Ander's Army. Third, they were searching for a Polish embassy to get care and protection from their own government. Forth, they assumed that British and American forces might enter Central Asia in the event of Soviet defeat and that they could find a chance to escape from the USSR by crossing the border into Afghanistan and Iran.

While amnestied Polish deportees were trying to reach Central Asia with the hope of joining the Polish Army or to access better living conditions, Soviet citizens from the Ukraine, Belarus, and the western parts of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) began to move towards the east to avoid the rapidly advancing German army. Two days after the German invasion of Soviet-occupied territories, the USSR's Council of People's Commissars and the All-Union Communist Party's Central Committee created the Council for Evacuation

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[22] Irena Grudzinska-Gross and Jan Tomasz Gross ed., *War Through Children's Eyes: The Soviet Occupation of Poland and the Deportations, 1939-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981) xxv.
[23] Grudzinska-Gross and Gross, *War Through Children's Eyes*, 61-62.
[24] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 102.

(Sovet po evakuatsii) to carry out the evacuation of Soviet citizens from the territories under the threat of German invasion.[25] Taking lessons from the large-scale population displacement of World War I, in which refugees often moved without state control, the Soviet state launched a mass evacuation organized and controlled by central authorities, who imposed rules upon local authorities.

The evacuation began with the transfer of industrial machinery, skilled workers, and nonworking dependents. With the June 27, 1941 decree, priority was given to the industrial equipment and factory essential for the military struggle.[26] After the evacuation of state enterprises and institutions, the priority was given to the certain occupational groups who were essential for the supply of arms and industrial production, personnel such as qualified workers, engineers, and employees of certain factories, Soviet and party leadership cadres, and members of the Soviet intelligentsia.[27] A week later, an additional decree authorized the evacuation of families of ranking officials and military officers.[28] All the dependents of the evacuated "privileged groups" had obtained the right to be evacuated and assisted by state authorities.

In a manner similar to the experiences of Polish deportees, Soviet authorities transported and resettled Soviet evacuees according to their familial networks. With a secret resolution of the Council of Ministries of the USSR of July 5, 1941, evacuated families of party and government leaders and of the top military personnel were provided with transportation, food, clothing and medical services in their evacuation.[29] The Evacuation Council, responsible body for carrying out the operation, also provided privileges to these groups of families to choose their place of

[25] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station,* 24-25; Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land*, 239.
[26] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land,* 240.
[27] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land,* 240; Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 34, quotes the decree in "Iz istorii velikoi otechestvennoi voiny: Nachalo voiny," Izvestiia TsK KPSS, no. 6 (1990): 208.
[28] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land,* 240.
[29] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 96-97.

resettlement, provided that it was not Moscow or Leningrad.[30] For example, the families of party leaders and of military, navy, and NKVD personnel could choose their place of settlement.[31] Moreover, these families often had the privilege to take their property with them, including furniture, in their evacuation.[32]

As is the case with the Polish deportees, it is difficult to access the exact number of Soviet evacuees because of the chaotic nature of the operation. While Soviet historians have presented an estimate of around 25 million people, revisionist scholars have estimated between 10 to 17 million.[33] Mark Harrison attributes the lack of accurate data about the evacuated populations to self-evacuees who moved on their own initiative and did not register in their new settlement.[34] Even with the lowest estimates, it was the first time in Soviet history that the state evacuated millions of people in a short time, eighteen months.[35] The Soviet regime aimed to create a well-ordered wartime population displacement to decrease the self-migrating population. With this mass-scale evacuation operations, Soviet citizens began to be directed and transported as evacuees (*evakuirovannye*) under the state control. However, contrary to the great Soviet zeal for such a mass-scale operation, there were no plans to coordinate or manage the evacuation process, and it was carried out spontaneously.[36] In the turmoil of the war, sometimes organized and sometimes in chaos, millions of evacuees resettled in provincial cities and rural areas in the

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[30] These cities were already under the threat of German invasion and had already announced an evacuation from these cities.
[31] Rebecca Manley, "The Perils of Displacement: The Soviet Evacuee between Refugee and Deportee," *Contemporary European History* 16, no. 4 (2007): 495-509, 501.
[32] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 97.
[33] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land*, 239; Manley, *To the Tashkent Station,* 50; Mark Harrison, *Soviet Planning in Peace and War, 1938-1945* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 70-71; Natalie Belsky, "Encounters in the East: Evacuees in the Soviet Hinterland During the Second World War," (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2014), 4; Kristen Edwards, "Fleeing to Siberia: The Wartime Relocation of Evacuees in Novosibirsk, 1941-1943" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1996), 50.
[34] Mark Harrison, *Soviet Planning in Peace and War 1938-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 70-71.
[35] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land*, 239.
[36] Jon Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London: Longman, 1991), 129.

central and southern areas of Soviet Union, including the Volga and Ural regions, Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia.

Even though the term "evacuee" was a newly created category, it seems that local bureaucrats in Kazakhstan quickly adopted the new terminology, as they registered the displaced people as "evacuees" in all official documents.[37] The term "refugee" (*bezhenets*) was not used as an administrative category during the Second World War. [38] After June 22, 1941, all those who arrived from zones of the wartime front obtained the status of evacuees regardless of where they came from or how they arrived their new destinations.[39] Although the state tried to create a new regime of population displacement, the evacuation in fact resembled one of the common practices of the Soviet regime: deportation.[40] Both operations increased state control over mobile populations through the selection of a targeted group for resettlement, the accommodation of transportation, and the determining of their sites of resettlement. Contrary to the state's effort to create such a novel term with a new system of displacement, as Manley notes, "The evacuee existed somewhere between the two, neither refugee nor deportee, but bearing the elements of each."[41] This situation is also clear in the memoirs of evacuees, who either depicted their evacuation as an exile or described themselves as "refugees" and the term refugee survived as a reality.[42] In addition, there were some self-evacuated Jews from Ukraine who were not part of

[37] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives (henceforward USHMM), RG-74.004, Selected Records from the State Archives of the Pavlodar Region, Kazakhstan Related to the Evacuation of Civilians in the Former USSR, 1941-1945; USHMM, RG-74.005, Selected Record from the State Archives of the Akmolinsk Region, Kazakhstan related to the evacuation of civilians in the former USSR, Original Source: Akmola oblystyq memlekettik müraghaty; USHMM: RG-74.007, Selected Record from the State Archives of the Western-Kazakhstan Region in Uralsk, Original Source: Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Zapadno-Kazakhstanskoi oblasti.
[38] Manley, "Perils of Displacement," 496.
[39] Vadim Dubson, "Toward a Central Database of Evacuated Soviet Jews' Names," 97.
[40] Manley, "Perils of Displacement," 496.
[41] Manley, "Perils of Displacement," 497.
[42] USHMM, RG-50477.1019, Oral History Interview with Polina Moshkova.

the evacuation process, and some of the Polish citizens fled to the hinterlands of the Soviet Union by their own means.[43]

It is difficult to make a clear distinction between Polish deportees and Soviet evacuees in their daily lives. First, they were exposed to similar economic and living conditions. Second, ethnic minorities of Jews, Belarusians, and Ukrainians having Polish citizenship tended to accept Soviet citizenship to benefit from state aid. Third, many of ethnic Poles, who had fled the control of Russian Empire in the past, could speak good Russian that made it hard to differentiate them from Soviet citizens. A self-fleeing Polish Jew, Zlota Gloger remarked that she and her family members boarded the same train as Soviet evacuees to go to east of the Soviet Union and after settling in Central Asia could find work in the same collective farms as Soviet evacuees.[44] Accurate differentiation could only be made through passports or registration records. While Soviet citizens were registered as "evacuees" under different familial or occupational groups, Polish deportees were described in official documents as "Polish citizens" by local bureaucrats in Kazakhstan,[45] Even though in daily life evacuees and deportees shared similar experiences, official documents tended to separate them carefully.

In addition to familial ties, in the registration documents Soviet authorities tended to register arriving evacuees and deportees according to their ethnic identity. In the lists of evacuees there was a column in which local bureaucrats noted the ethnicity of each individual. In some registration lists Soviet bureaucrats did not note the ethnicity of evacuees but tended to highlight the existence of Jews among other evacuees by adding to the list titles the phrase "including

[43] Feferman, "A Soviet Humanitarian Action," 823.
[44] USHMM, RG-50.838.001, Oral History Interview with Zlota Gloger.
[45] USHMM: RG-74.004, Selected Records from the State Archives of the Pavlodar Region, Kazakhstan Related to the Evacuation of Civilians in the Former USSR, 1941-1945, Original Source: Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Pavlodarskoy oblasti.

Jews."[46] In the registration list of Polish citizens, local authorities tended to separate the lists of ethnic Poles and Polish-Jews. The title of the lists were written either as "Polish citizens" or "Polish Jews." [47] This categorization illustrates the Soviet regime's distinctive attitude toward Polish Jews. The Soviet regime insisted on recognizing Jews, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians who had been resident in the eastern Polish provinces occupied by the USSR in 1939 as Soviet citizens and rejected their Polish citizenship, even though some Polish Jews did not want to get Soviet citizenship.

Because of a fluid and moving population in Kazakhstan, it is difficult to obtain the exact number of Polish or Soviet Jews who stayed in the Kazakhstan during the WWII. One of the estimates is that 45 percent of evacuees were Russian, slightly over a third were Jews, and 11 percent claimed Ukrainian nationality.[48] For the Jewish deportees, the available data shows that the families of 700 Jewish officers were sent to Kazakhstan in the second deportation.[49] However, Jews were present in all the four waves of the deportation which were sent to different regions of the Soviet Union. Thus, it is difficult to count the number of Polish Jews who lived in Kazakhstan among the hundreds of thousands Polish Jews who stayed in Soviet territory during the WWII.

State Policies: Punishing or Rewarding Through Family and Personal Networks

<u>Policies Towards Polish citizens:</u>

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[46] USHMM: RG-74.004, Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Pavlodarskoy Oblasti, f. 771, op.1, d. 97, 7.
[47] USHMM: RG-74.004, Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Pavlodarskoy Oblasti, f.5, op.3, d.15; f.3, op.1, d. 239, 120-121.
[48] Fiferman, "A Soviet Humanitarian Action?" 820.
[49] Mark Edele nd Wanda Warlık, "Saved by Stalin? Trajectories and Numbers of Polish Jews in the Soviet Second World War," *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union*, ed. Mark Edele et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017), 106.

Since their removal from eastern Poland, Polish citizens were treated as "unreliable" elements mostly because of their familial or personal ties. The NKVD gathered detailed information about the families of targeted groups and interrogated families of Polish military personnel not only in the process of deportation, but also in their new settlements, as they were under constant surveillance. During their transfer to the east, one exiled woman was interrogated by Soviet authorities. Although she was registered with her maiden name, she realized that Soviet authorities had information about her ex-husband, who was a Polish army officer, and that this relationship caused her deportation.[50] Sabina Berggren was another Polish deportee sent to a small village in Kazakhstan with her mother in 1940 because of her father's service in Polish army. She reported that her mother was endlessly interrogated by the secret police even in their small village in Kazakhstan. The secret police asked the mother where her husband was and tried to understand whether she was a spy.[51]

The Soviet state's attitudes towards Polish deportees changed according to the diplomatic relations between the Polish government in exile and the Soviet government. The rapprochement between the Soviet and Polish governments in July 1941 brought amnesty to all Polish citizens, and familial bonds began to provide advantages rather than punishments. Polish "amnestied" deportees could use their familial and personal ties as a means to exit from the Soviet Union by either joining the Ander's Army or showing their familial links to Polish military personnel. While many of the Polish amnestied male deportees joined the Ander's Army, the conscription of Polish Jews was discouraged as Soviet authorities did not recognized them as Polish citizens. When diplomatic relations between the Soviet and Polish governments eroded, General Sikorski, the prime minister of the Polish government-in-exile, decided to remove the Ander's Army from

[50] Jolluck, *Exile and Identity,* 98-99.
[51] USHMM, RG-50.030.0781, Oral History Interview with Sabina Berggren.

Soviet territory and resettled it in Iran. Hence, while the familial and professional bonds of Polish citizens caused them to be deported to the Soviet hinterland, these same ties enabled them a chance to leave Soviet Union, after the amnesty. Familial and professional bods were used both to punish and reward Polish deportees by the Soviet regime.

With the consent of the Soviet regime, Polish authorities carried out two evacuations in 1942. These evacuations included not only military personnel but also Polish civilians. However, priority was given to families of military personnel and orphaned children. In total, 115,000 Polish citizens exited the Soviet Union with these evacuations. [52] Sabina Bergghen, a Polish child deportee, was one of those people who was rescued from the Soviet Union thanks to her father's military post. Bergghen and her mother were evacuated to Tehran, but they first went to Jerusalem and ended up in England to reunite with the father.[53] Stalislaw H. was another child who was deported to Kazakhstan because his father was in the Polish army. Like Bergghen, Stalislaw was able to go to Iran in September 8, 1942 thanks to his father's service in military.[54] Ironically, their fathers' service in the Polish military both induced their deportation and enabled them to escape from the Soviet Union. The Polish government had planned to evacuate more people, but worsening relations with Soviet government did not allow for further evacuations. With the discovery of graves at Katyn by German forces, diplomatic relations with Soviet Union completely broke in 1943.[55]

In addition to familial ties, ethnic and communal ties played an important role in shaping the policies of the Soviet regime towards Polish deportees regarding access to material aid

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[52] Jolluch cites from Siedlecki, Lusy Polakow (p.134) The first evacuation included 48.858 individuals and the second, 69,247. Approximately 64 percent were army troops and the rest civilians. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity,* xv.
[53] USHMM, RG-50.030.0781, Oral History Interview with Sabina Berggren.
[54] Grudzinska-Gross and Gross, *War Through Children's Eyes*, 67-69.
[55] In the early spring of 1943, German forces found a mass grave near Smolensk. The grave in the Katyn forest contained the bodies of some 4000 Polish officers. Janusz K. Zawodny, *Death in the Forest: The Story of Katyn Massacre* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962); Swope, *Deportation and Exile*, 4.

through the channels of the Polish Embassy. Soviet government had allowed Polish embassy to distribute material aid to Polish citizens through delegates and local representatives, but Polish Jews encountered difficulties in requesting help from Polish relief agencies because of their ethnic identity. In the absence of state aid and under harsh living conditions, Polish citizens could demand help from local representatives. However, the Soviet Union did not recognize Jews who had been resident in the eastern Polish provinces occupied by the USSR in 1939 as Polish citizens, as it defined them as Soviet citizens. Thus, when non-ethnic Poles were appointed as relief workers by the Polish embassy, Soviet authorities mostly rejected their appointments.[56] Furthermore, in some cases the Soviet regime punished Jews who appealed to the Polish embassy. On February 21, 1942, the Polish Ambassador Stanislaw Kot investigated the arrest of 11 Polish citizens by Soviet authorities in Alma-Ata. The ambassador figured out that the majority of this group were Jews, and they were arrested for contacting the Polish embassy. Because the Soviet regime recognized some of the Polish Jews as Soviet citizens, their appeal to "a foreign diplomatic mission" was defined as a crime according to Soviet law. [57]

Moreover, after the severing of relations between the Polish and Soviet governments in April 1943, a Soviet document stated, "Polish citizens who remain in the Soviet Union are considered by Soviet authorities to be Soviet citizens, while the relief institutions and stores of relief goods, set up by the Polish Government, have been taken over by the Soviet Government."[58] Polish authorities in London kept a record of 271,000 Polish citizens still

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[56] Keith Sword, "The Welfare of Polish-Jewish Refugees in the USSR, 1941-43; Relief Supplies and their Distribution" in *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-46* ed. Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 152.
[57] Sword, "The Welfare of Polish-Jewish Refugees," 160.
[58] "Soviet Deportation of the Inhabitants of Eastern Poland in 1939-1941," Confidential P-66020 Report (London), Deecember 1943, U.S. Department of State, National Archives and Research Administration, Washington, DC (NND 1500, NARS date, July 31, 1973) in Tadeusz Piotrowski, *The Polish Deportees of World War II: Recollections of Removal to the Soviet Union and Dispersal Throughout the World* (London: McFarland&Company, 2004), 221-223.

remaining in Russia who received help from the social assistance network set up in the USSR in 1941-1943 by the Polish embassy. They decided to continue to assist these Poles by sending parcels of food and clothing from Iran. However, in January 1944, Soviet authorities ordered a stop to mail delivery of these parcels. Hence, from late 1944 on, material aid was sent mostly through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT) channels and reached mainly Jewish addresses.[59] The arbitrary decision of the Soviet regime to end the supply of relief by the Polish Embassy worsened the well-being of Polish citizens and Polish Jews who had been already suffering from lack of food and harsh living conditions.

Policies Towards Soviet Evacuees:

In the place of resettlement, evacuees and all arriving populations needed to be registered in local building registries. Local officials needed to send telegrams to Moscow that included the number of evacuees and their name lists. While they sent these telegrams complete with data to Moscow daily from July 13 to October 12, 1941, thereafter every five to ten days Soviet bureaucrats informed the center about the number and lists of evacuees in their region until the end of the war.[60] To achieve an accurate number of residents in each city or region, responsible officers tried to prevent any violation of the passportization regime. In a December 16, 1941 decree, the Executive Committee of the City Council of Deputies of Workers in Pavlodar warned about the current violations of the registration system in the city.[61] It was discovered that some heads of the state institutions and enterprises in the city violated the decision of the USSR

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[59] Grudzinska-Gross and Gross, *War Through Children's Eyes,* 241.
[60] Dubson, "Toward a Central Database," 99.
[61] USHMM: RG-74.004, Selected Records from the State Archives of the Pavlodar Region, Kazakhstan Related to the Evacuation of Civilians in the Former USSR, 1941-1945, Original Source: Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Pavlodarskoy oblasti.

Council of People's Commissars, as there were several people who were not registered in building registries, and some persons were employed even though they did not have the necessary stamps in their passports and did not have any listing in the residency records.

In the local residency records and lists of arriving evacuees, familial and professional ties determined the identification of individuals under certain categories. Not only during the process of evacuation, but also in their new settlement, certain categories of individuals and their families were privileged by the Soviet regime. The registration lists of evacuated populations in Pavlodar and West Kazakhstan provides a glimpse of the official thinking. There are four main categories in the registration documents: "families of servicemen," "families of party workers," "families of officers of the Red Army," and "families of NKVD personals."[62] If evacuees were not listed with their families, they were categorized under occupational affiliations, such as lists of "doctors," "medical personals," and "party workers."[63] However, in some of the lists created according to professional affiliations, either the marital status of individuals was written or the numbers of the people in their families were noted.

This categorization system shows the Soviet state's reliance on the family as an institution in the mass movement of populations, their settlement, and their control by the state authorities. It is remarkable that in the local registration documents individuals were listed according to nuclear familial units, and men were listed as the head of the household (*glava semi*) in ways that ran contrary to the Bolshevik regime's ideology of gender equality. In the time of chaos and uncertainty, it might be said the Soviet regime choose to categorize people

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[62] USHMM: RG-74.004, Selected Records from the State Archives of the Pavlodar Region, Kazakhstan Related to the Evacuation of Civilians in the Former USSR, 1941-1945, Manley also found similar results in her research in Uzbekistan. See Manley, "Perils of Displacement," finish this, and make font uniform?

[63] USHMM: RG-74.004, Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Pavlodarskoy oblasti; Selected Record from the State Archives of the Western-Kazakhstan Region in Uralsk, Original Source: Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Zapadno-Kazakhstanskoi oblasti.

according to their familial ties, since it was easier to manage them as familial units, and previous operations of population displacement had followed this procedure too. However, by privileging certain categories of people according to their professional and familial ties, the Soviet regime tried to create "reliable" units of people in a time of uncertainty and betrayal. The state adopted a similar logic with deportation as they rewarded or punished individuals based on their group affiliation.

In addition to evacuating and registering individuals under familial or professional affiliations, the Soviet regime privileged certain categories of evacuees according to their occupational and familial bonds in their new settlements. The main privileged categories of evacuees were "families of service men" and "families of party workers."[64] According to the July 5, 1941 resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, families of government officials and top military personnel, when they arrived at their destinations, were granted priority in housing and work, as well as financial aid.[65]. These families also had the opportunity to settle in a city in which their relatives lived. It seems that the Soviet regime tried to alleviate both psychological and material hardship for those families by providing them material aid and accommodation in the place of settlement. However, by privileging families of those individuals who were essential for the war effort on account of their military and official posts, or because they were directly fighting in the army, the Soviet regime seems to have aimed to increase the loyalties of military and state personnel whose families had a secure and safe place to live under state assistance. The war caused a spy-paranoia among the ruling elites, and having a husband or relative at the front removed suspicion and gave the families of military

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[64] USHMM: RG-74.004, Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Pavlodarskoy oblasti, f. 32, op.1, d.200, 1-2, 54-55, 83; f.1, op.1, d. 326, 1.
[65] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 97.

personnel more privileges than those of others, at least theoretically.[66] Thus, relations between state and citizen changed in accordance with rights and privileges attached to war time service or to having an occupation prioritized by the regime.[67]

However, such state aid and assistance by the Soviet regime were not automatically granted for the families of military personnel. According to a military decree (Stavka) of 16 August 1941, "to reinforce soldiers' motivation to fight" the well-being of their families became dependent on their service in the military.[68] If a Red Army soldier was taken prisoner or betrayed the country, state aid and allowances to the family of the soldier were automatically cut. [69] It shows that the Soviet regime did not approach the members of family as "individuals," but attached the fate of all members to the male figure who fought in the army. As in the case of deportation, the state rewarded or punished people for the crimes of individual members.

In some instances, due to lacking resources or the inadequacies of local officers, state allowances were not granted to the families of military personnel, as promised by the Soviet regime as a reward for military service. In Alma-Ata, the capital city of Kazakh republic, Aleksei Babkin, the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan, reported that "the pregnant wife of one Lieutenant Fenko had her possessions stolen and had to spend the night hungry outside, on the bare ground in the Alma-Ata Square, together with her nursing child who was emaciated, covered with lice, and almost naked".[70] This report shows that even though there were some failures in the state policy towards these families, there still was a considerable concern from the state level for the wellbeing of families of military personnel.

[66] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 109.
[67] Natalie Belsky, "Encounters in the East," 100-101.
[68] Barber and Harrison, "The Soviet Home Front," 91.
[69] Barber and Harrison, "The Soviet Home Front," 91.
[70] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 108.

In addition to families of military, state, and party elites, the Soviet intelligentsia and the residents of Moscow and Leningrad had the right to choose to settle in in a city where relatives and friends were willing to share living space.[71] Alma-Ata became home to various cultural and scientific institutions that were evacuated from big cities of the Soviet west, and consequently to members of the Soviet intelligentsia and their families, such as the leading figures of Kiev's Theater of Musical Comedy and the wife of the well-known poet of Aleksandr Bezymenskii.[72] Officials correspondence in the archives of Alma-Ata proves the care given to Soviet elites by Soviet regime. On September 8, 1941 a member of Politburo and Evacuation Council Lazar Kaganovich informed the chairman of the Kazakh Council of Ministers about the evacuation of family of the Stalinist prize-winning author Sergei Mikhalkov to Alma-Ata, while asking to assist the settlement of this family in the city. Consequently, on November 7, 1941 the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh Republic ordered the mayor of Alma Ata to provide an apartment for the family of this writer, which consisted of five people.[73]

In addition to assisting the families of military personnel and Soviet elites or enabling them to settle in a city in which they had relatives, local authorities tended to assist and help ordinary evacuees who wanted to reunite with their families and relatives. To move from their place of settlement, the evacuees needed to get a permission due to strict rules of the passportization system. There were numerous petitions by evacuees who were asking to move to another city in Kazakhstan or to another republic to unite with their relatives. The correspondence between the assistant director of evacuation in Kazakhstan and the head of the evacuation center in the city of Djambul in November 1941 gives insight into the state's logic in

[71] Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 151.
[72] Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land,* 258.
[73] USHMM RG. 74.002M, Original Source: Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvenni Arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstan (Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan) (henceforward TsGA RK), f. 1137, op. 6, d. 1280, 42-43.

managing population displacement. The provincial officer in Jambyl wrote to the central authorities in Alma-Ata "Every day evacuees turn to us with requests for train tickets to various places- Fergana, Kokand, Tashkent, Chkalov, etc.- where they have relatives" and asked how to deal with these petitions: "Do we have right to give them?" The assistant director of evacuation for Kazakhstan responded, "If there is documented proof of relatives living there, then you can distribute tickets."[74]

According to the traditional understanding local authorities allowed individuals to move beyond their administrative borders in order to reunite with their family members during WWII because other local officials had to deal with them and take responsibility for them.[75] However, in Kazakhstan, some of the evacuees just moved from one city to the another rather than leaving the republic altogether. The central authorities ordered local authorities to provide tickets to the evacuees who had the necessary documents proving that they had relatives in other cities or republics, rather than letting them move without providing transportation. This shows state authorities' willingness to help evacuees to reunite with their relatives in the time of displacement rather than getting rid of their burden.

Moreover, in some instances, local officials did not only assist evacuees in their transportation to other cities to reunite with their family members, but also were willing to receive new evacuees who had family members within their jurisdiction. On March 19, 1942 the secretary of the City Council of Alma-Ata requested the secretary of the City Council of Pavlodar to offer any kind of help to the citizen Valentina Petrovna Golobokov to get train ticketx to travel Alma-Ata. Valentina's sister was a resident in Alma-Ata, and she was in a hard

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[74] USHMM RG-74.002M, Original Source: TsGA RK, f. R-1137, op. 6, d. 1284, II. 134-135; Siegelbaum and Moch, *Broad is My Native Land*, 252.
[75] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 106.

situation since she was sick and had three children. Because there was no one to take care of the children of Valentina's sister, the secretary asked for every means of helping Valentina leave for Alma-Ata.[76] This provides insight into the care given to the wellbeing of evacuees and their families by Soviet authorities in Kazakhstan.

Survival strategies as inherently communal, in ways that both resist and advance state goals:

Like the Soviet regime, evacuees and Polish citizens relied on their familial and communal ties to ease the survival in the time of displacement. While Soviet evacuees appealed to local authorities to have better living conditions, request for state assistance, seek material aid, or change their place of settlement through their familial bonds, Polish citizens relied on their familial or personal ties either to exit from Soviet Union or survive in the absence of state aid. Contrary to ethnic Poles, Polish Jews had less chances of joining the Anders Army or appealing to the Polish Embassy, as some of them were not recognized as Polish citizens by Soviet authorities. However, they had another source to rely on: their communal and ethnic ties which enabled them to get aid from the Soviet Jewry.

Resettlement and Housing:

Complementing with state policies, familial and personal ties determined the place of settlement or housing for both Soviet evacuees and Polish citizens after the amnesty. In most of the memoirs, evacuees or amnesties deportees remarked that they moved to certain places due to their family or personal ties there. Avigdor Cohen, a child self-evacuee who fled with his family from Kharkov to Kazakhstan, noted that they decided to flee Kazakhstan because his uncle was

[76] USHMM: RG-74.004, Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Pavlodarskoy oblasti, f. 32, op.1, d. 200.

already living there. In addition, with a letter a friend of Avigdor's mother who was deported to Kazakhstan earlier invited them to come to Kazakhstan.[77] Similarly Grigory Liberchuk, a child evacuee from Ukraine, remarked that his mother's family had already evacuated Kazakhstan, and when it realized that Liberchuk and his mother survived, the family got them permission to come to Kazakhstan. With official permission, Liberchuk and his mother moved to Kazakhstan and spent the rest of the war years there.[78] Hence, both Soviet and Polish citizens tended to reunite with their families or acquaintancex in the time of displacement, and in most cases Soviet authorities allowed their reunification with family members.

Familial ties not only determined the place of settlement, but also enabled privileged groups of families to demand better housing. Knowing her right to accommodation due to her husband's service in the front, an evacuee from Leningrad Gal'perin requested to stay in the apartment of the deputy head of the Statistical Bureau, Badzhanov. However, Badzhanov did not allow her to move into his apartment, and in her petition to the Kazakh central Committee, Gal'perin complained about the behavior of Badzhanov toward her. After visiting the Alma-Ata housing administration office several times in the following months, she got the permit from the district police to move into Badzhanov's apartment. Even though this permit did not work because Badzhanov was backed by the city's soviet chairman, this case show the ways in which dependents of military personals used their familial ties to demand better treatment and housing from local authorities.[79]

<u>Material Aid:</u>

[77] Barbara Michael, *Evacuation to Central Asia* (Morrisville, LULU Press, 2008), 128-129.
[78] USHMM, RG- 50.030.0485, Oral History Interview with Grigory Liberchuk.
[79] Belsky, "Encounters in the East," 99.

Familial and professional ties also shaped the ways by which Soviet evacuees and Polish citizens accessed foods and material aid. During the war the Soviet Union had suffered from a shortage of food stuffs and encountered difficulties in distributing food among the displaced populations. Families of military, state, and party personnel already had food support from the state. Ordinary Soviet citizens could get subsidized food through ration cards. Rations were determined by the occupations of individuals, as they were larger for workers, professionals, and students. They received 600 to 800 grams of bread daily. The minimum ration was 400 grams, which was distributed to children up to age twelve and dependents.[80] A child evacuee in Kazakhstan remembered that her mother, a teacher, got 500-600 grams of bread a day, while he and his sister got 300-400 grams of bread from local authorities in Alma-Ata.[81] Some people tended to sell their coupons on the black market, because they were worth more in the market place, more than tenfold.

While Soviet citizens benefited from their familial and personal ties in their access to food, Polish citizens in need could appeal to the delegates of th Polish embassy for material aid. With the Sikorski-Maiskii Agreement, the Polish embassy was allowed to provide relief supplies to its citizens. According to the decision of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, in the distribution of the material aid priority was given to young children and elders who did not have a family, while parents with large families and women had sole responsibility for their children.[82] Polish citizens also benefited from the material help of the Red Cross as a family unit. Miriam Lewent remarked that her mother saved materials such as sugar, tea, and flour that Red Cross provided and sold them in the market to get a train ticket to go to Central Asia after the

[80] Kaganovitch, "Jewish Refugees and Soviet Authorities," 114.
[81] Cohen, Avigdor Interview, December 26, 2006 in Michael, *Evacuation to Central Asia*, 128.
[82] Sword, "The Welfare of Polish-Jewish Refugees," 147.

amnesty.[83] Another option for getting food was having a family member in the Anders Army. A Polish deportee in one of the collective farms Maria Borkowska-Wikowska stated that “In the *kolkhoz* we were given only 250 grams of barley. Mama found two stones and made flour during the whole time we lived in Kazakhstan. After enlisting in the army my father sent us bread from time to time.”[84] These kinds of extra food portions from relatives or the Polish Embassy saved Polish citizens from starvation, even though a considerable number of them died from hunger or disease in their stay in the USSR during the war.

Family and Personal Ties Save Lives:

Polish amnestied deportees used their familial ties to exit the Soviet Union. Dependents of the Polish service men had the opportunity to be evacuated by Polish authorities to Iran, then other countries. However, to benefit from such an opportunity, they needed to prove their familial ties to military personnel with necessary documents. In some cases, although they had relatives in the Polish army, they could not be evacuated by Polish authorities or needed to buy the ticket by their own means for evacuation from Soviet Union. Miriam Lewent, a Polish deportee remarked that her two brothers joined the Polish Army just after the amnesty, but she and the rest of the family members needed to stay in Central Asia until her brother sent tickets to them to go home from Kazakhstan.[85]

In some instances, personal ties saved the lives of Polish deportees coincidently, in violation of the regulations imposed by the Soviet regime. Zlota Gloger, a Polish citizen, explained how an acquaintance of her brother-in-law saved their lives in their journey from

[83] USHMM, RG-50.030.0131, Oral History Interview with Miriam Storch Lewent.
[84] Piotrowsky, *The Polish Deportees of World War II*, 88.
[85] USHMM, RG-50.030.0131, Oral History Interview with Miriam Storch Lewent.

Samarkand to Kyzylorda to reunite with her sister there. Gloger and her brother-in-law did not have any money to get train tickets to go from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, and they decided to get the first train which arrived at the train station, even though it might cause them to be arrested or kicked out from the train. Once they got on the first train, it took a moment to understand that this was a train full of Russian soldiers who were going to the front. For Gloger and her brother-in-law it was impossible to remain unnoticed among the Russian soldiers. Coincidently, they saw a doctor who was inspecting the soldiers in the wagon in which Gloger was staying. This doctor was the brother-in-law's childhood friend from Poland and recognized them easily. After introducing Gloger and her brother in law to the soldiers as his close friends, the doctor let them stay in the train until their destination in Kazakhstan.[86] An encounter with an acquaintance did not only saved them from arrest, but it also enabled them safe travel to Kazakhstan.

Similarly, another Polish deportee, Sabina Berggren, highlighted the material help that she and her mother got from their neighbors from Poland who were deported to the same collective farm in Kazakhstan. Berggren and her mother were deported due to her father's military service in the Polish Army. Berggren was too young to work, and her mother had a heart disease which prevent her from being listed for a job. As deportees, if they did not work, they could not get access to any food, as they state would not provide them any material aid. Berggren remarked that a family which was their neighbor at home shared its portion of bread with them.[87] If they did not have this generous help from this family, Berggren and her mother might have starved to death. Hence, personal and familial ties the saved lives of Polish deportees and enabled them to survive in their exile.

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[86] USHMM, RG-50.838.001, Oral History Interview with Zlota Gloger.
[87] USHMM, RG- 50.030.0781, Oral History Interwiew with Sabina Berggren.

Communal Ties: Soviet and Polish Jews

Even though most Polish citizens were exposed to the similar difficulties during their stay in the Soviet soil, Polish Jews were uniquely exposed to the arbitrary policies of Soviet and Polish authorities and tended to rely on their communal ties to survive. First, Polish Jews were not enlisted into Anders Army as easily as ethnic Poles. Many Jewish applicants to the Anders Army were eliminated arbitrarily "for poor health," as General Anders limited the number of Jews who would be accepted to the army. This correlates with the interests of the Soviet Union, for the Soviet regime aimed to assimilate all non-Poles and recognized most of them as Soviet citizens.

Mostly rejected from Anders Army, many Polish Jews stayed in the Soviet Union until the end of the war, and they relied on their communal ties as they benefited from their relationship with Soviet Jews. Zlota Gloger remembered that a Soviet Jewish family offered her brother the opportunity to teach Hebrew to their children, and this was really a good opportunity for them while they did not have anything to eat. Thanks to this job, his brother could access a piece of bread or some sort of food. In another example, cited by Natalia Belsky, a Soviet Jewish family saved the life of a Polish Jewish boy who attempted to steal food in order to survive in Chimkent (southern Kazakhstan), as it took him and employed him in a tailoring workshop.[88]

Similarly, a Polish Jewish deportee who escaped from a labor camp in Siberia, Jack Pomerantz, explained how a Jewish Red Army officer helped him to travel Alma-Ata to find his family members. Pomerantz met with the army officer in the train station and after understanding his situation, the army officer enabled him a free passage to Alma-Ata, as he told the NKVD personnel that Pomerantz was travelling under his order. During their journey they even spoke

[88] Natalie Belsky, "Fraught Friendships," 164.

Yiddish and before leaving the train the Soviet army officer offered to have Pomerantz travel to his home and stay with him. Nevertheless, Pomerantz refused this offer as he had to go Alma-Ata to reunite with family members. Pomerantz never knew this army officer's name, but his help enabled him to escape from Siberia and reach Alma-Ata where he would find his family members.[89] Polish Jews benefited from their shared Jewish identity since they received help from Soviet Jews even though these challenged the interests of the Soviet regime.

Polish Jews also benefited from the relief campaign by the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and material assistance sent from the Jewish Agency in Palestine. The JDC operation began after the amnesty, and the first help was sent from Tehran into the Soviet Union in August 1942. The Joint Committee sent 150,000 packages from Tehran to the Soviet hinterland to feed the Polish and Ukrainian Jewry. [90] In addition to material aid, during the war the Jewish Agency in Palestine also sent information bulletins in Russian giving information about Jewish settlements in Palestine, and it searched for relatives.[91] Rescue efforts of the JDC were headquartered in Tehran as it provided an easy access to Central Asia. Even after the Soviet Union banned all aid shipments to "sectarian groups," JDC continued its efforts to access Jewish families or individuals on Soviet soil. A basic parcel was approximately ten pounds and filled the basic needs of deportees with items like blankets, tea, sugar, soap and matzoh. Many of these foods were for immediate consumption to prevent their to being sold on the black market. Each parcel was directly sent to "individuals recipients whose names and locations were laboriously gathered by refugees and Anders Army members now working in Iran."[92] In addition to the help

[89] Jack Pomerantz, *Run East: Flight from the Holocaust* (Urbana: University of Illionis Press, 1997), 78-81.
[90] Michael, *Evacuation to Central Asia*, 150.
[91] Shimon Redlich, "The Jews under Soviet Rule During the World War II" (PhD diss., New York University, 1968) 95-96.
[92] Atina Grossman, "Jewish Refugees in Soviet Central Asia, Iran, and India: Lost Memories of Displacement, Trauma, and Rescue", in *Shelter from the Holocaust: Rethinking Jewish Survival in the Soviet Union* ed. Mark Edele, Sheila Fitzpatrick, Atina Grossmann (2017), 198.

from Soviet Jewry, the JDC's relief efforts helped many Polish Jews to survive on Soviet soil during the WWII.

Conclusion

One of the sparsely populated republics of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan became home to millions of Soviet evacuees and hundreds of Polish deportees during the World War II. As it did in previous operations of population displacement, the Soviet Union evacuated or deported individuals as groups according to their kinship bonds or professional affiliations. However, contrary to the previous examples, the Soviet regime this time embraced family as an institution in the mass population displacement not solely as a mechanism of punishment, but as a mechanism of rewarding. The privileges assigned to certain categories of families in the evacuation demonstrate that the Soviet regime attached individuals' well-being to their family members who served in the military, party, or state apparatus. Similarly, the fates of Polish deportees depended on the status of their family members, who had been exiled or arrested by Soviet authorities. These same kinship ties that caused Polish citizens to be exiled also brought them chances of escape from the Soviet Union. By comparing state policies towards Polish and Soviet citizens, this paper demonstrates that the Soviet regime did not individuate identities, rather identified people according to their familial bonds or professional affiliations.

In addition, by comparing the experiences of evacuees and deportees, this paper shows the similarities between experiences of evacuees and deportees who found themselves in harsh and unfamiliar living conditions. Their appeals to state institutions, requests from the local authorities, places of settlement, housing, and access to food and material aid were all shaped by their familial and personal networks. Moreover, the experiences of the Polish Jews also

demonstrate the benefits of communal and ethnic bonds, in addition to personal and familial bonds in a time of crisis and uncertainty. It is obvious that the state allowed most of the refugees to reunite with their family members to ease survival, as the family was the natural source of help and support during the time of displacement. However, it allocated funds to assist "the privileged families" or provided tickets to ordinary evacuees in ways that illustrate a more complex picture. To carry out mass population movements during the war, the Soviet regime chose to create more reliable, controllable, and loyal units of people and embraced the family as an institution with which to partner to conduct these operations. Adapting to the patriarchal forms of family by placing the men as the heads of the family, the Soviet regime punished and rewarded individuals according to their kinship ties, mainly their ties to head of the family. In the time of the crisis and spy-paranoia, family "as a traditional institution" functioned as the most reliable unit for helping carry out mass population displacement in the Soviet soil. Consequently, all these state policies changed the relationship between state and citizens or non-citizens by placing kinship ties at the center of the relationship between the sovereign state and the individuals under its control.