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## **“He Beat Prisoners of War for the Slightest Violations ...”: Practice of Bringing Nazi Accomplices to Criminal Liability (Based on Archival Materials of the Federal Security Service of Russia in the Vologda Oblast)**

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* the article examines the practice of bringing to criminal liability of accomplices of Nazi occupiers from among Soviet citizens after the end of the Great Patriotic War. *Purpose:* based on the analysis of the archival case to reveal the mechanism of criminal prosecution of collaborators. *Methods:* theoretical methods of formal and dialectical logic, empirical methods of description and interpretation, historical and biographical, textual and formal legal methods. *Results:* the study of archival materials demonstrates the tragedy of the fate of Soviet servicemen who were captured by the Germans during the Great Patriotic War. In relation to Soviet prisoners of war, the Nazis provided for a cruel regime that doomed them to gradual death from starvation and inhuman treatment. Persons who collaborated with the Nazis became accomplices of the criminal occupation policy. After the defeat of the German army and its surrender, most collaborators were sent to special (screening and filtration) camps of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs). The Smersh Counterintelligence Department carried out operational and investigative measures to establish and document the facts of treason to the Motherland and cooperation with the Nazi occupiers. Persons whose criminal activity could be confirmed by evidence were tried by a military tribunal on the basis of Article 58-1 "b" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and Article 2 of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On penalties for Nazi villains guilty of murder and torture of Soviet civilians and captured Red Army soldiers, for spies, traitors to the Motherland from among Soviet citizens and for their accomplices" of April 19, 1943. As a rule, accomplices of Nazi crimes served their sentences in penal camps of the Gulag.

**Key words:** Great Patriotic War, Soviet prisoners of war, Nazi occupation policy, screening and filtration camps, collaborators, prosecution.

### 5.1.1. Theoretical and historical legal sciences.

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### *Introduction*

Russian historical and legal science is interested in the events of the Great Patriotic War, its results and consequences. Previously inaccessible archival documents are introduced into scientific circulation, unknown facts are revealed, their interpretations and assessments are given, and complex and fundamental issues are discussed. Among insufficiently studied aspects of the war are special activities of the NKVD-NKGB and the Smersh Counter-intelligence Department considered as state inspection or filtration of Soviet citizens who found themselves in the territory occupied by the enemy.

The filtering mechanism and the activities of special NKVD camps for checking former prisoners of war and repatriates are considered in the works of A.F. Bichevost [1], A.V. Latyshev [2–4], V.S. Khristoforov [5], V.V. Shevchenko [6], as well as the author of this article [7–10]. They reveal regulatory and organizational-structural aspects of filtration measures, a number and composition, life support and labor use of convicts, as well as organization of political work with them. The fate of the persons who passed special examination, namely circumstances of their capture in German captivity, cooperation with the Nazis and criminal prosecution for the illegal acts committed, are much less studied.

According to the four-volume book "The Great Patriotic War. 1941–1945" almost 85 million people, i.e. 45% of the population of the Soviet Union, lived in the regions captured by the Nazi occupiers [11, p. 116]. Besides, according to various estimates, 4–6 million Red Army soldiers were taken captive [12, p. 234; 13, p. 248; 14, p. 5; 15, p. 5; 16, p. 6]. Over 3 million Soviet citizens actively participated in the resistance movement, fighting in partisan detachments. Millions of compatriots sabotaged activities of the occupation authorities, supplied food to the partisans, and sheltered underground workers [17, p. 153]. However, there also were those who cooperated with the German authorities and even fought on the side of the enemy. According to researchers, from 200 thousand to 1.5 million Soviet citizens served in armed formations of the Wehrmacht and institutions of the German occupation administration [18, p. 154]. The nature, typology and manifestations of collaboration during the Second World

War are studied in detail in the monograph of the Doctor of Sciences (History), Professor M.I. Semiryaga [19], therefore, we will not delve into the description of the military-political and socio-psychological essence of this phenomenon, but will focus exclusively on historical and legal consequences.

After the liberation of the occupied territories, the internal affairs and state security agencies addressed the task of checking persons who had been captured or on the occupied territory in order to identify traitors to the Motherland, as well as saboteurs and enemy agents. For this purpose, special NKVD camps were formed by the Resolution of the USSR State Defense Committee No. 1069ss of December 27, 1941 and the NKVD Order No. 001735 of December 28, 1941, [2, pp. 134, 194]. By the Order of the NKVD of the USSR No. 00100 of February 20, 1945 special camps were renamed screening and filtration camps (SFC), and the Department of Special Camps of the NKVD of the USSR was renamed the Department of Screening and Filtration Camps (DSFC of the NKVD of the USSR) [1, p. 73].

In total, according to A.V. Latyshev, from January 1942 to March 1, 1946, 652 thousand people were sent to special and screening and filtration camps [8, p. 16]. Most of them passed the examination successfully and were sent to local military enlistment offices, and then to units of the active army. Suspects of betrayal and treason were arrested, and cases against them were sent to military tribunals of the NKVD of the USSR.

One of the 69 special camps [4, p. 16] operating in the USSR in 1942–1945 was the screening and filtration camp No. 0313, located in the Karelo-Finnish SSR. It was organized by the Order of the NKVD No. 001403 of November 20, 1944 for the inspection and labor use of Red Army prisoners of war who had previously been in Finnish captivity. Initially, the camp was stationed in Petrozavodsk and was designed to accommodate 4 thousand people. In accordance with the NKVD Order No. 00838 of July 13, 1945, the camp was relocated to Medvezhyegorsk for convicts to take part in the construction of the White Sea-Baltic Canal. The capacity of the camp was increased to 9 thousand people, and 4 camp departments were formed in the structure of the camp. As of September 20, 1945,

8,282 people were kept in the camp, 2,699 of whom were Vlasov's supporters and served in German formations [20].

The archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast has a partially declassified archival file on serviceman N., a native of the Vologda Oblast, who was interrogated at the SFC No. 0313 and convicted of treason and collaboration with German occupiers (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84).

The structure of the case includes a resolution on the solution of a preventive measure, a resolution and an arrest warrant, a search report, a questionnaire of the arrested person, interrogation protocols, a resolution on the indictment, an indictment in the investigative case, and a verdict of the military tribunal. It is possible that the case also contains protocols of interrogations of witnesses, but such documents probably have access restrictions.

It should be noted that archival cases of the NKVD–NKGB and the Smersh Counterintelligence Department belong to the category of the most difficult to study historical sources. This is due to the fact that the testimony of the accused may contain distorted or unreliable information, taking into account possible facts of physical and psychological pressure on the arrested and their being in pre-trial detention. On the other hand, these documents contain unique information that allows us to find out prerequisites and reasons that prompted a particular serviceman to embark on the path of cooperation with the enemy, study the mechanism of bringing to justice, and clarify his/her future fate. All this requires the researcher to know the specifics of the Soviet legal proceedings [21; 22] and the specifics of office documentation of the judicial investigative bodies of the NKVD–NKGB [23].

The purpose of the study is to reveal a mechanism of criminal prosecution of collaborators based on the analysis of a specific archival case. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to find out the specifics of office documentation of the judicial investigative bodies of the NKVD–NKGB and the Smersh Counterintelligence Department, circumstances of the capture of Red Army servicemen, motives for cooperation with

the enemy, organization of special checks in the NKVD camps, grounds for bringing former prisoners of war to criminal liability, the content of the indictment base, stages of investigative measures, and the court verdict.

The following research methods are used: theoretical methods of formal and dialectical logic and empirical methods of description and interpretation. Private scientific methods adapted to the tasks of historical and legal research are also used, in particular, a historical and biographical method aimed at describing, reconstructing and analyzing life circumstances and the socio-psychological portrait of a collaborator; a textual method focused on critical analysis of the information contained in the text with regard to possible distortions, contradictions and omissions; a formal legal method consisting in the interpretation of norms of law and existing legal practice. The chosen methodology helps achieve the purpose and objectives of the study.

To protect personal data, names and surnames of law enforcement officers, persons who underwent special verification and were brought to criminal liability, as well as witnesses and eyewitnesses mentioned in this article, are not published. Names of localities are original (according to the person involved in the criminal case), but are accompanied by necessary explanations and comments. When quoting the text of a document, text omissions are indicated by an ellipsis enclosed in square brackets.

#### *Research*

On August 19, 1945, the senior investigator of the Smersh Counterintelligence Department at the screening and filtration camp No. 0313 signed a decree for the arrest of a serviceman N., born in 1921, a native of the Ustyuzhensky District of the Vologda Oblast, suspected of committing crimes under paragraph "b" of Article 58-1 (treason was understood as actions committed by USSR citizens to the detriment of the military might of the Soviet Union, its state independence or the inviolability of its territory, including: espionage, revealing military or state secrets, defection to the enemy, escape or flight abroad. Paragraph "b" of Article 58-1 provided for the highest measure of criminal punishment – execution with confiscation of property) of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. According to the decree, N., while at the front,

was captured by the Germans. Performing the duties of a food distributor in the camp, he treated prisoners of war roughly, did not give them the required products and systematically beat them. Later he served in the German army and was awarded a medal for his diligent service. He was exposed by the testimony of witnesses and his confessions (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 1).

In order to avoid the escape of the suspect, it was decided to place him in custody. On August 28, 1945, N. was arrested by the counter-intelligence department and transferred to the NKVD Belomorstroy detention center (Medvezhyegorsk). The search report indicates that nothing was seized from the detainee (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 4 and 5 flesh side).

The arrest materials fixed his biographical data: a citizen of the USSR, Russian by nationality, non-partisan, single, primary education (1–4 grades), a firefighter, social origin – from peasants, after the revolution – a middle peasant, did not belong to counter-revolutionary organizations, was not engaged in socio-political activities, was not subjected to repression under Soviet rule. Until 1940, he worked in agriculture: first on his father's farm, then on a collective farm. In 1940, he moved to the Chagodoshchensky District of the Vologda Oblast and worked at a factory before being enrolled in the Red Army (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 5, 9).

The first protocol of the interrogation was dated August 14, 1945 and signed by the senior investigator of the Smersh Counterintelligence Department of the 289th Infantry Division. Before the interrogation, N. was notified about liability for giving false testimony under Article 95 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. N. reported that on October 24, 1940, he was called up by the Chagodoshchensky district military commissariat and sent to one of the rifle units stationed in Lithuania. There he was trained, and then transferred to the 232nd rifle division, in which he served as a private until about August 1941. He took part in battles with the Germans in the Baltic republics. In the summer of

1941, near Staraya Russa, he was captured by the Germans (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 6).

N. described circumstances of the capture as such: "As a machine gunner, the squad commander ordered me to hold on as long as possible to cover the division's retreat. When people left, at least most of them, I loaded the machine gun on the wagon and wanted to catch up with the division myself, but it was too late. The Germans bypassed us. I was forced to surrender to save my life" (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 6 flesh side).

Further, the investigator's questions concerned N.'s behavior during his captivity and his subsequent stay in German camps. According to N., when captured, the Germans did not interrogate him, but only conducted a search, during which they seized his watch and a machine gun with ammunition. Until the summer of 1942, he was in the prison camp in the village Pochinok (it may be the village Pochinok in the Demyansky District of the Leningrad Oblast, since July 5, 1944 – the Novgorod Oblast), then he was transferred to the camp in village Pekashino (it may be the village Pekakhino in the Demyansky District of the Leningrad Oblast, today – the Novgorod Oblast). The document has different variants of the above mentioned village, such as Pekashino, Pekakhino, Pokashino), where he stayed until the beginning of 1943. In the camps, he worked in the camp kitchen as a laborer and then as a bread distributor, and brewed coffee for the Germans. On behalf of the camp administration, he stood at the post with a rifle, guarding the territory without fences from the intrusion of unauthorized persons. As a result, he received great privileges: he lived in a separate dugout, ate in the kitchen without restriction and had the right to freely stay outside the zone, which he used to communicate with women (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 7 and 7 flesh side).

The investigator asked, "you had a possibility of free exit from the camp, why you did not flee?" and got a frank answer, "I did not run away, because the work was easy, they fed well and paid

enough. I lived better than in the Red Army and did not fear for my life. Coming out of this, I decided not to rush into the unknown” (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 7 flesh side). Thus, the main reason for cooperation with the Germans was the pragmatic factor, which consisted in the desire to save life and improve his position in captivity by occupying a privileged position in the camp.

Another part of the questions concerned N.’s relations with other prisoners of war. Initially, the interrogated person stated that “he had treated prisoners of war well and had not hurt anyone”. Then, under pressure from the investigator, he admitted that in the spring

autumn of 1942 he hit a prisoner of war several times for picking up a bone from the ground near the camp kitchen and “often pushed prisoners of war away from the kitchen” (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 7 flesh side).

In conclusion, the investigator asked N. to disclose circumstances of enrollment in the battalion of the 30th German Division and service in these units. N. reported, “in February or March 1943, the prison camp in the village Pekashino was disbanded (in February 1943 the territory of the Demyansky District was freed by the Soviet army). [...] I was among 10 people enlisted in the battalion of the 30th German Division, where I served until the day of the German surrender, performing various jobs”. Besides, N. mentioned that in 1943 he took the oath “to serve the Germans honestly”, and in 1945 he received a bronze medal of the 2nd degree “for honest work” from the German command (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 8).

In the interrogation protocol of August 28, 1945, the arrested man gave new testimony regarding circumstances of his surrender: “our department worked on a machine gun. I was the 1st reserve number and was in the trench nearby the machine gun. When the Germans went on the offensive and came close, the soldiers loaded the machine gun on the cart and began to catch up with the units. I was afraid that I might be killed, stayed in the trench and surrendered to the Germans”. When asked, why

he had previously given incorrect testimony, N. stated that he “had tried to hide the fact of voluntary surrender and thereby reduce guilt before the Motherland” (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 10 flesh side).

Then N. clarified the location of branches of the German prison camp (he did not report its number and name), which, due to the change in the front line, had been transferred several times from one settlement to another. So, he spent the first week in captivity in Staraya Russa, then he was kept in villages 45 km far from Staraya Russa for about a month, then in the village Pochinok until the summer of 1942, in the village Obran’ (it may be the village Obran’ in the Demyansky District of the Leningrad Oblast, today – the Novgorod Oblast) for two or three months and in the village Pekashino until January–February 1943 (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 11).

Further efforts of the investigators were aimed at encouraging N. to admit his guilt and confirm facts of criminal activity in German captivity. The interrogation protocol of September 1, 1945 had the following statements: “Working as a bread distributor in the prison camp in the villages of Pochinok and Pokashino, I criminally used my position and treated prisoners of war roughly, pushed them away from kitchen and often inflicted blows. There were cases when I beat prisoners of war without sufficient grounds. I recall certain events now. In the autumn of 1942, I kicked three times [...] for trying to lift bones near the kitchen. Somehow, when dividing bread in the village Pekashino I beat the prisoner of war Boris for expressing dissatisfaction with the distribution of bread. [...] In the spring of 1942, I beat [...], who also expressed dissatisfaction with the distribution of bread. I remember hitting him several times on the back with my fist. Perhaps there were other cases when I beat prisoners of war, but I don’t remember now. Besides beating prisoners of war and pushing them away from the kitchen, I constantly insulted them. It is my fault that the prisoners of war did not always receive their bread allowance. When distributing additional pieces of bread to the main ration, they fell into the basket, and when prisoners of war made some

comments about this, I pushed them away. For some time, insistently demanding a fair distribution, I threatened to deprive them of bread, but I never did it. Once in Pekshino, because of my denunciation, the Germans beat a sergeant, who was especially dissatisfied with the bread distribution order. It was said that the sergeant was beaten in front of the formation, but I did not see it myself. [...] As a bread distributor, I was around the Germans. For fun the Germans and I could throw pieces of bread into the crowd of prisoners. Laughing at them, I cried, "Russian Schwein (pig), Vologodsky – good". Because of my addiction to using German words that I knew, I was called Franz in the camp. I lived with the Germans, and prisoners of war cleaned my boots along with theirs" (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 13–14).

The interrogation protocols also included excerpts from witness statements read out by the investigator. So, a witness [...] testified that in December 1942, when N. was carrying a bowl of pea soup to the garbage, he asked to give him this soup. In response to the request, N. cursed him and said that "he would better give the soup to a dog of the Ober-Lieutenant than to a prisoner of war". N. replied that he did not remember it but this fact could be possible, "since the Germans forbade helping prisoners of war in any way" (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 14–14 flesh side).

To the investigator's question: "What prompted you to embark on the path of assisting the Germans and criminal treatment of Soviet prisoners of war?", N. explained, "After becoming a bread distributor, I realized that in order to stay in this place, it was necessary to please the Germans and pursue their policy. I copied their rough treatment of prisoners. Besides, I was rude towards prisoners, because I did not believe in the Victory of the Red Army over fascist Germany" (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 14 flesh side). Thus, in addition to purely selfish considerations, the decision to cooperate with the occupiers was explained by military-political and moral-psychological factors, namely, successful offensive of the Wehrmacht and N.'s

conviction of the inability of Soviet troops to repel enemy aggression.

The interrogation protocol of September 2, 1945 reveals circumstances of N.'s enrollment in the German army. According to him, in January or February 1943, in the camp in the village Pekakhino, the German Ober-Lieutenant announced to the prisoners of war that they were enlisted in the German army and would be distributed among the units. For some time, the prisoners worked on logging, and then were sent to the working (sapper) battalion of the 30th German Infantry Division. There N. took the oath of allegiance to the German command. They took the oath in the village Suslovo near Staraya Russa (it might be the village of Suslovo of the Starorussky District of the Novgorod Oblast). According to N., before the formation of the battalion, a German Lieutenant read out the text of the oath of anti-Soviet content, after which everyone signed its acceptance. In the working battalion, N. was a private, received a monetary reward of 68 marks per month and got food in the amount of a German soldier. According to the interrogation protocol, N. had no weapons and did not participate in battles against the Red Army and partisans. The personnel of the battalion were engaged in the construction of roads and defensive structures in the German rear. As the Red Army advanced, the battalion retreated to Libava (or Liepaja – a city in the south-west of Latvia, on the Baltic Sea coast). Here, on May 9, soldiers of the battalion were transferred to the Soviet command and subsequently sent to special camps.

On September 6, 1945, the Deputy Head of the Smersh Counterintelligence Department No. 0313 approved a resolution on the indictment of N. under paragraph "b" of Article 58-1 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR. According to this document, N. in the area of Staraya Russa in the summer of 1941, participating in battles against the Germans as a private of the 232nd Infantry Division, surrendered to them following his premeditated plan. During his stay in the prison camp, he worked as a bread distributor in the camp kitchen and often replaced the Germans at the camp guard post. Using his position, he treated Soviet prisoners of war roughly, called names and beat them. From January–February 1943 to the day of the German surrender, he served as a private in the working (sapper) battalion of the 30th Ger-

man Infantry Division, where he took the oath and received an award – a bronze medal of the 2nd degree. The document had the signature of the accused. A copy of the resolution was sent to the prosecutor of the Petrozavodsk garrison (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Page 17).

During the interrogation on September 6, 1945, in which the Deputy Military Prosecutor of the Petrozavodsk garrison took part, N. admitted all the charges and explained that he had surrendered in order to save his life and that he had carried out all further criminal activities in order to have good relations with the Germans.

The indictment on the investigative case No. 2170 of September 14, 1945, signed by the Head of the Smersh Counterintelligence Department No. 0313 and the Military Prosecutor of the Petrozavodsk Garrison, contained all of the above charges. In addition, it indicated that criminal actions of N. were exposed by witness testimony and confrontation with a witness [...]. Considering the investigation of the case completed and the guilt of N. proved, the senior investigator of the Smersh Counterintelligence Department of the Belomorsky Military District, Lieutenant [...], sent the case to the Military Prosecutor of the Petrozavodsk garrison in accordance with Article 208 of the Criminal Procedural Code of the RSFSR to bring the accused to a military tribunal. For further detention, N. was transferred to the Military Tribunal of the Petrozavodsk Garrison (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 38–39).

On September 18, 1945, the permanent session of the Military Tribunal of the Belomorsky Military District in a closed court hearing in Medvezhyegorsk, consisting of Presiding Captain of Justice K., Captain K., Red Army soldier N., Senior Lieutenant of Justice K. (secretary), considered case No. 0053 on charges of the former Red Army soldier of the 232nd Infantry Division N. The materials of the case and the judicial investigation revealed that the defendant N., being on the front line of the Western Front, in August 1941, during a battle in the area of Staraya Russa, voluntarily surrendered to the Germans with a machine gun and then was sent to a prison camp. Being in the prison camp, N. in September 1941 worked as a bread distribu-

tor for prisoners of war until February 1943, while periodically performing duties of a guard of this camp. While serving as a bread distributor, N. mistreated Soviet prisoners of war and beat the latter. So, in the autumn of 1942, he kicked a prisoner of war three times because the latter, being half-starved, picked up a bone from meat in the kitchen and wanted to eat it. In October 1942, he beat two prisoners of war with his fists because the latter demanded the issuance of a full ration of bread. At the same time, N. denounced Sergeant Fedor to the head of the camp, since the prisoner expressed dissatisfaction with the food. For this, the prisoner Fedor was beaten before the formation.

Mocking Soviet prisoners of war, N. systematically did not give them required norms of bread and threw the remaining pieces into the crowd of prisoners of war, calling them “pigs”. Having earned the trust of the Germans, in February 1943 he voluntarily joined the German army – the sapper battalion of the 30th Infantry German Division. He received a reward of 68 German marks (670 rubles) per month. He served there until May 9, 1945, i.e. until the day of the surrender of Nazi Germany. During his time in the German army, in early 1945, N. he received an award from the German command, in particular, a bronze medal of the 2nd degree and took the oath of allegiance to the service of Nazi Germany.

Having found N. guilty of committing a crime, but “not identifying in the circumstances of the case the need to apply the highest measure of criminal punishment (execution) to the defendant”, the permanent session of the Military Tribunal on the basis of paragraph “b” of Article 58-1 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and Article 2 of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR “On penalties for Nazi villains guilty of murder and torture of Soviet civilians and captured Red Army soldiers, for spies, traitors to the Motherland from among Soviet citizens and for their accomplices” of April 19, 1943, sentenced N. to exile to hard labor for a period of 20 years, followed by a loss of rights for five years, without confiscation of property for the absence of such. The beginning of the term, taking into account pre-trial detention, was calculated from August 28, 1945. The verdict was declared final and was not subject to cassation appeal (Archive of the Office of the Federal Security Ser-

vice of the Russian Federation in the Vologda Oblast. Archive 25. Case 84. Pages 52–53 (flesh side).

### Conclusion

The study of materials of the considered archival case clearly demonstrates the tragedy of the fate of Soviet servicemen in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War. In the summer and autumn of 1941, the Nazi invaders occupied the north-western regions of the USSR, including the territory of modern Leningrad, Novgorod and Pskov oblasts. As in other sectors of the Soviet-German front, a large number of Soviet soldiers were trapped here in the first months of the war. Being in an enemy environment, many of them sought to avoid fascist bondage at any cost, but not everyone managed to escape.

In relation to Soviet prisoners of war, the Nazis provided for an extremely cruel regime, condemning them to death from starvation and inhuman treatment. In these conditions, there were those who preferred to go over to the enemy amid hopes to save their lives. As a rule, such persons tried to earn the favor of the German camp administration in order to get a privileged position in the camp staff and regular meals. In some cases, as evidenced by the re-

viewed archival case, the path from an additional meal portion to the oath of allegiance to Hitler was quite fleeting, and the price of betrayal was very high. Persons who collaborated with the Nazis became accomplices of the criminal occupation policy, the instrument of murder and torture of their compatriots.

After the surrender of Germany, most collaborators were sent to special (screening and filtration) camps of the NKVD. The Smersh Counterintelligence Department carried out operative and investigative measures to establish facts of treason to the Motherland and cooperation with the Nazi occupiers. Persons whose treacherous activities could be confirmed by evidence were tried by a military tribunal in accordance with paragraph “b” of Article 58-1 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and Article 2 of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR “On penalties for Nazi villains guilty of murder and torture of Soviet civilians and captured Red Army soldiers, for spies, traitors to the Motherland from among Soviet citizens and for their accomplices” of April 19, 1943. As a rule, accomplices of Nazi crimes served their sentences in penal camps of the Gulag.

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