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This map depicts the location of GULAG camps throughout the Soviet Union. For statistical information about the camps, and what happened at the various places, visit the [interactive map at The GULAG.org](http://TheGulag.org). Click on this image for a better view.

Millions of people did not "get through" the labor camps alive. Recently opened Russian State Archives, now available for study through the Hoover Institute, reveal the following facts:

- Ten percent of the entire population of the Soviet Union lived in the camps.
- The Gulag administration was the largest single employer in all of Europe.
- The average life expectancy of a camp prisoner was one winter.
- At least twenty million people perished in the labor camps during Stalin's rule.
- The camps dehumanized life and instituted a reign of terror throughout Soviet society.

Felix Dzerzhinsky, who became head of Soviet Russia's secret police after the October Revolution (in 1917), set up the regime's first forced labor camps. He was also known as the principal architect of the "Red Terror," a large-scale campaign of arrests and executions which Lenin and his political party (the Bolsheviks) used to consolidate their power between 1917 and 1923.

Acknowledging the government's regular use of fear against its own people, Dzerzhinsky told *New Life* (a Russian newspaper) in 1918:

We represent in ourselves organized terror - this must be said very clearly - such terror is now very necessary in the conditions we are living through in a time of revolution.

While the Nazis carefully documented their atrocities, and evidence like the Stroop Report survived to reveal massive genocide perpetrated by Hitler's forces, the Soviets carefully avoided creating such a record. While General Eisenhower and other Allied leaders purposefully included themselves in concentration camp pictures, to avoid the possibility of future denials that such events ever took place, no foreign troops ever closed down a Soviet forced labor camp.

Rather, the evidence we have today - in addition to that of the official archives - comes from camp prisoners themselves. Prisoners like Alexander Solzhenitsyn (the Nobel-Prize winning author whose stories - including his own personal experiences - informed people outside the Soviet Union what had happened in the GULAG) and Nikolai Getman (who, after he was released and "rehabilitated," surreptitiously created a series of stunning paintings which tell an agonizing story).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/FACTS-ABOUT-THE-GULAG-I-Am-David)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/FACTS-ABOUT-THE-GULAG-I-Am-David)

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Felix Dzerzhinsky - Head of Soviet Secret Police

Image of Felix Dzerzhinsky, online courtesy [Deutsches Historisches Museum](#).

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Felix-Dzerzhinsky-Head-of-Soviet-Secret-Police>



Felix Dzerzhinsky - Red Terror

Image of Felix Dzerzhinsky, as he appeared on 28 September 1918.

Image online, courtesy RIA Novosti archive, image #6464 / RIA Novosti.

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General Eisenhower at a Nazi Camp - Photo

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

PD

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Nikolai Getman - GULAG Prisoner

Image online, courtesy [Jamestown Foundation](#).

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FACTS ABOUT THE GULAG

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GULAG - A Documentary on Stalinist Labor Camps

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Director: Angus Macqueen

Production Company: BBC

Awards/nominations include:

Grierson Award, Best British Documentary 1999
IDA Documentary Feature Award 2000, Los Angeles
British Academy and Royal Television Society Nomination

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GULAG - A Documentary on Stalinist Labor Camps, Part 2

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Director: Angus Macqueen

Production Company: BBC

Awards/nominations include:

Grierson Award, Best British Documentary 1999
IDA Documentary Feature Award 2000, Los Angeles
British Academy and Royal Television Society Nominations

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Director: Angus Macqueen

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Director: Angus Macqueen

Production Company: BBC

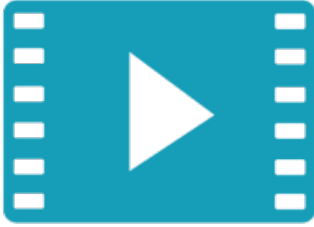
Awards/nominations include:

Grierson Award, Best British Documentary 1999
IDA Documentary Feature Award 2000, Los Angeles
British Academy and Royal Television Society Nominations

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Alexandr Solzhenitsyn - Documentary

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Alexander Solzhenitsyn - Leaving America

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Alexander Solzhenitsyn - Returning to Russia

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Alexander Solzhenitsyn - Part 4

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Alexander Solzhenitsyn - Part 5

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