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A Gulag unit in Macikai 1945–1955

Imprisonment was one of the most widely applied measures used against the opponents of the Communist Party and the Soviet regime. The USSR Main Administration of Camps (Rus. *Glavnoye upravleniye lagerey* [Gulag]) was the largest system of prisons – labour camps and colonies. Divisions of the main administration were established very rapidly in all the regions of the Soviet Union and its occupied territories during WWII. Local units subordinate to structural Gulag units of the USSR NKVD (MVD) (between 1953 and 1954 – to the Ministry of Justice of the USSR) were established in Soviet republics and included corrective labour colonies and labour camps. Inmates of these units did agricultural work, worked in local industry and produced consumer good and products for internal use of the camps¹. A Gulag unit in Lithuania – the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD – operated since 1944.

¹ Система исправительно-трудовых лагерей в СССР, 1923–1960: справочник, сост. М. Б. Смирнов, Москва, 1998, с. 532.

According to the data of 1 March 1952, the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD consisted of the following²:

- Unit 1 of the labour camp with three subunits:
Subunit 1 on Rasų Street in Vilnius, established on 1 August 1944, closed in 1953 (in April 1952 there were 471 prisoners, although the capacity was 200);
Subunit 2 on Baltarusių Street in Vilnius, established on 14 June 1951 (in April 1952 there were 240 prisoners, although the capacity was 200);
Subunit 3 in Liubavas Village of Nemenčinė District (today Vilnius District), established on 14 June 1951, closed in 1953 (in April 1952 there were 81 prisoners, the capacity was 200).
- Unit 2 of the labour camp – in Pravieniškės Village of Kaunas District, established on 1 August 1944 (in April 1952 there were 488 prisoners, although the capacity was 500).
- Unit 3 of the labour camp in the district of Šilutė. It consisted of two subunits:
 - Subunit 4 of the labour camp in Macikai Village (central subunit, on 1 April 1952 there were 2,935 prisoners, although the capacity was 2,314);
 - Subunit 5 of the labour camp in the Island of Rusnė, established on 29 November 1951, closed in 1953 (on 1 May 1952, there were 95 prisoners, the capacity was 200).
- 4th corrective labour colony in Klemiškės Village, Klaipėda District, operated from 1946 (on 1 March 1952, there were 325 prisoners, the capacity was 500).
- 5th corrective labour colony in Vilnius, 1 April 1952, closed on 1 April 1952.
- 9th corrective labour colony in the town of Naujojoji Akmenė, operated from 1947 (on 7 April 1952, there were 473 prisoners, the capacity was 650).
- A transit prison in Vilnius. This operated from 1946 (on 1 April 1952, there were 1,065 prisoners, the capacity was 1,090).
- An area hospital of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies in Vilnius, established in 1949 (on 5 April 1952, there were 165 prisoners, the capacity was 176).

² Based on the list of labour camp units and colonies of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD dated 1 March 1952, LYA, f. K-8, microfilm 5, b. 534; certificates-descriptions of labour camp units and colonies of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD dated March-May 1952, *ibid.*

From 1944, units of the labour camps and corrective labour colonies were subordinate to the LSSR NKVD-MVD Department of Corrective Labour Colonies (Rus. *Otdel ispravitelno trudovykh coloniy* [OITK]). In April 1953, they were transferred to the Ministry of Justice (not MVD), but in February 1954 they were returned to the MVD³. Inmates worked in agriculture, peat mining, industry, wood or metal processing, etc. Officially, these institutions were designated for detention of criminals, but people convicted for ‘counter-revolutionary crimes’ were also imprisoned there. The majority of criminals were imprisoned for a variety of household crimes and tax evasion. Out of the total 6,338 people imprisoned in these labour units and corrective labour colonies in March–May 1952, 375 were political prisoners charged under Article 58 of the Penal Code of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and most of these (218) were imprisoned in Unit 3 of the labour camp in Macikai Village of Šilutė District. As LSSR NKVD (MVD) archival documents show, from 1945 this unit was called the 3rd corrective labour colony and from June 1948 – the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp (Rus. *otdelnoye lagernoye podrazdelenie*, [OLP-3]), from early 1952 – the 3rd unit of the labour camp (Rus. *lagernoye otdelenie* [LO-3]). Further in the text we will call it the 3rd unit of the labour camp.

The archival documents do not provide the exact date of the establishment of the 3rd unit of the labour camp, however, both the details in the archival documents and memoirs of inmates show that in spring 1945 the labour camp already operated on the site of the former Nazi POW camp Stalag Luft 6 next to POW camp 184 for German Army prisoners, which was established in May 1945. Pursuant to Resolution No 162 of 22 March 1945, the LSSR Council of People’s Commissars transferred 1,569 ha of land in Šilutė County and some of the buildings of the former Nazi POW camp to the 3rd unit of the labour camp⁴. In spring 1945, 200 political prisoners (120 men and 80 women) were delivered to the labour camp from Šiauliai Prison⁵. From 1946 onwards the 3rd unit of the labour camp expanded rapidly, three parcels of land were allocated for production (agricultural and industrial). The aim was to fit out accommodation sections for prisoners by late January 1947, to repair the premises for military personnel, to arrange utility services (heating, etc.), to complete repairs of agricultural equipment, vehicles and tractors, and to expand production workshops in order to maximise the use of prisoner labour. In July–Au-

3 L. Truska, A. Anušauskas, I. Petravičiūtė, *Sovietinis saugumas Lietuvoje 1940–1953 metais*, Vilnius, 1999, p. 31.

4 Resolution No 162 of 22 March 1945 of the LSSR Council of People’s Commissars, LYA, f. V-69, ap. 1, b. 123, l. 46.

5 S. Mėlinauskas, *Macikai: Sugrižimas atminties takais*, p. 105.

gust 1948, the 3rd unit of the labour camp was reorganised by transferring the buildings of Soviet POW camp 184 to it⁶.

The labour camp was surrounded by 10 watchtowers and a double 3-metre high barbed wire fence. The space between the inner and outer fences was fitted with razor wire. A double barbed wire fence separated the men's and women's zones and also the living and production areas. Dogs guarded the spaces between the fences. The entrance gate to the camp bore a sign with the following words written in Russian in large letters: 'Work in the USSR is a matter of pride, glory, valour and heroism' (Rus. *Trud v SSSR – delo chesti, delo slavy, delo doblesti i geroystva*)⁷. This symbolised the essence of the Gulag prison system – hard and excruciating work.

The 3rd unit of the labour camp had all the attributes of a Soviet labour camp: barracks, sanitary section, punishment room for 50 prisoners, etc. The camp was divided into an industrial and a residential zone. The prisoners lived in an 8-barrack residential zone, subdivided into three zones – two men's zones (6 barracks) and one women's zone (2 barracks). In the documents the camp was called a republic-level hospital with the republic-level Mother and Child Home⁸. That is why this camp was different from other prisons in Lithuania. Most of the prisoners were disabled and were brought to this camp from other prisons across Lithuania and even from eastern parts of the Soviet Union. Both the men's and women's zones had inpatient units (a hospital), while pregnant women and women with children, born in this or other prisons, were held at the Mother and Child Home.

The living zone of the camp was expanded over time. In 1952, the living area was 5,928 square metres (an average of 2.3 square metres per prisoner); in 1953 the living area increased to 6,240 square metres and in 1954 – to 9,220 square metres. In addition, 1,300 square metres were allocated to the medical unit and the Mother and Child Home⁹.

6 Order dated 17 August 1948 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 8, l. 14.

7 B. Antanaitis, *Žodžiai iš pragaro*, p. 67.

8 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-154/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 96.

9 Certificate-description dated 16 April 1952 issued by B. Dimindavičius, chief of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 534; Deed dated 28 October 1953 of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 140; Deed dated February 1954 issued by Sinicyn, vice minister of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, f. K-8, microfilm 5, b. 209.

From 1951, the camp had two canteens in the auxiliary buildings (later – there was also a commercial canteen in the men's zone), a bathhouse with a capacity for 70 people, disinfection chamber, laundry, three drying areas, three item storage units, and a kiosk. In the living zone prisoners lived in work teams according to the type of work, regardless of the length of sentence or crime. The same principle applied in the women's zone. Due to fears that political prisoners might engage in anti-Soviet activity in prison, they were accommodated in separate sections, but in the same zone as other prisoners. Although the camp administration was not happy with this, it was impossible to separate political prisoners from criminals. In hospital, political prisoners were only held separately in the therapeutic and tuberculosis units, but were together with other convicts in the surgery unit. Prisoners under the 'standard discipline conditions' were held separately from those under the 'free discipline conditions' who could walk around unescorted by guards.

Prisoners were guarded and escorted outside the camp by the USSR MVD paramilitary guards ('riflemen'), who were hired individuals, often ex-soldiers of the Red Army. After WWII, they were used to provide security in labour camps and colonies across the Soviet Union. Privates and sergeants of the paramilitary guards of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the LSSR MVD lived in a brick building, which had a lounge, item storage, a drying room and a weapon cleaning room. Senior officers were accommodated in the village outside the camp area. In September 1953, the military personnel of the camp consisted of 100 riflemen officers and privates, of which 49 worked as security guards in the camp in Macikai and 21 – in the subunit in Rusnė¹⁰. In addition to the paramilitary guards, the prisoners were guarded by many supervisors who oversaw discipline. In September 1951, a limit of 204 supervisors was set for 2,304 prisoners. Each movement of a prisoner without a guard was treated as an attempt to escape. Prisoners were escorted to work outside the camp and back to the camp after work. Prisoners under 'free discipline conditions' (unescorted prisoners; prisoners convicted of minor household crimes could be entitled to such a discipline regime after some time in prison, provided they behaved properly) were also guarded, but not so closely and they could walk without guards (prisoners of this category lived and worked on the island of Rusnė).

In addition to the military part, the internal structure of the camp consisted of cultural education, sanitation, supply, agricultural administrative, distribution accounting, and transport sections, a bookkeeping unit, veterinary service, personnel and production planning units, a secretariat, office, and others. In September 1950, six self-defence groups of 5-7 people were established in the camp: order and supervision, fire protec-

10 Certificate dated September 1953 issued by the commander of the paramilitary guards of the 3rd squadron of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 20, l. 10.

tion, degassing, accident, restoration, medical and shelter). Members of these groups were paramilitary security guards (riflemen)¹¹.

The following served as chiefs in the camp:

- until February 1946 – Kovalevskiy;
- 1 March 1946 – 19 June 1946 – Stefan Lipackiy;
- 20 June 1946 – 20 February 1947 – Vasiliy Simashev;
- February 1947 – 23 June 1947 – Gavril Maryenkin;
- from July 1947 – Yegorov;
- 2 September 1948 – 15 August 1949 – Ivan Borovkov;
- until the end of January 1951– Zayats, replaced temporarily by Grigoyev;
- 5 April 1951 – July 1953 – Bronius Dimindavičius;
- August 1953 – June 1955 – Ivan Khomenka.

Pursuant to an order of 29 November 1951 of the LSSR MVD, subunit 5 of the 3rd unit of the labour camp was established in the Island of Rusnė (chief – Raspopov). It was finally fitted out in 1952 when two frame buildings for prisoner accommodation (250 square metres of living area) were built. This subunit was for prisoners who did agricultural work and who were allowed to move around without a guard escort. There was one bathhouse in the camp, which could be used by 10 people at a time. The capacity of the camp was 200 prisoners. In May 1952, the camp had 95 inmates (42 men and 53 women)¹². On 1 July 1952, 57 men and 67 women worked in the camp and lived outside the subunit¹³; in August 1954, 73 men and 49 women worked in the subunit¹⁴.

Pursuant to an order of 30 June 1953 of the chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, the names of the labour camp subunits, colonies and transit prisons could be written in full only in secret correspondence, while in other non-confidential documents a code name had to be used. Following the instruction from the USSR MVD Gulag, the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR was allocated the mailbox number OČ-12. In all non-confidential correspondence the 3rd unit of the labour camp had to be referred to by

- 11 Order dated 13 September 1950 of Zayats, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 14, l. 71–72.
- 12 Certificate-description dated 1 May 1952 of subunit 5 of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, f. K-8, ap. 1, micro-film 5, b. 534.
- 13 Certificate dated 16 July 1952 of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 415.
- 14 Deed dated 5–7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 186.

its mailbox number OČ-12/3 and in telegrams – by its code name ‘Zaliv’. It was however prohibited to use code names in the secret correspondence among other MVD departments. Letters to the relatives of prisoners from labour camps were not stamped with any stamps and the return address was given only as a mailbox number. It was categorically prohibited to specify the full name or the main administration or division of the place of imprisonment and to undersign any such letters with the sender’s name or surname¹⁵.

The number of inmates and contingent

In 1945–1950, 1,673 prisoners, who were convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes, not paying taxes to the state or escape from exile (Table 1), were held in the 3rd unit of the labour camp in Macikai. Participants of the armed and unarmed resistance, partisan supporters, messengers and other Lithuanians who opposed the Soviet occupation forces were charged with counter-revolutionary crimes described in Article 58 of the Soviet Penal Code¹⁶. They were imprisoned for several months, mostly prior to being tried, and then sent to the remote Gulag camps. For failure to pay taxes farmers were sentenced by the People’s Courts to between one and three years imprisonment and those who had escaped from exile – to three years. They did their entire sentence in the camp in Macikai. Table 1 shows the numbers of prisoners and the mortality rate of prisoners, which was the highest between 1945 and 1947.



Anelė Skirmantienė (1899–1960) in Zheshart (Komi ASSR) deported on 14 June 1941. After her escape from exile in 1946 and return to Lithuania she was arrested and imprisoned for three years in Macikai labour camp (Šilutė District). Skirmantienė was deported again in 1952. An inscription to her daughter Birutė who remained in Lithuania: ‘Remember forever, from your mom – to Birutė Mom 14/IV-55 *г. Кому СССР*’. Photo taken in 1954

15 Order dated 30 June 1953 of A. Kuznetsov, chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of LSSR, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 534.

16 *RSFSR baudžiamasis kodeksas*, Maskva, 1926, p. 35–43.

Table 1. Number of people imprisoned in the labour camp in Macikai for non-criminal activities, 1945–1950

Year of detention	Total number	For failure to pay taxes		For escape from exile		For counter-revolutionary crimes		Died during imprisonment	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1945–1947 ¹⁷	1,207	61	3.7	150	12.5	996	83.6	171	14.1
1948 ¹⁸	130	14	10.7	19	14.6	97	74.6	11	8.4
1949 ¹⁹	162	5	3.0	0	0	157	97.0	9	5.5
1950 ²⁰	174	18	10.3	0	0	156	89.6	13	7.5
Total	1,673	98	5.9	169	8.6	1406	85.0	204	12.2

Lithuanian prisoners made up the majority of inmates, for example, on 27 May 1952, out of 2,072 prisoners, 882 prisoners were Lithuanian, 613 – Russian, 121 – Polish, 78 – Belarusian, and 378 prisoners were of other nationalities²¹.

In 1951–1954, political prisoners accounted for about 18–20% of all prisoners. In May 1954, out of 2,072 prisoners sentenced to between 1 and 25 years in prison, 366 were convicted for counter-revolutionary activities, 842 – for stealing state and public property, 44 – for homicides, 29 were repeat offenders, etc.²²

The archival data provided in Table 2 show that in 1951 and 1952 the number of prisoners exceeded the capacity of the prison in Macikai by 27% and it was only from August 1954 that the number of prisoners was lower than the prescribed capacity.

17 *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, t. 2, Vilnius, 1998–2005.

18 *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, t. 2, Vilnius, 1998–2005.

19 *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas*, t. 4, Vilnius, 2012–2014.

20 Database of the list of names of *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas* stored by the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (LGGRTC).

21 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the LSSR MVD Committee, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 165–166.

22 *Ibid.*, l. 165.

Table 2. The number of prisoners in 1951–1954²³

Date	Capacity	Total number	Men	Women	Political prisoners
January 1951	2,166	2,750			
1 April 1952	2,314	2,935	1,849	1,086	218
1 July 1952		2,805		883	
16 September 1953		910	638	272	237
28 October 1953		2,267	1,573	694	
1 February 1954		2,320	1,629	691	
27 May 1954		2,072		655	366
5 August 1954	2,200	1,894		631	359
1 September 1954		1,724			
27 September 1954	2,200	1,582		529	312
1 October 1954		1,570			
20 November 1954	1,100	1,026		401	282

Criminals, who accounted for the bulk of the prison contingent used to cause unrests, riots, refuse to go to work and bully other prisoners. For many prisoners the 3rd unit of the labour camp in Macikai was a transit stop of their imprisonment. Some of the sick and the disabled prisoners were brought to Macikai from labour camps in the north of the Soviet Union (usually these were criminals); after their recovery they were sent to other prisons. For example, pursuant to an order of 21 October 1953 of the Main Administration of Labour Camps of the USSR MVD, 1,051 prisoners (including 298 women), considered disabled and sick, from Nyroblag (a corrective labour camp in Nyrob, Perm Oblast) and Kizelag (a corrective labour camp in Kizel Perm Oblast), were brought to Macikai and most of them criminals²⁴. Because of the unrests, in October–December 343 of them were deemed fit for physical work and transferred to other labour camps in the USSR²⁵.

23 The table has been completed on the basis of the reports and notifications of the administration of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 209; b. 415; b. 534; f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 11, l. 27; f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 20, l. 1; b. 26, l. 60, 92, 140, 165, 184.

24 Deed dated 28 October 1953 of the committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 140.

25 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the committee of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, l. 166.

There is no information on the release of prisoners as per type of crime prior to completion of their sentence period. Most frequently those prisoners who distinguished themselves in work and received commendations and disabled prisoners convicted of various offences, who previously worked in other labour camps and for some time at the 3rd unit of the labour camp were released prior to completion of their sentence period. Sometimes prisoners with severe disabilities or who had incurable diseases were also released before the end of their sentence period.

Living conditions of prisoners

Prison conditions were similar to those of a concentration camp. The most difficult conditions for prisoners were at the beginning, when the camp was being established. In his order of 2 February 1948, the chief of the camp, Yegorov, wrote that the majority of prisoners did not have beds and ‘were lying around on the floor without anywhere to sleep except on the bare ground without any bedding, [...] there was a shortage of boards in the four-bunk bed units, however wooden boards that were piled on the floor right there were used for fitting out the classrooms for agricultural education’²⁶. Many of the boards used for the bunk beds were not even sanded. The chief of the camp accused the staff of a negligent and inhumane attitude towards their work and the prisoners and ordered them to make 20 four-bunk beds. The staff did not even bring the bunk beds they had made into the zone. On the order of the chief the prisoners carried the bunk beds to the residential zone after they came back from work. In later years, as in other Soviet labour camps, prisoners usually slept on wooden bunk beds, but there were not always sufficient beds for all prisoners. At the end of 1951, due to the shortage of beds, 300 prisoners were sleeping on bunk beds, although 90 % of beds were actually unusable²⁷. The deed dated October 1953 of the committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR says that there should have been 2,267 bunk beds, but there were only 1,252. So, there were only sufficient beds for half of the prisoners. And even these bunk beds were damaged and unusable, while there were only enough iron beds for 400 people²⁸.

26 Order dated 2 February 1948 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 8, l. 2.

27 Notification dated 8 January 1952 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 11, l. 28.

28 Deed dated 18 October 1953 of the Committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 143–144.

Throughout lifetime of the labour camp, prisoners were short of bedding and blankets. There was a shortage of underwear, only one in two prisoners had underwear. Likewise the prisoners did not have sufficient outerwear, especially warm clothes for winter, and footwear. After bathing or leaving the disinfection chamber they had to put their old dirty linen back on. There were cases where prisoners did not go to work because they had no footwear²⁹. For example, in early 1951, there was a shortage of 600–700 blankets and 1,200 pairs of footwear. In October 1953, prisoners were supposed to be issued 2,500 pairs of boots for working, but only 1,527 were available, so they were 973 pairs short. There were supposed to be 5,100 pairs of underwear, but only 2,550 were available, so again they were 2,600 pairs short. There were supposed to be 70 pairs of children's footwear, but only 16 were available and they were 54 pairs short³⁰.

All prisoners lived in low-rise brick barracks built for prisoners of war during the Nazi occupation. The buildings had no foundations, no ceilings (the building just had a roof), the walls were only half a brick thick, they were not plastered, and did not provide good protection against the cold. The floorboards were laid directly onto the soil and became damp. The buildings were really cold and were not suitable for living in during winter. The camp administration recognised that the barracks were uninhabitable and all needed repair: floors had to be changed and ceilings had to be installed. However, no money was allocated for the barracks or other buildings (bathhouse, canteen) due to the alleged shortage of money and building materials. Every year a standard repair of the barracks was carried out – the walls and ceiling were painted; the roofs, doors and windows were mended. In 1953, only the premises of the paramilitary guards were fully repaired.

The situation was similar for the other structures of the labour camp. For example, the inspection deed dated October 1953 says that 'the fence must be repaired, lighting in the camp was poor, fences and electricity poles were rotten, lights did not meet the requirements, the cabling was of insufficient power and the watchtowers were in danger of collapsing in a strong wind. The punishment room was inappropriate for keeping prisoners, because the door hinges of most of the cells were broken'³¹.

Each year, the camp administration failed to prepare for the heating season and accumulate sufficient quantities of firewood. Due to the lack of fuel prisoners' living quar-

29 Notification dated 11 April 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 16.

30 Deed dated 18 October 1953 of the Committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 145.

31 Deed dated 18 October 1953 of the Committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 144.

ters, the kitchen, and the hospital were often unheated. For example, in winter 1951 they needed 9,000 cubic metres of firewood, but only had half that amount³². In January 1951, during an inspection of the situation in the camp's utility and sanitation areas it was identified that the firewood which should have been used for heating 'was supplied to the industrial zone to produce boxes, and wet twigs and sawdust were used for heating instead; the result was that the living areas were cold and prisoners were sick. Due to the lack of heat, it was impossible to operate the bathhouse and laundry properly. [...] Some of the barracks became uninhabitable. Bedding used by many prisoners was inappropriate. The mattress filling was worn out, and another 200 mattresses had no stuffing, not all prisoners had towels'³³.

Industrial waste, rubbish, and old things lay scattered around the site, the residential barracks were dirty and smelt strongly of urine. Due to the poor hygiene conditions, prisoners were riddled with lice. For example, during an inspection in August 1947, half of the prisoners who worked outdoors in parcel No. 2 had lice³⁴. Prisoners suffered from the cold not only inside the barracks, but also during the camp inspections that lasted for 1.5–2 hours when they were required to stand at attention outside. In addition, physical force was used against prisoners, even those who were physically weak, (usually by prisoners who worked as supervisors, foremen or work allocators [Rus. *naryadchik*]). In his order of 21 August 1947 the camp chief wrote: 'The work allocator and the foreman use physical force against prisoners in spite of the fact that many prisoners are weak. Although the food could be improved from local resources (vegetables, etc. could be used), the food is poor'. Under this order he instructed that very feeble prisoners be sent to hospital and that a disinfection chamber be prepared. Work allocator Steponavičius was put in detention for 5 days for using physical force and the foreman was reprimanded, but both were replaced by other prisoners.

However, despite numerous instructions and orders issued by camp chiefs and higher LSSR MVD officials regarding improvement of the utility and sanitary areas of the labour camp or penalties for negligent work, the situation did not change and orders were not carried out. The camp personnel, from the chiefs down to the employees, worked

32 Notification dated 11 April 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 16–16 a. p.

33 Order dated 25 January 1951 of J. Bartašiūnas, minister of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-141, ap. 1, b. 192, l. 21–22.

34 Order dated 21 August 1947 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 3, l. 73–74.

carelessly and with indifference, no one cared about improving the living conditions of inmates. Following the order of 25 January 1951 of minister of LSSR MVD Juozas Bartašiūnas, the chief of the camp, Zayats, was replaced, because he was deemed unfit and due to the poor utility and sanitary conditions of the camp, however, violations continued and the living conditions of prisoners did not improve until the closing of the 3rd unit of the labour camp in 1955³⁵.

Another problem of Soviet labour camps was the poor food served to prisoners. The 3rd unit of the labour camp was no exception. Many prisoners were employed in providing services for the prison, including in the kitchen. So, those who did not necessarily have any special training also did the cooking. Food product deliveries to the camp were inconsistent; there was often a shortage of vegetables, flour, sugar and other products. Food and boiling water were not served at the right time, the menu was always the same. Due to the negligence of the administration and the stock room employees, food products often went bad, with the result that prisoners did not get sufficient food. In 1954, for example, Belkova, the chief of the sanitary unit, made an unlawful payment of food rations, intended for patients, to the kitchen staff who cooked for the prison hospital³⁶. The kitchen often lacked cereal, so the starter and the main course were cooked from oats; fresh vegetables were rarely supplied, although the labour camp owned quite a large parcel of land where prisoners cultivated vegetables. Food norms were not observed. For example, the inspection in January 1951 determined that instead of the 400 grams of bread, prisoners were given 250 grams of bread and the rest was substituted with cabbage³⁷. The camp administration did not ensure sufficient food supplies for winter. For the winter 1953/1954, 400 tonnes of potatoes and 135 tonnes of cabbage were required for the camp, however, in late October 1953, the camp only had 169 tonnes of potatoes and 66 tonnes of cabbage³⁸.

In 1954, the camp had a shared kitchen with mouldy walls, a separate kitchen for patients, and three canteens – for men, women (built in summer 1952) and the patients. There was a commercial canteen in the women's zone, but it could only seat 40 people. The camp had a kiosk, but because of such a large number of prisoners it was too small.

35 Order dated 25 January 1951 of J. Bartašiūnas, minister of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-141, ap. 1, b. 192, l. 22.

36 Deed dated 5-7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 187.

37 Order dated 25 January 1951 of J. Bartašiūnas, minister of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-141, ap. 1, b. 192, l. 21-22.

38 Deed dated 18 October 1953 of the Committee of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Justice of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 145.

The prisoners who were admitted to hospital could not use the kiosk, because it was too far from the hospital. Food for prisoners who worked in the fields and on the farm with the livestock was delivered to their workplace, but there was no specific place for eating, so prisoners sat on the ground to eat.

Prisoners could make complaints regarding poor living conditions or inhumane treatment by camp employees, but because of the bureaucratic system, negligence and indifference their complaints were often ignored. All complaints and claims first went to the chief of the cultural education unit, who passed them to a prisoner working in this unit for recording. The recorded letter was transferred to the chief or deputy chief of the camp. These would issue an order and send it to the employee of the cultural education unit who would pass it to the person who had to implement the order. It was hard to trace what happened to the complaints submitted by prisoners. The procedure was long, so it was difficult to control whether and where the complaint got lost. Prisoners' appeals for pardon would not be dispatched for 3–4 months. In addition, many prisoners did not know to whom they should address complaints and letters for amnesty. The internal rules and other information in the camp were written in the Russian language, whereas the prisoners were mostly Lithuanians. Some prisoners were illiterate, which was used by the camp staff, who demanded compensation for writing a complaint or a letter.

Cultural education was designed to take care of the prisoners' political education. The camp had a library and a hall with seating for 700 where men and women were given lectures and shown films, separately. The lectures given by camp chiefs, deputy chiefs and other administrative personnel were aimed at instilling Soviet ideology. The most common themes of the lectures were Soviet education policy, the international situation, the moral face of the Soviet man, etc. The ideological theses of the Communist Party of the district were read during the lectures too. The camp administration however complained that 'cultural educational work did not have the desired effect among prisoners, because political prisoners communicated with those sentenced for household crimes and this had a negative effect on the re-education of criminals'³⁹. The radio only broadcast the programmes of Moscow and Vilnius radio stations. Listening to the radio was strictly controlled. The radios were kept under lock and key. In 1951 the camp authorities prohibited personnel from bringing their radios for repair to the prison, because the prisoners listened to the Voice of America and BBC broadcasts⁴⁰.

39 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, *Ibid.*, l. 170.

40 Order dated 3 March 1951 of Grigoryev, acting chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 15, l. 16.

Work of prisoners

The work profile at the 3rd unit of the labour camp was agriculture and manufacturing of wood for use by industries.. Agricultural activities involved animal husbandry and horticulture. The main agricultural activity was crop and vegetable cultivation, harvesting, feed preparation, and cattle and pig farming. Wood manufacturing consisted of the manufacturing of furniture (dining tables) and wooden packing boxes. There was a sawmill, a wood processing workshop and other auxiliary workshops, a forge, product warehouses, a farm equipment workshop (repair workshop for agricultural equipment and garages), a mill, a bakery, a shoe repair shop, a tailor's, a laundry, a barber's/hairdresser's, etc. on the site of the camp. The prisoners in subunit 5 on the Island of Rusné did agricultural work on the parcel of land in Pakalnés Village.

Pursuant to an order of 17 June 1946 three production parcels of land were formed. Two of them were allocated for agriculture, a dairy farm and an industrial production area, and the third – for fishing⁴¹. Five teams of prisoners (two male and three female teams) worked in agriculture, a total of around 125 prisoners.

The agricultural section was expanded. In November 1954, there was 1,689 hectares of land, of which 648 hectares were arable land. The harvested area was 495 hectares, of which 310 hectares were cereal and leguminous agricultural plants, 18.25 hectares of vegetables and technical crops, 33 hectares of winter crops and 500 hectares of meadows⁴².

The camp had farm buildings (in 1951 there were four buildings) where horses, cattle, pigs and poultry (chickens, geese, ducks) were kept and a dairy. In March 1946, there were 205 horses and 103 cattle⁴³. In September 1953, there were 125 horses, 617 cattle and 300 pigs on the farm; and in November 1954 – 116 horses (of which 81 were working horses), 606 cattle (of which 166 cows) and 252 pigs. The farm had three tractors, one thresher and other inventory⁴⁴.

41 Order dated 17 June 1946 of S. Lipackiy, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 60.

42 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 95.

43 Order dated 25 March 1946 of S. Lipackiy, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 27.

44 Certificate dated 17 September 1953 of the head of the veterinary unit of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 20, l. 27 a. p.; Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 95.

As in the rest of the Soviet Union, the camp administration were tasked not only with achieving the planned output indicators in both industrial production and agriculture, but were also required to exceed them by increasing labour productivity significantly. In April 1951, the plan was to sow 422 hectares with spring cereals and other crops. It was planned to sow vegetables in 10 days, Lupins – in 3 days, and plant potatoes in 15 days. In total 570 hectares were actually sown and planted⁴⁵. If they exceeded the plans and output norms, prisoners were allowed to meet with their relatives. Pursuant to an order of July 1947 of the chief of the 3rd corrective labour camp, those who exceeded production rates by up to 25 % were granted 5-minute meetings with relatives; those who exceeded production rates by 26–50 % were granted 10-minute meetings with relatives, 51–100 % – 20-minute meetings; and over 100 % – 30-minute meetings with relatives during working hours and up to 1 hour on weekends⁴⁶. In autumn 1948, after harvesting, 26 prisoners were allowed to meet with relatives. Pursuant to an order of 1948, prisoners who worked longer hours could get additional food products from the farm, but only if they fulfilled or exceeded the established output norms.

The inmates were poorly fed and were often hungry, even though according to the reports, production outputs were quite high. In Q1 1951, for example, 586.3 metric centners of milk (instead of the planned 606.9) were produced, while the output of the wood-processing workshop amounted to 674,700 roubles (RUB) (instead of the planned RUB 602,000)⁴⁷.

In Q4 1951, 294 hectares of crops were harvested, 134 tonnes of grain were milled, 239 tonnes of hay and chaff were collected, and 11 tonnes of vegetables and 146 tonnes of potatoes were harvested. The archival documents state that crops were harvested 45 days

45 Notification dated 11 April 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 14 a. p.; Notification dated 3 July 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 84.

46 Order dated 13 July 1947 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 1, b. 3, l. 23; S. Mėlinauskas, *Macikai: Sugrįžimas atminties takais*, p. 123.

47 Report (not earlier than 1 April 1951) of Grigoryev, acting chief of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 51–52.

earlier than planned⁴⁸. In May 1954, 251 hectares of crops were sown; 135.45 hectares of vegetables (beets, carrots, potatoes, cabbage, cucumber, tomato, corn, etc.) were sown and planted, totalling 386.45 hectares⁴⁹.

The working hours of prisoners changed depending on the season. In winter the working hours were reduced to 8.5 hours (prisoners worked from 9 o'clock in the morning) and during planting/sowing or harvesting season it was extended. In 1946, during the harvesting (from 1 August to 15 September) the working hours were from 07.00 to 21.00 with a lunch break from 13.00 to 15.00⁵⁰. From August 1947, working hours were extended to 10–11 hours per day (from 08.00 to 20.00 with a lunch break from 13.30 to 15.00); inside the camp – it was extended to 9 hours per day⁵¹. Those who worked in agriculture, had days off 2–4 times a month and only if the weather conditions were not suitable for work. Kitchen employees worked 12–14 hours daily without any days off.

From November 1948, in order to make use of the daylight, the camp authorities set the same working hours for all prisoners (both working in agriculture and industrial production) from 09.00 to 17.30 without a lunch break. Prisoners were provided with food twice a day – in the morning and evening, the lunch ration was redistributed between the morning and evening meals⁵².

Prisoners working in mechanical workshops, construction, forges and other places were not provided with any special clothing, and there were violations of work safety rules.

Since the majority of prisoners of the camp were disabled and sick people (including pregnant women and nursing mothers), the majority of them did not work. As a result, the entire workload fell on a small number of prisoners. Between 1 January 1954 and 1 May 1954, there were on average 2,293 prisoners, of whom 61% (1,402 prisoners) were unable to work due to disability or illness. Other prisoners did not work because they were held in quarantine (103 prisoners), punishment cells, or were waiting to be trans-

48 Notification dated 8 October 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, *ibid.*, l. 159.

49 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 2, l. 174–175.

50 Order dated 30 July 1946 of V. Simashev, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 79.

51 Order dated 1 August 1947 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 3, l. 37.

52 Order dated 1 November 1948 of Timofeyev, deputy chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 7, l. 132.

ferred, etc. During this period, on average 241 prisoners worked in agricultural and industrial production and 189 in the camp⁵³. In July 1954, only 27% of prisoners worked (at the time there were 1,894 prisoners, of whom 1,295 were disabled and 88 were unable to work due to other reasons)⁵⁴.

Medical care and health condition of prisoners

Although a number of sick and disabled prisoners were sent to the 3rd unit of the labour camp, proper conditions for their accommodation and supervision (let alone treatment) were never provided over the lifetime of the camp. If a person was healthy on admission to the camp perhaps they had some chance of survival, however, due to the poor sanitary conditions they were very likely to get fleas, lice or infectious diseases, fall ill from the cold or become exhausted from malnutrition, but it was very unlikely that sick or disabled prisoners would survive.

The negligent, inhumane and indifferent attitude of the camp staff to the sick and disabled aggravated the suffering of these prisoners and hastened their death.

Table 3. Life expectancy of prisoners after conviction⁵⁵

Life expectancy	1–11 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6–8 years
Number of deceased prisoners	86	13	61	28	31	5	6

No information is available about 142 deceased prisoners.

Although there was a hospital in the camp territory, some patients were not admitted to hospital and remained in their residential zones, neglected, deprived of medical assistance and proper food⁵⁶. As a result infections spread very easily.

53 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 2, l. 179.

54 Deed dated 5–7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of LSSR, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 186.

55 Record book No. 2 of the prisoners who died in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 9.

56 Order dated 2 February 1948 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 8, l. 1.

The aim of the camp administration was to increase the employability of prisoners rather than to look after their health. On 29 February 1946, Kovalevskiy, the chief of the camp, issued an order in which he stated that the medical labour commission had established that many prisoners were in poor health and half of the new prisoners were severely depleted (ill with dystrophy). The document instructed the head of the sanitation unit to improve the physical condition of prisoners and to increase their employability: to make a list of prisoners to be included in the so-called health promotion group, to accommodate them in separate premises, to provide them with beds and bedding, and to give them extra food. Every two weeks the health of this group of prisoners was to be checked and when they began to recover they were to be sent to work. Other prisoners who would not be included in this group were to be used for light work⁵⁷.

Officially, according to their fitness prisoners were divided into four categories of physical labour. Healthy and able-bodied prisoners belonged to category one; prisoners who were partially able to work belonged to category two; prisoners who were excused from work temporarily or suffered from chronic diseases belonged to category three; and prisoners suffering from dystrophy, who were disabled or were unable to walk belonged to category four. In order to maximise the use of prisoner labour, the authorities of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD and the camp administration forced sick prisoners to work. Pursuant to the ordinance of 15 January 1947, Azat Amirian, deputy chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, gave an order to expand production workshops and to use 300 disabled prisoners and prisoners from physical labour category four for light work (production of toys and baskets)⁵⁸. In his order dated 21 August 1947 regarding the inspection results of the 2nd (agricultural) parcel of land, Yegorov, the chief of the camp, stated: 'Since prisoners [working] in the 2nd (agricultural) parcel of land are weak, they are to be allowed a day off once a week (Sunday) and this is to be considered a sanitary day'⁵⁹.

According to the information dated 16 September 1953, there were 910 prisoners in the camp. Of these, 168 (96 men and 72 women) were fit for physical labour category one and 349 (239 men and 110 women) were fit for physical labour category two. There were

57 Order dated 29 February 1946 of Kovalevskiy, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR NKVD, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 15.

58 Ordinance dated 15 January 1947 of A. Amirian, deputy chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 2, l. 23.

59 Order dated 21 August 1947 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 3, l. 73–74.

393 (309 men and 84 women) disabled persons in need of medical assistance and 138 (105 men and 33 women) who were unable to work⁶⁰.

According to the information dated 27 May 1954, out of 2,072 prisoners, 1,279 (910 men and 369 women) were disabled and sick⁶¹. In the deed dated 20 November 1954, Markelov, the chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, wrote that there were 1,026 prisoners, of which 71 prisoners (of which 37 women) were suitable for physical labour category one; 311 prisoners (of which 142 women) were suitable for physical labour category two. There were 626 prisoners who were sick and unsuitable for physical work or disabled. Among those prisoners who were ill, 54 prisoners had tuberculosis, 59 were recovering from surgery, and 150 had other conditions⁶².

Table 4. Number of deceased prisoners by age⁶³

Age of deceased prisoners	Number of deceased prisoners	
	Number	%
Under 20 years of age	10	2.7
20–30	47	12.6
31–40	29	7.8
41–50	54	14.5
51–60	101	27.2
61–70	78	21.0
Over 70 years of age	13	3.5
Age not known	40	10.8
Total number of prisoners who died in 1948–1952	372	100

60 Certificate dated September 1953 of the head of the sanitary unit of the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 20, l. 2.

61 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 170.

62 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 92, 96.

63 Record book No. 2 of the prisoners who died in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 9.

The medical part of the labour camp consisted of a hospital, a Mother and Child Home, a maternity home, two outpatient units, a chemist and a laboratory. There were inpatient units in both the men's and women's zones of the camp. The hospital had therapeutic, surgery, infectious disease and tuberculosis units and had 100 beds, but, for example, in late May 1953 there were as many as 137 patients in the hospital: 44 (of which 16 women) patients were in the therapeutic unit, 23 (of which four women) in the surgery unit, 10 women in the infectious disease unit, and 30 (of which 10 women) in the tuberculosis unit⁶⁴. Each unit had wards with disabled prisoners who needed a medical care and individual nursing. These wards had 30 to 40 disabled prisoners. However, care was not provided to either those who were ill or disabled. On 27 September 1954, there were 861 disabled prisoners, of which 278 were in hospital, but there were only four doctors, one assistant doctor and six nurses. Such a small number of staff could not provide care for so many sick and disabled people. In addition, they also still had to provide health care to the administration of the camp⁶⁵.

The camp did not have a neurologist or a gynaecologist. There was no eye specialist or an ear, nose and throat specialist, neither were such doctors available in the district hospital, so it was not possible to call them in for consultations. In autumn 1954, the tuberculosis unit with 12 patients in the women's hospital did not have a specialist doctor or an assistant doctor and there was only a prisoner, who was a nurse by profession, to take care of the patients and issue medicines only if it was necessary. Two patients with the 'open' type of tuberculosis were in the same room as the rest of the women who had tuberculosis⁶⁶. In July 1954, there were 57 prisoners with open pulmonary tuberculosis, but they were not isolated from other patients⁶⁷. There was an acute shortage of medicines in the hospital and in the Mother and Child Home. There were cases of prisoners buying penicillin, gauze bandages or cotton wool for themselves. Many medicinal products and medical supplies delivered to the hospital in 1953 were not suitable, and were sent from other units of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD that had been closed.

The surgery unit provided services only in urgent cases. The inpatient units were short of beds and those that were available were in poor condition. Furthermore the premises

64 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 171.

65 Deed dated 26–28 September 1954 of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 69.

66 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 100.

67 Deed dated 5–7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 187.

were unsuitable for patients, particularly in winter. Both the men's and women's hospital barracks were in very poor condition – in a state of total disrepair, and were decrepit, damp and cold. The conditions in the tuberculosis and surgery units were the worst; there were no air vents to air the premises. The heating stove system in the hospitals heated the corridors rather than hospital wards⁶⁸.

All committees formed by the repressive Soviet structures to assess the conditions of the labour camp emphasised that the hospitals required major repairs, but nothing changed. The sick and the disabled were left to die a slow and painful death. During one such inspection on 27 September 1954, it was identified that 'water was leaking through the hospital roof, [...] it was dark in the surgery unit and there was a smell of mould. The floor in large wards for weak prisoners had so many holes that it was difficult for even a healthy person to walk⁶⁹.

If patients were diagnosed with a communicable disease, the camp chief ordered two-week quarantine, sick prisoners were isolated, and only half the staff and security were allowed into the camp and only if this was necessary, meetings between prisoners and their relatives were prohibited, new prisoners were not accepted and prisoners could not be sent to other prisons, prisoners were to be provided with boiled drinking water, and the residential zone of the prison and toilets was to be cleaned. However nothing changed and hygiene instructions were ignored. The prison never had sufficient boiled drinking water, the kitchens, bathhouse and toilets were poorly cleaned, and sanitary inspections were not performed. The conditions in the bathhouse were most unsanitary and moreover, it was in an inconvenient location further away from the residential zones. It was therefore difficult to take the sick and the disabled to the bathhouse and in addition there were no stretchers to carry the patients on.

Although the prison staff and new prisoners were vaccinated against communicable diseases and new prisoners were placed in quarantine for 21 days (separate sections), intestinal diseases spread, particularly typhus and typhoid. The main cause of this was the lack of hygiene: flies, drinking water, which was not boiled, and poorly washed vegetables and fruits.

68 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 99.

69 Deed dated 26–28 September 1954 of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 68.

Table 5. Prisoner mortality 1948–1952⁷⁰

Type of charge: the Penal Code of the RSFSR	Number of deceased prisoners	
	Number	%
Charged under Article 58 of the Penal Code of the RSFSR	45	12.1
Failed to pay taxes	30	8.1
Escaped from exile	14	3.8
Avoided mobilisation	9	2.4
Charged for speculation, embezzlement of state property, production of moonshine, other household crimes	207	55.6
Charged for robbery, crimes against the health and lives of others	67	18.0
Total number of prisoners who died in 1948–1952	372	100

Mother and Child Home

It is not known whether the Mother and Child Home (Rus. *Dom materi i rebyonka*, DMR) was in the camp from the time it was established in 1945, but the archival documents provide evidence that it was already operating in 1946. The home was on the site of the labour camp and was intended for imprisoned women with children under two years of age (older children were usually sent to a children's home). Some women were pregnant when they were sent to prison, others were delivered from other prisons with children. Children in the barracks were divided by age.

Table 6. Prisons from which women were delivered with children, October 1949–1953⁷¹

Prison	Number of women with children
Macikai labour camp*	135

* Children born in Macikai labour camp.

70 Record book No. 2 of prisoners who died in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 9.

71 Record book No. 3 of children born in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 12.

Prison	Number of women with children
Pravieniškės (women's) prison	97
Panevėžys women's prison	23
Klaipėda prison	30
Kaunas hard labour prison	23
Šiauliai prison	29
Marijampolė prison	3
Šilutė prison	19
Vilnius transit prison	113
Other places of imprisonment	8
Total number of women with children	480



Three political and two criminal female prisoners with children. From left to right: Eugenija Lapinskienė with her daughter Virginija (b. 1953), Stefa Daukšaitė with her daughter Vandutė (b. 1953); above: Laimutė with her son Antanėlis and two criminal prisoners with children (names unknown). Šilutė labour camp, 1954

Until 1951, the Mother and Child Home was allocated a better building with better heating, a laundry and a drying room. Apart from this, other conditions in the home were not any better than in other units of the camp. Living areas for sick and healthy children and for pregnant women were untidy, dirty and damp. There was a shortage of boiled water and water for washing dishes, hygiene needs and washing clothes. Children's kitchens and milk preparation rooms did not meet sanitary requirements, the whitewash used to paint the walls was peeling and the roof was leaking⁷². The living quarters and the kitchen were full of flies and rodents. The face of a 4-month-old baby who passed away in August 1948 had been bitten by rodents⁷³.

Due to the unsanitary conditions, lack of care, shortage of medicines and vitamin deficiency, child mortality was high. Over a period of 10 days in December 1948, four children passed away⁷⁴; in 1951 – 12 children and in 1952 – 10 children⁷⁵. According to the data of 20 September 1951, four children were seriously ill (two had pneumonia, one had pulmonary tuberculosis, and one had congenital syphilis). Measles, meningitis, gastrointestinal diseases, pulmonary tuberculosis and pneumonia were usually specified as the causes of death. This, however, was probably not true. While many orders of the chief of the camp spoke about measures to improve the conditions and the staff of the Mother and Child Home and medical personnel received reprimands and warnings, negligence and cold-heartedness were widespread, orders were often ignored, and everything remained exactly the same, as in the rest of the camp. The personnel providing care to sick children did not follow doctors' instructions regarding medicines and diets. Children's clothes and diapers were dirty, wet, and often unwashed, just dried and subsequently used for another child. Quarantine requirements for sick children were also ignored. There was no special hospital ward in the home. Sick children were transferred to separate premises and looked after by general hospital staff. The linen of healthy and

72 Notification dated 25 September 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 19, l. 31.

73 Order dated 9 August 1948 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 5, l. 132.

74 Order dated 13 December 1948 of I. Borovkov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, l. 218.

75 Notification dated 25 September 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 19, l. 32–33, 104; Certificate dated 16 July 1952 of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 415; Record book No. 3 of children born in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 13.

sick children was dried together. This was the cause of the spread of infections, usually measles, typhoid, etc.

Table 7. Statistics related to children born in the labour camp

Mothers brought with children ⁷⁶		Children born in the camp with no names of mothers specified	Total number of children	Number of sick children ⁷⁷	
Year	Number			Number	%
1948	40		40		
1949	85		85	24	28.2
1950	101		101	22	21.8
1951	87	3	90	12	13.3
1952	28	37	65	10	15.4
1953	0	29	29	2	6.9
Unknown	139	0	139	2	1.4
Total	480	69	549	72	13.1

Both hired staff and prisoners worked as nannies. If, at the end of their shift, the next shift was late, the children were left unattended, sometimes for as long as 3–4 hours. In addition, nannies changed frequently. An order of 13 December 1948 of Borovkov, the chief of the camp, said that at the Mother and Child Home, ‘babies were fed, dressed and washed by whoever could, but nobody cared for older children’; mothers often conflicted with nannies and other employees, disputes and fighting used to break out⁷⁸. Employees of the labour camp provided no information about the care, feeding or medical issues of children to either mothers or nannies, and there were no disease prevention measures. Due to the unsanitary conditions children often had diarrhoea and even then mothers were not told what they should do to avoid it. As a result, children with diarrhoea were often fed unsuitable food.

76 Record book No. 3 of children born in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 12.

77 Record book No. 3 of children born in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 13.

78 Order dated 13 December 1948 of I. Borovkov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 5, l. 218.

Table 8. The ages of children who were born and who died in the labour camp in 1948–1954⁷⁹

Number of children who passed away	Age of infant
5	1 week
4	Up to 1 month
6	2 months
14	3 months
7	4 months
10	5 months
5	6 months
5	7 months
3	8 months
4	9 months
2	10 months
1	11 months
4	From 1 year to 1 year and 6 months
2	From 2 years and 2 years and 6 months
Total number 72	

On 20 September 1951, there were 95 children of imprisoned women at the Mother and Child Home, 60 were under 9 months and 35 – between nine months and two years of age⁸⁰. There were 12 hired medical staff to look after the children (two doctors, one assistant doctor, one senior nurse and eight nurses). In addition, 40 prisoners worked in the home, one of which was a doctor, two were nurses (with no medical training, later removed from the job), 23 nannies and 14 for auxiliary work.

There was always a shortage of diapers, linen, blankets, warm clothing, socks, footwear, etc. in the home. Children did not get fresh fruit and vegetables often, fresh meat was scarce. Cooked meals were often different from those specified in the menu. For example, according to the menu on 31 July 1948, children were to be served rice porridge prepared with milk and butter for supper, but instead they had rice porridge with very little milk

79 Record book No. 3 of children born in the 3rd unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, ap. 2, b. 13.

80 Notification dated 25 September 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 19, l. 31.

and no butter⁸¹. In August 1951, vegetables were replaced with cereal and macaroni, in September instead of fresh fish and meat children were served salted fish and meat. The supply of many products was insufficient, for example, in November 1951 the Mother and Child Home received 241 litres of milk less than the norm. A nurse who worked in Macikai camp reminisces that because of the poor food children often suffered from diarrhoea and were exhausted; ‘mothers who received money were much happier. They would give the money to prisoners they knew who could walk outside the camp unescorted. They would buy something for the children’⁸².

In late 1951, a new one-storey 261 square metre building was built for the Mother and Child Home. The new building was separated from the living zone of prisoners with a wooden fence. There were offices for doctors and nurses, a room for clothes, a waiting room, a quarantine room for sick children, a kitchen (but not intended for cooking, so it was not used) in the building. In December 1951, out of 113 children, 75 children under 11 months were transferred into the four rooms of the new building⁸³. Each child had 3.5 square metres and the beds were steel. Although the building was new, the walls in two rooms were damp. In addition to the main building, the Mother and Child Home had four wooden barracks. Other older children (under two years of age) were transferred to two rooms of barrack No. 10 with wooden beds. This was an old, panel barrack built in 1941 by the Germans and was completely inappropriate for children. A canteen in the barrack was used as a game room. Food for children was prepared in barrack No. 9.

Table 9. Buildings of the Mother and Child Home⁸⁴

Buildings	Purpose	Total area/Living area (m ²)
New building built in 1951	Children under 11 months	394.55/261.33
Barrack No. 8	Quarantine for new female prisoners with children	238.26/190.39

81 Order dated July 1948 of Timofeyev, deputy chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 5, l. 116.

82 S. Mėlinauskas, *Macikai: Sugrįžimas atminties takais*, p. 151.

83 Notification dated 21 December 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 19, l. 99, 101.

84 Certificate dated December 1951 of the head of the supervision unit of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, l. 108–109 a. p.

Buildings	Purpose	Total area/Living area (m ²)
Barrack No. 9	Auxiliary premises (common kitchen, milk preparation, product storage, product cutting, and dish washing areas)	149.46
Barrack No. 10	For older children under 2 years of age	138.75/121
Barrack No. 11	Maternity home	150.87/145.08
Total		1,071.89/729.80

On 1 January 1952, there were 118 children at the Mother and Child Home⁸⁵ and by 1 July 1952 the number had risen to 155⁸⁶. Some women slept in the children's bedrooms and because of the shortage of beds slept on the floor next to the cots of their children.

In December 1951, 14 full-time employees, including 2 doctors and 7 nurses, 15 nannies (who were female prisoners) and auxiliary staff worked at the home⁸⁷. Due to the planned closing of the labour camp, starting from 1954 the number of administrative staff and the amount of food was reduced. There was insufficient cooked food for prisoners. For example, on 22 November 1954, there was a shortage of supper for 28 women (including pregnant women), so instead of the cooked food the deputy head of the kitchen (also a prisoner) gave them 10 raw potatoes.

On 27 May 1954, there were 61 children at the Mother and Child Home, but only two doctors and five nurses. The maternity home employed only one assistant doctor/midwife who was not qualified to handle complicated deliveries. In April 1954, 10 children were born and in May another six; four of these deliveries were complicated and prisoners were transported to the hospital in Šilutė⁸⁸. On 21 November 1954, there were still 23 pregnant prisoners and 86 prisoners with children under two years of age at the Mother and Child Home⁸⁹.

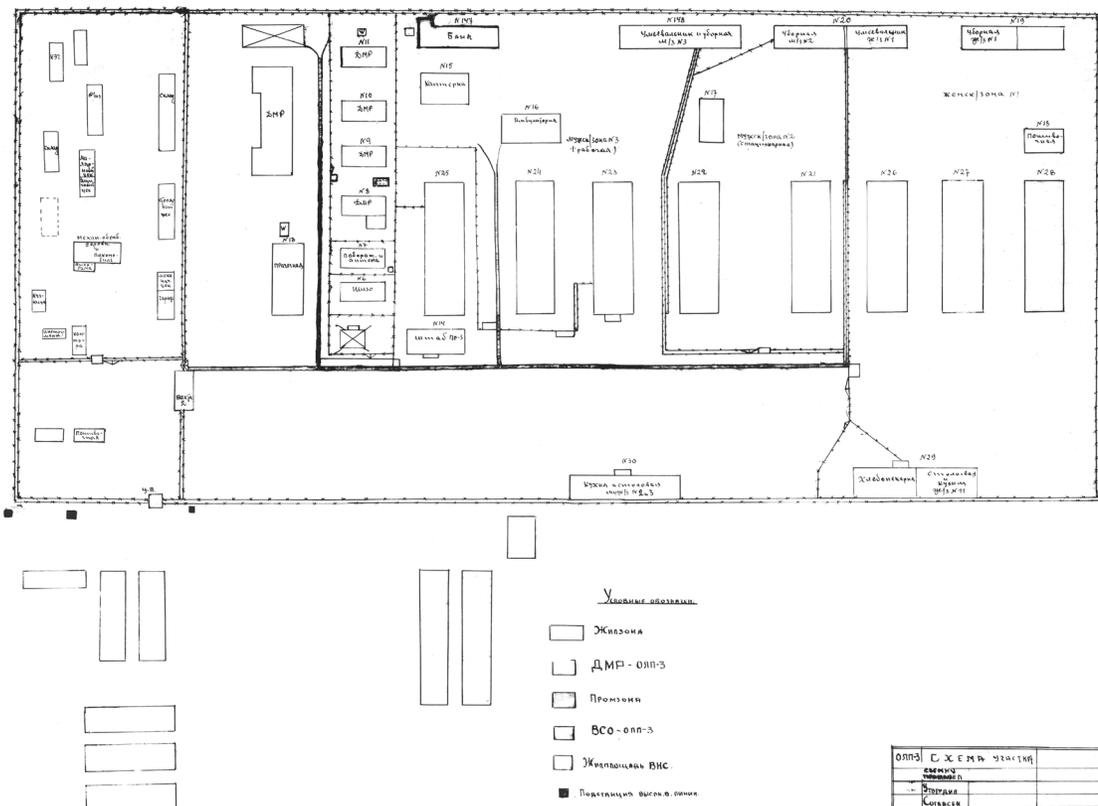
85 Notification dated 8 January 1952 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, *ibid.*, b. 11, l. 29.

86 Certificate dated 16 July 1952 of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 415.

87 Notification dated 21 December 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 19, l. 100.

88 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 2, l. 172.

89 Deed dated 20–24 November 1954 of Markelov, chief of the Department for Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 96.



Plan of Unit 3 of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, 1952, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 534

From left:

Production zone, ДМР – buildings of the Mother and Child Home, 13 – Laundry, 6 – Punishment room, 7 – Laboratory and chemist.

Zone 3 (zone for men who were working): 14 – Headquarters of unit 3 of the labour camp, 15 – Storage area, 16 – Dispensary, 23–25 – Barracks, 147 – Bathhouse, 148 – Washing and toilet facilities.

Zone 2 (men’s inpatient unit): 20 – Men’s toilet, 21–22 – Barracks, 30 – Kitchen and canteen of male zones 2 and 3.

Zone 1 (women’s zone): 18 – Tailor’s, 19 – Women’s toilet, 20 – Washing facilities, 26–28 – Barracks, 29 – Bakery, kitchen and canteen.

Violations of the camp rules and penalties

Prisoners charged under various articles were held together at the labour camp. In addition to political prisoners there was a number of real criminals. For example, in May 1954, there were 29 criminals in the camp. They regularly violated the camp discipline, stole personal items, parcels and food of other prisoners, and terrorised other prisoners. Thus thefts, robberies, fights and hooliganism were frequent in the camp. The administration failed to control their behaviour; therefore they were classified as non-working prisoners (disabled and partially suitable for physical work).

A significant problem for the administration of the camp was the problem of intimate relations between men and women. Although the women's living zone was separated from that of the men's by a double barbed-wire fence, the camp was not equipped for their total isolation. Women and men had the same entrance gate to the camp and the same guards. In the production and agricultural units men and women worked together. They also had other opportunities to communicate: until 1952, there was no canteen in the women's zone, so women ate in the canteen in the men's area. In addition, during the installation of the women's canteen, construction work was performed by both men and women and contact between them was not controlled. The fence that separated the women's and men's zones was by that time corroded, sometimes even completely destroyed, so men could get into the women's zone. Even though the camp authorities took various measures – in 1951, there were 24-hour night watchmen in the security posts located between the zones, additional lighting was installed, and efforts were made not to mix men's and women's work teams – the problem continued to persist. It should also be said that the guards did not always fulfil their duties properly. On 5 August 1949, a dance evening was organised for the prisoners in the camp club pursuant to the order of the head of security⁹⁰. Between 1 August 1951 and 20 September 1951, 16 cases of intimate relations between prisoners were identified⁹¹. In 1953, the fence separating the men's and women's zones was finally restored and a watchtower was erected.

The camp administration introduced punishments for escapes from the camp, alcohol consumption, playing cards or refusal to go to work. Alcohol was mostly consumed by unescorted prisoners (those who lived and worked on the Island of Rusnė). The most common punishment was a day in the punishment unit, which was surrounded by a

90 Order dated 10 August 1949 of Zayats, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 11, l. 209.

91 Notification dated 8 October 1951 of N. Nozhnitskiy, chief of the Administration of LSSR MVD in Klaipėda region, LYA, f. V-14, ap. 1, b. 10, l. 160.

double barbed-wire fence. Pursuant to the order of 16 January 1947 of Amirian, deputy chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, a so-called disciplinary team was established for prisoners with violations⁹².

On 23 July 1948, three prisoners who worked in the tree-felling team tried to escape, but were detained. For this violation prisoner Mubarak Zainulin was punished with 10 days in the punishment room and three months' work in the disciplinary team, and prisoners Juozas Verpečinskas and Bronius Budginas to 10 days in the punishment room and one month's work in the disciplinary team⁹³. Prisoner Ivan Golovachyov was punished with five days in the punishment room and three months' work in the disciplinary team for beating up the inspector of the personnel unit, and was then put on trial⁹⁴.

There is little information in the archival documents about escapes from the camp. It is recorded in the document dated July 1952 that there were no escapes from the Gulags across Lithuania in the first half of 1952⁹⁵. Between January and 15 September 1953, one prisoner escaped and in the first half of 1954, two prisoners escaped (later they were found and returned to the camp)⁹⁶.

Between January and 15 September 1953, there were 434 violations by prisoners, on 374 occasions they were placed into the punishment room, and penalised for other breaches on 60 occasions⁹⁷. Between January and May 1954, there were 252 violations of the rules of the camp (refusals to work, hooligan acts, thefts, possession of prohibited items, playing cards, etc.) and 168 prisoners were placed in the punishment room⁹⁸. Between June and July 1954, there were 90 violations and 67 prisoners were placed into the punishment room⁹⁹.

92 Order dated 16 January 1947 of A. Amirian, deputy chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 2, l. 12.

93 Order dated 27 August 1948 of Yegorov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 7, l. 19.

94 Order dated 31 December 1948 of I. Borovkov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 5, l. 227.

95 Certificate dated 16 July 1952 of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. K-8, ap. 1, microfilm 5, b. 415.

96 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-145/11, ap. 2, b. 26, l. 166.

97 Certificate dated September 1953 of the head of the supervision unit of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 20, l. 6.

98 Deed dated 27 May 1954 of the Committee of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 26, l. 167.

99 Deed dated 5–7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 186.

There were cases of prisoners being placed in the punishment room for no reason or consideration to the circumstances. On 14 July 1954, prisoner M. Aksiunikienė was placed in the punishment room for three days, but according to the medical certificate from 7 July she was running a high temperature and could not be kept there. On 9 July, B. Šukaitytė was placed in the punishment room for three days for making a coat for her baby from diapers. The doctor's note indicates that at the time Šukaitytė's baby was seriously ill and the mother had to stay with it¹⁰⁰.

Before the Soviet holidays (October Revolution Day or May 1), security was tightened in the camp, like in all Soviet labour camps or colonies, and reserve groups of armed guards of 5–10 people were on duty. Prisoners who had a history of escapes or rebellious prisoners were locked in separate barracks, security was reinforced, the surveillance-operational work intensified in the days preceding public holidays, and prisoners were spied on by informants.

Camp security and administrative personnel were punished for negligence, disciplinary violations and failure to comply with the procedures. Many employees responsible for material goods stole camp property. Pursuant to an order of 11 May 1946, Moskvina, the head of the sanitary unit, was strongly reprimanded for the unsanitary conditions in the camp, as a result of which prisoners had lice, while a doctor was put in the punishment room for five days¹⁰¹. Pursuant to an order of 13 December 1948 of the camp chief, Sotnikova, the head of the camp Mother and Child Home, and Dr Nesterova were strongly reprimanded for neglectful supervision of the household, negligent and bad organisation of work and increasing child mortality, while Moskvina, the head of the sanitary unit, received a warning¹⁰². In 1954, the commander of the guard squad and a member of the guards were dismissed for mistreating prisoners and having intimate relations with women.

Supervisors who abused their position, failed to fulfil assigned duties, consumed alcohol, mistreated prisoners, used physical force, and harassed female prisoners also received a number of penalties. For example, in 1947 Sobolevskiy, a supervisor and a rifleman of the 4th Division, was dismissed and put on trial for disciplinary violations;

100 Deed dated 5–7 August 1954 of the Committee of the Main Administration for the Supervision of Prisons of the Prosecution Service of the LSSR, *ibid.*, l. 186.

101 Order dated 11 May 1946 of S. Lipackiy, chief of the 3rd corrective labour colony of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 1, l. 49.

102 Order dated 13 December 1948 of I. Borovkov, chief of the 3rd separate unit of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 5, l. 218–219.

supervisor Bystrova was arrested for five days and dismissed for abuse of office, harassment of female prisoners and theft of their personal belongings¹⁰³. However, usually the administration issued only reprimands for the use of physical force against prisoners and rude behaviour.



At the end of 1954, due to the planned liquidation of the labour camp, the number of administrative staff was reduced, the common kitchen and the canteen in the women's zone were closed, no new prisoners were admitted, and industrial production ceased. Pursuant to an order of 9 February 1955 of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, prisoners of unit 3 of the labour camp of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of LSSR (including prisoners with children from the Mother and Child Home of the labour camp) were to be moved and the parcels of agricultural land which belonged to this imprisonment institution were to be transferred to the Ministry of Social Welfare of the Lithuanian SSR. Pursuant to an order of 18 June 1955 of Alfonsas Gailevičius, Minister of the LSSR MVD, unit 3 of the labour camp was liquidated. Its property was transferred to other operating units of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD¹⁰⁴.

103 Order dated 16 January 1947 of A. Amirian, deputy chief of the Department of Corrective Labour Colonies of the LSSR MVD, *ibid.*, b. 2, l. 20–21.

104 Order dated 18 June 1955 of Alfonsas Gailevičius, minister of the LSSR MVD, LYA, f. V-141, ap. 1, b. 254, l. 201.