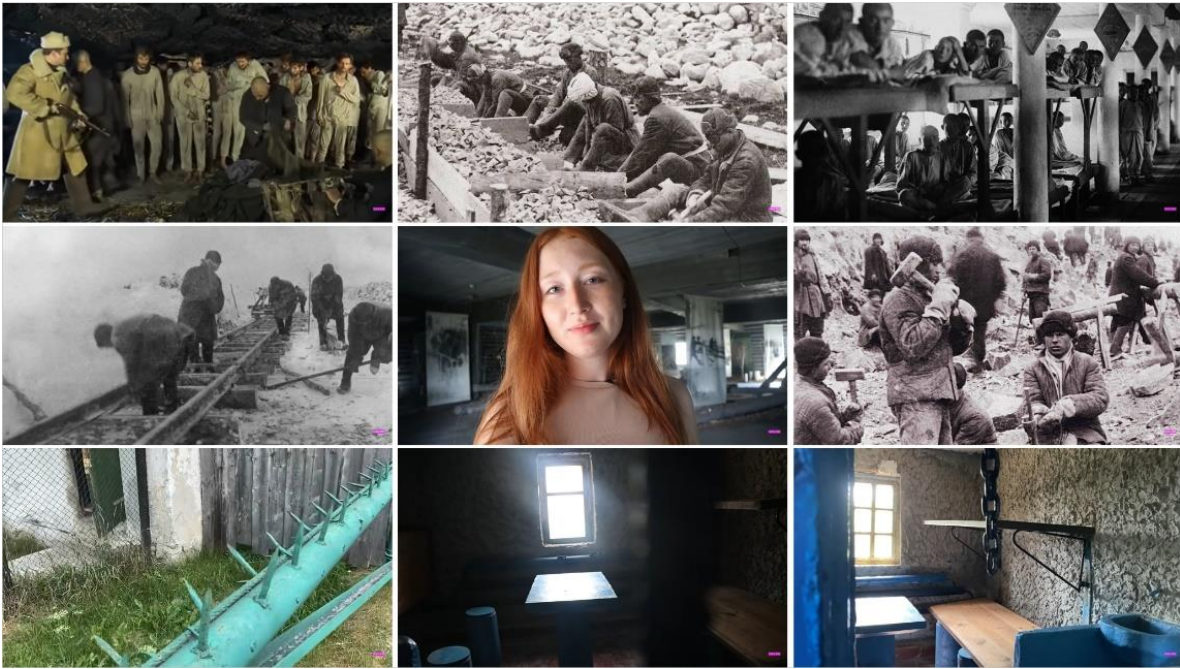


# A Country with No Need for Foreign Workers

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2025-02-19.08:00 EST Wed



There are two main ways to build national infrastructures powerful enough to make your country a world power: Pay folks enough money to make working for you attractive, even if you must travel from another country to do it, or install a system of fear and horror so overpowering that no one dares to object even they come to arrest your dearest friends and relatives for saying a wrong word and force them to work under brutal conditions, often to death.

In a powerful 2021 YouTube video [1], native-born Russian Elina Bakunova captures the essence of the second system that transcends any specific political ideology and pops up throughout human history. The only critical requirement for its emergence is having leaders who have lost all reverence for life and revel in cruelty:

*[10:20] What is GULAG? GULAG isn't only about these camps. It was the country's way of life then. It was an absolutely necessary element of the system, because without the total horror of these camps, and repressions — the total subjection of those who were at liberty — the totalitarian regime of that time would be impossible. GULAG camp's labor was a big part of the Soviet economy. The prisoners built the biggest industrial and transport projects of the country: dozens of canals, plants, railroads, and highways.*

Elina has simple advice for those who see cruelty and indifference to life emerging in their own political system:

*[13:58] Our parents — the older generations who grew up in constant fear — always keep telling us from early childhood, “Be silent. Watch out for every word you say. Don't draw attention to yourself — it's dangerous.” But the times have changed, and we shouldn't live in fear anymore. If everyone speaks up and supports what he stands for, then probably our country won't see any more times when people's lives didn't mean anything.*

## References

- [1] E. Bakunova, *What is Russia ashamed of? | Perm 36 GULAG prison camp*, Eli from Russia (YouTube), [Aug. 13] (2021). <https://youtu.be/vgtjgPtGmx0>

