ATOM BOMB PLANT IN SOVIET ARMENIA

According to many reports, the production of atomic bombs in the Soviet Union is under the supervision of the chief of the secret police, Lavrentiy Beriya, who is also the chairman of the "Secret Committee for the Production of Atomic Weapons." Stalin has given him unlimited freedom of action, ordering that all of Beriya's demands for labor, money, machinery, etc., are to be met immediately.

The Politburo originally intended to produce atomic weapons serially by 1947, utilizing captured German specialists and secret information from the US and Canada. Molotov confirmed this in a speech in Moscow on 6 November 1945.

The Soviet experts required, first, many powerful electric plants for the various production processes. All of the "atomic cities" built in great haste in the Urals near Chelyabinsk and in Western Siberia, southeast of Omsk ("New Germany"), and in Tuva Autonomous Oblast (the upper course of the Yenisey) proved unsatisfactory because of the topography which was very unsuitable for hydroelectric power plants. Beriya's final choice was Armenia.

On the northern side of Mount Ararat is Lake Gokcha (Lake Sevan), 7,300 feet above sea level. It contains 60 billion tons of water and collects the flow from 28 streams and brooks. The lake has only one outlet, the Zang, a tributary of the Araks. This river, which flows between high cliffs of basalt and forms several waterfalls, is ideal for hydroelectric power plants. The development of the Zanga system was begun in 1932, and by 1947 there were over ten power plants with a total capacity of 2 million kilowatts.

An enormous area along the river, between the eastern slopes of Mount Alages, Lake Gokcha, and the Kamair Plateau, is now a secret zone, guarded by select MGB troops. All departments of the atomic bomb plant are housed in six caves along the basalt shore of the river. The work was performed by German prisoners of war and Soviet slave labor in conformity with plans drawn up by the German specialists who built Hitler's underground factories in Germany and Austria. The caves are very deep and are absolutely secure against bombs.
of all types. Part of the machinery was ordered from domestic factories and the rest was imported from Germany. Assembly began in 1947. In addition, Germany delivered a considerable quantity of high-tension equipment, cables, oil current breakers, etc.

In January 1948, transport of uranium ore from Saxony and Czechoslovakia began. The factory was ready for operation in May 1948. Power was drawn from the Dzorages and Yerevan power plants I and II to supplement that from the ten hydroelectric plants of the atomic plant. All other industrial enterprises in Armenia are now forced to get along with a minimum of electrical power. The "Atomgrads" in Chelyabinsk, Western Siberia, and Tuva Tuva are merely auxiliary and experimental factories.

A certain Professor Arakelyan is the technical and scientific director of the atomic plants. He is an Armenian, one of Mikoyan's school comrades, and he enjoys Stalin's confidence.

Besides the plutonium-uranium factories and various experimental stations, the USSR now has two secret centers where the characteristics of cosmic rays and their military applications are being studied. Prof. P. Kapitsa directs one of them. This center is located in the Urals, approximately 100 kilometers north of Magnitogorsk. It is an almost completely isolated city, the major part of which is underground. The second center, which is directed by Prof. Alexander Zhvanov, is somewhere in the Pamirs. Zhvanov is famous for the observations of the properties of cosmic rays he undertook on top of Mount Alges during the total solar eclipse in 1939. He published the results of his observations in an article, "The Incommensurable Fission of the Atomic Nucleus Under the Influence of Cosmic Radiation." Zhvanov was decorated for this work with the Order of Lenin and won two Stalin prizes.

Wild rumors are circulating that Kapitsa has succeeded in reproducing cosmic rays artificially and that he has already constructed an apparatus which can be used in war.

The first Soviet atomic bomb was completed at the Zanga plant in February 1949, and the first explosion took place on 10 July 1949 in the Eastern Ural wastes near Mangyshlak Peninsula. London and Washington reported this explosion on 23 September. The completed bombs are transported by plane to the Kuznetzk area where they are stored in underground chambers 500 meters deep. It is said that the "Kube" is the center of the Soviet arms industry and the main citadel to which the government can withdraw with its entire political and military administrative machine.

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