



DOMESTIC COLLECTION DIVISION

Foreign Intelligence Information Report

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COUNTRY USSR DATE DISTR. 5 March 1981

SUBJECT Construction Activities of Prisoners at Nizhnaya Tura and Sverdlovsk (DOI: 1942-1950) REFERENCES [REDACTED]

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1. In the late 1940's about 4,000 prisoners were incarcerated at the closed scientific city of Nizhnaya Tura. Their activities included the construction of prefabricated wooden buildings at the wood dispatching facility Post Office Box 14-18, service as laborers, and the maintenance of a motor pool.

2. The Nizhnaya Tura scientific facility was housed in a pre-revolutionary walled prison. The only prisoners known to be permitted inside were attractive females who had befriended military guards and who were given "easy" jobs there as part of the char force. Although these prisoners had no direct knowledge, it was believed that the facility was for the enrichment of uranium from the nearby Kachkanar uranium mine. They believed that a large dam and a hydroelectric facility, which had been dismantled in Germany after the war and reconstructed in Nizhnaya Tura, supplied power for the enrichment facility. In addition, the nearby cities of Vladimir Serov and Kyshtym were also believed to be involved in the Soviet nuclear weapons development program. Although prisoners did not visit those cities, it was believed that weapons components were fabricated at Vladimir Serov and that weapons were assembled at Kyshtym.

3. The Kachkanar uranium mine was located about 12 kilometers from Nizhnaya Tura. No prisoners worked at the mine, but occasionally small groups were dispatched to the site to supervise the construction of prefabricated buildings. It appeared from the sizes and types of

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support facilities that about 2,500 workers were probably employed at Kachkanar.

4. In addition to supplying local needs, the Nizhnaya Tura wood dispatching facility produced prefabricated buildings for other sites as well. One major project in the mid-1940's involved the construction of buildings including a hospital, bakery, saunas, and a recreational club for the Ishimbay oil field.

5. During the 1942-1946 time period, a group of prisoners from Nizhnaya Tura was reassigned to Sverdlovsk to assist in the construction of two underground industrial plants. The Artillery Plant Number 8 was dismantled in Moscow and moved to Sverdlovsk, and the Plant Number 76, which produced engines for military vehicles, was relocated there from Leningrad. Production at the artillery plant included standard 203 mm cannon shells and 156 mm shells for tanks. Natural vegetation provided the camouflage for both facilities.

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