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THE FUHSIN CAMP

The Camp for deserters from USSR near Fuhsin was officially named in Russian "Camp for Interned Red Army Men" and in Japanese "Russian Labor Unit"(exact translation) and briefly "DZEKAIN".

The first Supervisor of the Camp was a Jap named SAIGOUSHI; the second and last, a Jap by the name of TAGAMI, a gendarm of long standing in his pas. Their assistants were: a Japanese called KAGAVA and a number of representatives from Military Mission and Police. It was a Labor Camp and all its members have worked in Fuhsin coal mines, in fact for the MANTAN Company; but this was only written on paper, whereas actually all the campers were people deprived of all human rights, ruled over by a satrap TAGAMI, as the following narrative will reveal.

Job 76-780R, Box 328

The Camp history begins from July 1942, when a married couple by the name of KARCHEVSKY, have been delivered from Kiamusze prison where they had been kept before. On 24 August, same year, a batch of prisoners from Kiamusze prison was delivered (among whom were Abramov, Gouskov - former Harbin resident, working for CHinese Eastern R-ly, who had been later shot as a spy, and few others). In November 1942, 17 men more have been brought over to the camp. At that time, the work of the campers in the coal mines was running at full swing. In February 1944, the most numerous batch of campers, consisting of 50 persons was added, and a little later two men more. That made a total number of 81, but by the end of August 1945, only 64 persons were alive: all the rest perished from tortures, overwork and illness, or else from being shot. The campers were being constantly robbed, cheated and forced to work for 16 hours a day, and kept always threatened by tortures and death. Now let us get to the story of a Vasilii F. Stepanov, <sup>(Sergeant, 30 years old)</sup> one of the pioneer campers and a witness to all what had taken place there.

I got into the camp on 24 August, 1942. During the period of my stay  
Satrap(s) - Sort of vice-roys appointed by ancient Persian potentates to rule over various parts of the state.

there I suffered much from hard, strained work and still more from barbarous treatment of campers by the Japs. Sometimes I had to work for 12, 14 hours at a time, sometimes even for 4 shifts (one shift 8 hrs.) on the excavator. I had to load the coal under the <sup>constant</sup> threats that otherwise I will be shot to death. This forced me to work overtime, as long as I was ordered to by Japs, and at the same time be always underfed. Official monthly ration per person had to be: 30 ding's (<sup>Chinese</sup> a weight measure equal to an lb.), <sup>of kaolian</sup> 12 ding's flour, 500 grms. vegetable oils. But nobody of us ever received the whole quantity of food: except for kaolian\*, all other foodstuff used to be taken away by the Japanese guards somewhere and afterwards we received only 170 grms of bread (at the most, usually still less). The salary which officially was supposed to be paid to us by the Company had never been paid to us in full. Out of the hands of our Japanese supervisors we used to receive only about 1/10 of it.

Except for the Japs themselves nobody knew for certain whom they used to kill, but they did kill a lot of people, especially Chinese Prisoners of War. We were told by the Japs that ours was the camp for Russians and other foreign internees, and that we were to live and work there until the end of the war with USA and Britain, when everybody was promised to be released. But the longer we stayed there the clearer we began to understand that ~~the~~ Japs were keeping us in the Camp as working hands working much better than Chinese coolies, and all their promises of future release and freedom were only beautiful words. Life in the Camp was very hard. For instance, going out beyond the fence without a Japanese supervisor's permission was punished by beating and ~~prison~~ with chained hands and feet, and a small bowl of rice for food. Usually this ended in the death of such a prisoner. The world does not know what had taken place in Fuhsin camp, why Russians were captured, suffered and finally killed there. Japanese painstakingly tried to keep the information about

\*Kaolian - local cereal, with seeds of orange-brown color. 3-4 times more than millet seeds.

what befell the imprisoned from the rest of the campers, but the news spread inspite of all their attempts to hid it.

It is hard to describe what had happened to the people during three years of their stay and work in the Camp. Complete absense of any safety ensuring devices or methods of work caused almost daily accidents which could not be treated properly on account of an absolute lack of medicine in the Fuhsin hospital. A broken arm or leg indicated a sure death, since there were no bandages and even a slight wound inevitably resulted in blood infection and consequent death. Japs did not want to give us any medical assistance. They frankly told us that there was no medicine and that everybody should work with utmost care since there was no way of treating the accidents properly.

Exceptionally hard has been the life of the Chinese POW's who had to work in the underground mines being chained in pairs and suffer especially cruel treatment on the part of the Japs. Chinese internees lived in wooden huts surrounded by a high fence with electric current wiring. From their dwellings down to the mines was also protected by a similarly equipped high fence, so that not one of them could ever escape. Chinese worked in the mines and then in about 2-3 years they died because of unendurable work, and their places were filled up by new POW's. All the hills around Fuhsin are full of their graves. There were about 50000 of them in that area. All Japs living in the camp were former gendarms and effected executions without any attempts at trials. Thus, in March 1945, 30 Chinese were beheaded in Police quarters only for their alleged spreading of rumors about the Japanese Army defeats, as told to me by a Jap-contractor SASAKI. We, Russians, were strictly forbidden from any intercourse or friendly relations with the Chinese campers, and on the contrary Japs always tried to blow up the flame of hatred between us.

The majority of Russian internees were young men aged between 20-35 years, among them quite a number of representatives of different nationalities

comprising the population of Russia. There were representatives of 13 nationalities; all of them <sup>have</sup> thought and spoke about Russia, but the infernal Japs kept them in custody and whoever tried to oppose them were shot. Now I'll tell you about those who were shot:

1. **ABRAMOV**, Alexander, from Gorky, technician; a graduate of a middle school and then of a technical one. Then he crossed the frontier. After beatings and tortures in Kiamusze prison he was brought over to Fuhsin Camp and put to the hard work. Here he had worked for about a year and started planning to escape via China to India. He escaped from the Camp but after having covered already about a thousand kilometers he was caught by a Japanese military unit and brought back to Moukden. Here, on 18 November 1943, he was executed by testing on him the effect of newly invented Japanese poisonous gases. Details about his death were told us by the Russian supervisor of the camp, a V. Bekarevitch.
2. **GOUSSKOV**, Alexander, formerly a resident of Harbin; together with a Kossack named Ivan **VEHOSIN** (a hunter from Amur regions) were shot in Kinken (Tsincho for having refused to do the work they could not do.
3. **DOLGII**, Stepan, Red Army man, 23 years old, and **ALEXEEV**, Michail, were beheaded on 27 April 1944, in Kinken to where they had been brought about a month before from the Camp. The facts of their execution were established due to their bloodstained clothes being returned to the camp. Dolgii's overcoat bore bloodstains around the collar. They were charged with "refusal to work" as they became disappointed in the Japanese.
4. **ANDROSSOV**, Petr & **TARASSOV**, Vladimir, both Red Army men, aged 26 and 23 years respectively, were executed in Kinken in spring of 1944, for the same reasons. Prior to that Androssov had been badly hurt by a piece of machinery and on coming out of the hospital told the Japanese supervisors: "Either give us freedom, or shoot us. Just the same life in the camp is a continuous

- torture..!" Then Japs took them over to Kinken(Tsinchow), a large industrial center, not far from Fuhsin, where all the exucutions usually took place. A Japanese supervisor told us with reference to them: "Here, in the camp you will have either to work or to die. The camp is the last step to life " *Probably a worded saying or proverb.*
5. KARCHEVSKY, Leonid, and his wife Maria with their child, were taked away from the camp to Kinken where they were tortured to obtain their confession in being spies. He and the child died; Maria was delivered to the hospital in a very serious condition. It took place in 1944, in May. It is certainly of interest to note that before taking them away the Japs gave them a banque and even presented Karchevsky with a new suit of clothes.
  6. DIDENKO, Nicholai, Red Army man, 27 years, hanged himself in the mine because of the unbearably hard life, in August 1943.
  7. TCHIBISSOV, Nicholai, Red Army man, 30 years old, hanged himself on a rail on 2 June 1945. He decided to do this being afraid <sup>of</sup> repressions and tortures which he was awaiting for some minor disciplinary offence committed by him.
  8. RASSOULEV, ALEEV & SHADIEV, all of them Mohamedans from Tashkent, died from typhoid fever in March 1945. Rassoulev having his leg broken in an accident with a small coal car was put into hospital where he got contaminated with the fever. The other two, being his friends, went to visit him there and got the fever from him.
  9. KATAEV & RIBNIKOV, both Red Army men, 25 & 21 years old respectively, were shot in July 1944, for their attempt to escape from the Camp.
  10. HOVANSKY, 47 years, male nurse, & MIAZIN, Red Army man, were liquidated also for their attempt to escape. Hovansky was taken to some other place, whereas Miazin was put to an unbearable work into the mines where he, being absolutely sick, worked until the last hour and ultimately fell dead.
  11. POLIANSKY & PLOUTCK inadvertently broke one of the glass windows in the nearby Chinese settlement (Sankovan), which caused a big scandal, and these

two poor men.

It should be noted too that before sending them over to Police the two men were beaten by one of the campers, a certain N. FATEEV who among his fellow campers enjoyed the reputation of a "squealer". The beatings of these two men as well as of others were supervised by the Chief himself (TAGAMI), who was famous for his cruelty. He always used to ask about the above two men "When will they die, how soon?" Besides his cruelty he was also dishonest and mercenary. "Mantan" Company issued a certain amount of foodstuffs to be distributed among the Russian campers before the Easter Holidays. The campers received only one half of their due. Once he started selling to the campers potatoes spoiled by freezing. Potatoes were delivered <sup>red</sup> for the campers' needs but owing to the carelessness of the Japs left uncovered to freeze.

Among other bosses of the Camp a very cruel officer KOSAKA and a Police officer ITO, who treated Russians comparatively decently, should be mentioned too. Assistant of the Chief KAGAWA spoke good Russian and always boasted of <sup>previously</sup> having been a merchant in Vladivostock ( in 1934), and was alleged by deserters from Tungan to have been a Chief of one of the Departments of Japanese Military Mission somewhere in Pogranichnaya area.

The Russian supervisor Bekarevitch had been later substituted by a half-cast MIYATO (half Japanese, half Russian), a comparatively young man from Harbin, (about 35) In Harbin he used to be <sup>ONE OF</sup> the Russian language teachers in the «Russian Language school for Sergeants».

The camp was located within approx. 3 miles from Fuhsin.

Around 20 August 1945, part of the campers, with permission of the Camp Chief, left the Camp ( in view of the oncoming Soviet Red Army units), whereas the other part preferred to stay.

ENCLOSURE: List of the internees of the Fuhsin Camp for the Red Army Men.