

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. The following report mentions several different types of forced labor camps in the USSR, viz.:

- a. Minlag: A camp maintained by the MGB for political prisoners. Minlag is an abbreviation of ministralnaya lagernaya chast MGB. The meaning of ministralnaya is said to be that the camp is a central one with certain responsibilities for dependent camps.
- b. Gorlag: A camp maintained by the MGB for political prisoners, at which special precautions against escape are taken. Gorlag is an abbreviation of gosudarstvennyy osoborezhimnyy lager (State special regime camp).
- c. OLP: A small camp in a severe climate, maintained by the MGB and believed to be a subdivision of a minlag. OLP is an abbreviation of otdeleniye lagernogo punkta chrezvychaynorezhimnogo lagerya (subsection of a sub-camp of an extreme regime camp).
- d. Ozerlag: A camp maintained by the MVD for both political and criminal prisoners with long sentences, at which special restrictive measures apply. Ozerlag is an abbreviation for osobozakrytnyy rezhimnyy lager (special closed regime camp).
- e. Steplag: An MVD camp in the steppe zone, believed to be identical in function with an ozelag.
- f. ITL: A corrective labor camp maintained by the MVD. The initials stand for ispravitelnyy trudovoy lager (corrective labor camp).
- g. KTR: A penal labor camp maintained by the Ministry of Justice. The "K" stands for katorzhnyy (penal), the "T" probably stands for trudovoy (labor), and the "R" may stand for rezhim (regime).
- h. Peresyłka: A transit camp (peresylnyy lager).

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Sosva (N 59-10, E 62-00), 1945-1951

2. At Sosva, there was the headquarters of the Severnyy Urallag (North Urals Camp). This is an ITL of the MVD, commanded by a Col. Vasin (fnu). It had a subcamp at Simi (not identified) and possibly another at Verkhoturys, 60 kilometers southwest of Sosva. Between them these camps held 200,000 prisoners, who were subdivided into groups of 800 to 1,000 for work. The prisoners were mostly Russians, though they included many Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Germans; very few were of other nationalities. They all worked at felling timber or in sawmills. Up to 1948, conditions were very hard, with very poor food and a high death rate; since then conditions improved: that is, prisoners lived in wooden barrack-huts and got two meals a day. The morning meal consisted of 0.75 liter of soup, 375 gr of bread, and 90 gr of fish. The evening meal was identical, except that 200 gr of porridge was substituted for the fish. The food was supposed to contain 45 gr of meat, 15 gr of fat, and 20 gr of sugar. Prisoners who were Soviet citizens could write letters and could receive letters and parcels.

Burovsk, 1946-1949

3. The location of this camp has not been identified exactly, but informant described it as north of Solikamsk (N 59-40, E 56-50), on the Kama River and also on the railroad some 450 kilometers by rail from Molotov. This was an MVD camp, subdivided into 18 subcamps.

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Men and women had separate barracks but were not segregated, and they all had the same work and norms. All prisoners worked at felling timber in the sawmill or on loading timber into railroad cars. There was a good deal of malaria and dropsy at this camp.

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Pechora (N 65-50, E 57-00), 1947-1948

4. This camp was merely a peresylka, mainly for political prisoners.

Inta, 1948 - December 1953

5. The exact location of Inta has not been established, but informant described it as on the Kirov-Vorkuta railroad, 80 kilometers southwest of Abez. Inta must, therefore, be at approximately N 66-00, E 60-00. This was an MGB minlag and contained very few foreigners. It held altogether 30,000 men and 12,000 women, subdivided into seven subcamps (lagernoye otdeleniye) as follows:

a. Lagotdel No. 1: 3,500 men mining coal in three shifts at four mines.

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b. Lagotdel No. 2: 4,000 men or more, mining coal at five mines.

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c. Lagotdel No. 3: 4,000 men or more mining coal at six or seven mines.

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d. Lagotdel No. 4: About 6,000 women, working in a tile factory, a woodworking combine, and on the construction of roads, railroads, and houses for free settlers in the district.

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e. Lagotdel No. 5: Camp hospital, also used as a transit camp for arrivals and departures. It normally contained a little less than a thousand persons but had room for 2,800. It had two operating theaters, a large X-ray cabinet, and a women's department. Altogether, it had 36 barrack buildings of one or two stories.

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f. Lagotdel No. 6: Held about 7,000 prisoners, working seven mines, in 1953; but this camp has been under extension since 1952 and should eventually hold 13,000 prisoners.

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g. Lagotdel No. 7: This camp had the machine repair shop (mashinoremontnyy zavod, abbreviated to remza), in which 4,000 prisoners were working on repairs to equipment used in the mines. An increase to 5,000 prisoners was planned. It also had a tile factory employing about 2,000 prisoners, and a special camp for ex-criminals. This special camp held about 4,000 persons, of whom many were not prisoners any longer but had been directed to work at the camp after their release. These persons worked in the better trades, which were forbidden to political prisoners, such as shoemaking and tailoring.

6. The camp at Abez (see paragraph 8 below) was also subordinated to the camp headquarters at Inta.

7. There were also 30,000 persons living outside the camps, in the town of Inta. These were all Russians, political suspects, or ex-prisoners, who had been directed to live there.

Abez (N 66-50, E 61-45), 1948-December 1953

8. Abez was also an MGB minlag, which held prisoners who were not 100 percent fit for work, including invalids from Inta who recuperated at Abez and then returned to Inta. It consisted of three sub-camps (lagotdel) for men, one for women, and one which was a hospital camp. The camp at Abez was subordinated to the camp at Inta.

Shum, 1947-1949

9. The exact location of Shum has not been established, but, like Pechora, Abez, and Inta, it lies on the Kirov-Vorkuta-Salekhard railroad. Informant described it as about 70 kilometers southwest of the point where the railroad crossed the Usa River, which would mean that it must be situated near Kochmes (N 66-10, E 60-45), or else be related to a second crossing of the Usa River at some point between Vorkuta and Salekhard.

10. Nine hundred men from the Pechora transit camp worked on the railroad and on a bridge across the Usa River from August 1947 until February 1949. These were all political prisoners, mostly Russians, but included a number of prisoners from the satellite nations, from the Baltic States, and East Germany.

Vorkuta (N 67-30, E 64-00), 1951-June 1953

11. OLP No. 3 was at Vorkuta. It contained some 4,500 prisoners, of whom about 1,000 were from the Baltic States, predominantly Estonians. Some of these prisoners had been transferred from the camp at Sosva (see paragraph 2 above). They all had long sentences of 20 to 25 years. They worked in three coal mines, Nos. 12, 14, and 16. Informant believed that the Vorkuta Rayon included 40 mines and a total of 400,000 prisoners.

Dzhezkazgan (N 47-50, E 67-30), 1949-1953

12. Dzhezkazgan was the site of the MVD Steppe Camp (steplag) of the Kazakh SSR. Up to the end of 1949, it contained some 6,000 political prisoners, divided into three subcamps named lagerpunkty. No. 1 subcamp did stone-breaking and general labor; No. 2 dug mines and erected buildings, while No. 3 operated five or six mines which yielded copper.

13. At Dzhezdy, some 40 kilometers southwest of Dzhezkazgan mines, there was a hospital camp and a labor brigade also belonging to the steplag. Up to December 1953, there were about 2,000 men at this camp; they broke stones, worked in a

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tile factory, and mined for manganese. There were four or five manganese mines, of which the prisoners worked three, and civilians worked the other one or two. More than half the prisoners here were Ukrainians, while the rest were from the Baltic States, mostly Lithuanians.

14. All these prisoners wore two or three letters and three figures on the back and on the left trouser leg. The first letter was "S" (for spetskонтингент) in all cases; prisoners' numbers thus ran from SA-001 to SA-999, then from SB-001 to SB-999, and so on to SShch-999; then the system began again at SAA, SBB, and so forth. [redacted] the numbering had reached SShSh. He believed that this series of numbers covered all the steppe camps of the MVD. This suggests a total of about 60,000 prisoners in steplag camps.
15. The steppe camp was a hard regime camp, and the food was very poor. From May 1952, the bread ration was increased, and one-third of each man's pay, amounting to between 30 and 200 rubles, was paid to him in cash.
16. The camp was surrounded by a wall four meters high with barbed wire on top. A five-meter forbidden zone was wired off outside the wall. Inside the wall, first a three-meter zone and then a two-meter zone were similarly wired off, and the three-meter zone was patrolled with dogs by night. The wire at the inside of the two-meter zone was fitted with electric alarm bells. At each corner of the camp there was a watchtower. The guards were MVD troops with blue cap bands and red shoulder boards; they served for seven years, and many of them were themselves undergoing punishment. After release at the end of their sentences, a number of these prisoners were compulsorily settled at Kagaranda, Novosibirsk, and Krasnoyarsk.

Stalinsk (N 53-50, E 87-10), 1947-1948

17. At Shodrova, 80 kilometers east-southeast of Stalinsk, there were at least two labor camps. At Shodrova No. 2 Camp there were 800 prisoners, mostly Estonians, engaged in felling timber. Their camp was infested with lice, and the food was poor; there was a good deal of pneumonia and dystrophy in the camp, and within three months of 1947 half the prisoners lost weight; [redacted]
18. At Konfarma, just outside Stalinsk, there was a woman's camp with a section set aside for male semi-invalids. In January 1948, the camp contained 1,500 to 2,000 prisoners. The food, in particular, was better at this camp.
19. At Abakur, eight kilometers outside Stalinsk, there was a persylka. In summer 1948, it held 2,000 prisoners, including a number of women.

Krasnoyarsk (N 56-00, E 92-45), August 1948

20. At Krasnoyarsk, there was a peresylka which held 12,000 to 13,000 political and criminal prisoners. Informant believed that this camp was maintained by the MGB. Prisoners arrived by the Trans-Siberian railroad, and many of them were moved on northwards down the Yenisey River by river steamers to Dudinka and Norilsk.

Norilsk (N 69-20, E 60-00), 1948-July 1953

21. At Norilsk, there were at least six camps of the gorlag type; Gorlag No. 4 held some 8,000 prisoners, of whom a good 3,000 were from the Baltic States, predominantly Estonians. Gorlag No. 6 was a women's camp, holding 6,000 women, of whom about half were from the Baltic States, predominantly Latvians, but also including a large number of Ukrainians. All told, informant estimated that there were about 50,000 prisoners in the gorlag camps at Norilsk; nearly half of them were from the Baltic States. They were all political prisoners, and the camps were maintained by the MGB. These prisoners worked in the ore mines.

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22. At the same time, the MVD maintained ITL corrective labor camps at Norilsk. These held almost 100,000 prisoners, primarily criminal offenders but also including some political prisoners. These prisoners worked in factories in Norilsk, not in the mines.
23. There was also a KTR and an ozerlag at Norilsk.
24. Another informant stated that No. 4 subcamp (lagotdel) at Norilsk contained 6,000 to 8,000 prisoners in summer 1949, while from then until June 1953 No. 2 subcamp contained 3,000 prisoners.¹

Tayshet (N 56-00, E 98-00) and Bratsk (up to 220 kilometers east of Bratsk), 1949-November 1953

25. The Tayshet-Bratsk ozerlag consisted of a number of subcamps known locally as columns, which were strung out along the railroad from Tayshet to Bratsk. The largest column contained some 2,500 prisoners, all political prisoners, many of whom were Germans. At least ten such columns existed and were engaged in building houses and villages, repairing roads, railroads, and bridges, in felling timber, and in operating sawmills. They were under MVD guard. The Japanese PWs who had built the Tayshet-Bratsk railroad had all gone by the beginning of 1949. In August 1953, shortly before the large-scale repatriation of German prisoners, Soviet criminal prisoners were moved into the area; they were engaged in the same kind of work but were kept entirely segregated from the political prisoners. Informant knew the following columns:
 - a. Column 007: Was engaged in strengthening the railroad bridge over the Chuksha River.
 - b. Column 011: Existed, but no details were known to informant.
 - c. Column 013: Was engaged in January 1950 in building Vikhorevka Village about 30 kilometers west of Bratsk, equipping Vikhorevka with a water tower, an electric power station, and a 10-grade school. Column 013 consisted of about 1,200 men. It was guarded by 150 armed MVD troops.
 - d. Column 020: Contained about 1,500 prisoners, a number of whom were invalids.
 - e. Column 034: Existed, but no details were known to informant.
 - f. Column 042: Was a hospital camp located in the town of Bratsk, just beside the bridge over the Angara River.
 - g. Column 043: Built a sawmill during 1950 and thereafter operated it, as well as felling the timber for it.
 - h. Column 049: In 1949, this was a men's camp, but in March 1952 it became a women's camp, holding some 650 women, including many non-Russians. They had to fell trees and build roads.
26. Another informant mentioned a camp numbered 03/215/2, known in Russian as a lagpunkt and therefore probably an OLP as described in paragraph 1 above, located at Kilometer 162 on the railroad from Tayshet towards Bratsk. It contained 600 men in the summer of 1953; they were felling timber, operating a sawmill, and loading sawn timber on railroad trains. They were all political prisoners, although the camp had formerly been occupied by criminals.
27. A parallel women's camp existed at Kilometer 161. The women did the same type of work as the men at Kilometer 162.

Vladivostok, 1949

28. In February 1949, a transport of 2,000 political prisoners, including 200 women, went by rail from Burovsk (see paragraph 3 above) to a camp at Vladivostok. At

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one labor camp, some 15 kilometers outside Vladivostok, there were 1,200 men. They felled timber and operated sawmills. Two thousand men moved from this camp to Bratsk (see paragraph 20 above) in April 1949.

Conditions in Forced Labor Camps

29. In most of the camps mentioned above, quarters consisted of fairly primitive, undivided wooden barrack-huts, and food consisted mainly of soup, bread, and fish. At the extreme regime camp at Vorkuta, however, the food is said to have been better, probably as a condition of survival. At Burovsk, the day's ration of bread was withheld from any prisoner who failed to perform his full labor norm. At Norilsk, in a biting wind at temperatures of -30°C and below, prisoners walked four kilometers each way to their work in the mines. Mortality was fairly high at all camps until 1948, in which year conditions became more humane at most camps. From May Day 1952, each prisoner was paid a daily wage, though deductions were made for food and clothing, with the result that the only prisoners who ever held any cash in their hands were the few who were able occasionally to exceed their norm. Even these, at that time, were not allowed to have more than 100 rubles in the pockets, though this was increased to 300 rubles on May Day 1953. From 13 August 1953, close relatives of prisoners were allowed to visit the camp for a day or two once a year. A prisoner's wife was allowed to stay the night in camp; she and her husband were locked into a special room. Soviet citizens could write two letters a year from these camps but could receive any number of letters and parcels. From 4 December 1953, non-Soviet prisoners with good conduct records were allowed to write a postcard to relatives through the Red Crescent Society.
 30. The normal punishment for an attempt to escape from camp was to start one's sentence from the beginning again. After completing a sentence, a prisoner was released, but would usually have to settle as a "free citizen" in the same area as the labor camp.
 31. In all camps, women had exactly the same conditions as men.
1. Comment: These subcamps appear to be identical with the gorlag camps described in paragraph 1.b.

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