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History, Russia

GULAG system *



The network consisted camps during the height of several thousand forced labor camps stationed throughout the Soviet Union. For the vast space of the Kolyma River basin, flowing into the Arctic Ocean (sea Wschodniosyberyjskiego) were deployed cruelest Soviet gulags, the largest concentration camp in the world. This is an area exceeding 2.5 million square kilometers, almost eight times the size of the current Polish territory, called by the prisoners *Cursed Island*.

Climatic zone is the Arctic Circle permafrost, the extremes of cold in Wierchojańsku and Ojmiakonie, where the winter temperature reaches minus 70 degrees Celsius. In the south extends to taiga, on the Chukchi Peninsula - tundra. Kolyma has an extremely abundant mineral deposits - platinum, coal, uranium, tin and lead ores, and especially gold. For exploring the Soviet authorities created a system of exploitation of prisoners - a free workforce concentrated in forced labor camps. In these areas was made known. Dalstroj - mining company, reporting directly to the NKVD.

RECOMMENDED



Distribution camps in Kolyma

The prisoners themselves built camps in the midst of the taiga. They were mostly large tents calculated per 100 people, which for warming wrap the moss. Placed inside the iron stove made from a barrel after gasoline. Despite this, the internal temperature in the tent was about -20 °C. The conditions in the Soviet prison camps almost exclude the possibility of survival of planted judgment period by the majority of the prisoners. The food was starvation. No clean clothes and low temperatures decimated the prisoners. Deadly diseases were pneumonia, typhoid and diarrhea caused by dysentery, as well as frostbite of the fingers, whole hands and feet. Lethal was also a slave labor in mines, 12 hours a day, in two shifts. There was more terrible death than that of Kolyma - the most cruel, inhumane conditions. Due to the high death rate, of up to 80% of the state, they were sent still new transports of prisoners from the depths of the Soviet Union, as well as satellite countries. After the end of World War II, the Soviet authorities sent to the labor camps of Kolyma former Red Army soldiers who were prisoners of war were interned in Nazi concentration camps. The Soviets treated them as traitors. After the liberation of POW camps were transported to Moscow, where it was transported to Kolyma.



Gulag prisoners work in the gold mines in Kolyma (public domain)

