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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Report

*Forced Labor Camps and Prisons in the USSR*

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### SUMMARY

Crime and social dissidence constitute an increasing problem for the Soviet government. During the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, a series of repressive legislative measures aimed at curbing this "anti-social" behavior has been instituted, and the penal system has undergone revision and expansion. Since 1965, the number of forced laborers has increased at a rate that is double the rate of increase for the population as a whole; at least 85 new forced labor camps have been constructed, the size of many existing camps has been increased, and yet all available information indicates that existing penal facilities are crowded. At least 2.2 million persons are now confined in over 1,000 forced labor camps and

170 large urban prisons in the USSR. The entire penal system may encompass well over 3 million people, taking into account the network of local detention facilities and other types of punishment without confinement.

Forced labor continues to be the backbone of the Soviet penal system. Soviet penologists justify the economic exploitation of prisoners by the theory that socially useful labor is the key to rehabilitation. In practice, prisoners are forced to work in places and under conditions which are more likely to benefit the Soviet economy than rehabilitate the prisoner. The greatest concentration of labor camps and prisons occurs in the Urals, Northwest, and Siberian regions of the RSFSR.

*This report was prepared by the Office of Basic and Geographic Intelligence and coordinated within CIA.*

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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Directorate of Intelligence

December 1972

## FORCED LABOR CAMPS AND PRISONS IN THE USSR

1. Crime and other acts of "anti-social" behavior appear to be increasing in the USSR. Economic crimes and acts of hooliganism are openly discussed by the Soviet information media, and *samizdat* (underground press) reports the conviction of many individuals for "political crimes." The Soviet penal system has felt the impact of this upswing in criminal and dissident activity. This is apparent in the rash of recent legislation governing punishment and confinement, and from the accounts of former inmates and their relatives which describe various camps and tell of the conditions within them.

2. This report presents information on crime and on conditions within Soviet penal institutions as reported in the Soviet news media and in accounts of former prisoners contained in *samizdat* and other open-source literature. It outlines the Soviet system of punishment as provided for in recent legislation and gives an estimate of the approximate size and distribution of the current prisoner population and penal facilities in the USSR based on the sources noted above as well as other intelligence documents and information.

### Penal and Legal Reforms

3. Following Stalin's death in 1953 the Soviet government began to remodel its legal system. By 1958 a revision of the "Basic Principles of Criminal Law and Procedure" was promulgated, and during the period 1959-61 new codes of criminal procedure replaced older codes in all the union republics. In this reform only two categories of penal institutions—prisons and corrective labor colonies—were retained, and all of the former forced labor camps were designated corrective labor colonies. In theory the labor colony was to accord more

importance to rehabilitation and less to punishment and economic exploitation; in actuality, however, the distinction between a colony and a camp is probably only a matter of semantics.

4. It appears that the movement toward the liberalization of Soviet law had passed its peak by 1966. A number of reforms decreed since then (see Appendix A) have tightened the regime's control. In 1966 anti-parasite laws were passed and in 1968 law enforcement was recentralized at the national level under the newly reconstituted Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), thereby making the militia (the civil police force) a more effective instrument of criminal control. These developments were followed by the introduction in 1969 of new penal legislation, "The Principles of Corrective Labor Legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics." Finally, in 1970, the USSR Ministry of Justice was restored, having been abolished in 1956. All of these actions signaled that in addition to recentralizing control in Moscow the Soviet leadership had adopted a policy of firmer law enforcement.

### Crime

5. In the USSR the state is concerned with three categories of crime—political, economic, and common. Political crimes cover a broad spectrum, ranging from treason and espionage to anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. Convicted religious dissidents, such as members of the Independent Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses sects, are handled as political prisoners although they are not officially classified as such. Although a number of political crimes may carry the death penalty, this penalty is never mandatory.

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6. Economic crimes involve such acts as the theft, embezzlement, destruction, or willful abuse of state property. Carelessness that sets the stage for subsequent crimes is also considered a crime. The Soviet press occasionally contains accounts of bribery, falsification of reports, party-state complicity in concealing corruption, misuse of public office and state funds, and patronage in appointments. The gravity of certain types of economic crimes is reflected in the fact that the death penalty can be imposed on conviction.

7. Common crime is a serious and increasing social problem in the Soviet Union; it is aggravated by juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, and recidivism among criminals. According to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Nikolai Shchelokov, petty crimes, such as hooliganism (disorderly conduct), robbery, and theft, are the most prevalent common crimes in the USSR. The category of common crime also includes more serious acts such as murder, rape, and assault, which are usually not reported in the Soviet press. Drunkenness is associated with many crimes, especially those committed by juveniles. According to the Soviet press, 56 percent of the thefts and 70 percent of the armed assault cases heard in RSFSR courts in 1971 were committed by intoxicated persons. More than 90 percent of the hooligan acts committed are attributable to drunkenness.

8. The Ministry of Internal Affairs indicated in 1971 that 30 percent of all crimes in the USSR are committed by recidivists (those with a previous criminal record). The highest rates of recidivism appear among those who have been released from strict and special labor camps. Some Soviet penologists propose to solve the problem by lengthening the duration of prison sentences in order to permit the "re-educational" process to take effect.

### The Penal System

9. Punishments which can be imposed by Soviet criminal courts are of three kinds: basic, mixed, and supplementary. Basic punishments are death, imprisonment, forced labor without imprisonment, and social censure. Mixed punishments are exile, banishment, disqualification from certain occupations, fines, dismissal from office, and making amends for the harm caused. Mixed punishments can be imposed on their own or as supplementary punishment along with one of the basic punishments. Confiscation of property and loss of rank are

supplementary punishments and can be imposed only in addition to basic punishments.

10. Imprisonment in the Soviet Union may range from 3 months to 15 years, with the sentence normally served in a forced labor camp. There are four major types of camps with increasingly severe regimes: general, intensified, strict, and special (see Appendix B). The system also includes "educational" labor camps and colony settlements. Persons convicted for the first time of serious crimes serve their sentences in intensified camps; those convicted of serious political crimes, or who have previously been imprisoned, serve their sentences in strict camps; and those considered to be "especially dangerous recidivists," or those whose death sentences have been commuted, serve their sentences in special regime camps. Some political prisoners and hardened criminals fall into this latter category and serve their sentences in special regime camps. Milder types of regimes are found in the general camps, the "educational" labor camps for minors, and the colony settlements holding those who have shown signs of reformation. According to a recent defector the camps with milder regimes are being increasingly used to accommodate the influx of juvenile and first-time offenders.

11. Forced labor without confinement is widely imposed for minor offenses. Sentences may range from 1 month to 1 year, during which the offender is forced to work at his usual place of employment or in a specified job in the vicinity of his residence. In addition, deductions are taken from his earnings, and the time spent at forced labor is not credited to his labor record. A 1970 law stipulates that a person convicted of a crime, the penalty for which is 1 to 3 years of confinement, may be given a suspended sentence. The law further stipulates, however, that the Ministry of Internal Affairs may assign the individual to work anywhere in the country. A Soviet legal journal indicated that for the first quarter of 1971 nearly 11 percent of all those convicted were given suspended sentences together with obligatory work assignments.

12. Although prisons are used mainly for the pre-trial detention of prisoners, they may also be used to confine political offenders, dangerous recidivists, or labor camp inmates who violate camp discipline. According to R. Nishanov, a member of the Supreme Soviet, however, less than 1 percent of those convicted serve their time in prisons. Unlike forced labor camps, prisons have only two regimes—general and the more

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rigorous special regime. In addition to large prisons, there are small local jails in most cities used for preliminary detention and as transit prisons by the militia. The Committee of State Security (KGB) probably maintains a small network of detention facilities in addition to the small local jails run by the MVD. One of the larger prisons in Moscow is the KGB's Lubyanka; the large Butyrka prison is operated by the MVD. In addition, most cities maintain overnight "sobering-up stations" to confine drunks, who are usually released the following day.

13. The Soviet system of exile is similar to that used by the tsars, the exile being forced to transfer his residence to a specified area, usually in Siberia or the Far North. Within the specified area the exile lives as a free person although he may find limited opportunities for employment in farming or lumbering. Among the dissidents who have been exiled are Andrei Amalrik, Larissa Daniel, Konstantin Babitsky, and Pavel Litvinov. Amalrik, author of *Involuntary Journey to Siberia*, was charged with parasitism and exiled to a kolkhoz (collective farm) near Tomsk for 2½ years. Parasitism is defined as "malicious refusal by persons who are leading a parasitic way of life . . . to take a job and desist from a parasitic existence." Anti-parasite laws for union republics were introduced from 1956 to 1961. In 1970 the RSFSR Supreme Soviet passed a new anti-parasite law; presumably it was intended to facilitate a major drive against citizens not engaged in "socially useful" labor. Sentences for those convicted of parasitism are now more severe, requiring 1 year in either prison or a forced labor camp.

14. Banishment is a supplemental form of punishment used to prohibit individuals from living in certain designated places for periods of 2 to 5 years. Yuli Daniel, for example, having been confined in a forced labor camp for dissident writing, is now banned from the larger cities of western Russia. With the exception of these cities, or other specified localities in which they are forbidden to live by court sentence, banished persons can normally select their place of residence and type of work. Entire groups have been banished in the past. The Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars, banished during World War II, remain, in effect, banished from their homelands.

15. Confinement of political dissidents and other individuals in mental institutions has been described by former inmates as the most morally repulsive form of political repression in the Soviet Union. The regime

resorts to using psychiatric hospitals to circumvent the necessity of an open political trial, avoiding the adverse publicity that political trials arouse, especially outside the country. At least 19 institutions have been mentioned in *samizdat* literature as being associated with the treatment or confinement of political prisoners (see Map 1). Prominent individuals such as former Major General Grigorenko and Zhores Medvedev, a noted biologist, have been detained for psychiatric treatment. Medvedev was released after his confinement aroused the indignation of prominent figures of both the Soviet and foreign scientific and intellectual community. Grigorenko, a former civil-rights activist, was declared psychotic and remains confined in a mental hospital. The malevolence of this treatment is reflected in Grigorenko's own words concerning his confinement in the Leningrad Special Psychiatric Hospital: "Political prisoners are kept in the same wards with badly mentally deranged inmates; on refusal to renounce their ideas, the former are subjected to physical torture under the pretext of medical treatment." Solzhenitsyn bitterly condemns this action calling it "spiritual murder" and a variation of the gas chamber, but even more cruel.

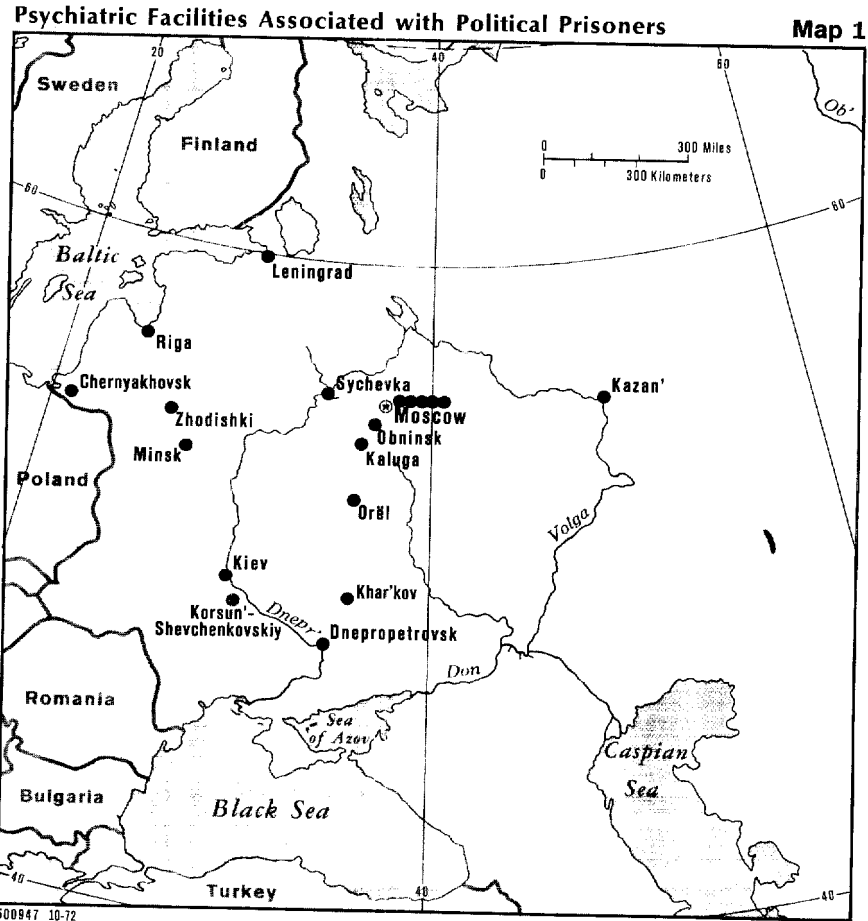
### Distribution of Penal Facilities and Prisoners

16. An extensive network of penal facilities stretches across the USSR. More than 1,000 forced labor camps and over 170 large urban prisons have been located (see Maps 2 and 3, Appendix E). It is estimated that the total number of prisoners held within them amounts to approximately 1.8 million persons in forced labor camps and 0.4 million in large urban prisons (see Map 4, Appendix E). These 2.2 million prisoners represent nearly one percent of the total Soviet population.

17. It is estimated that at least one million additional persons are subject to various other restrictions or confinement. These include persons in local jails and KGB prisons; criminals and political prisoners confined to psychiatric hospitals; individuals and groups exiled and banished; those committed to forced labor without confinement; former labor camp inmates detained in the region of their camps, youths confined in "educational" labor camps, and alcoholics confined for treatment and "reeducation."

18. The largest concentrations of prisoners are found in the Urals, Northwest, and West Siberian regions of the Russian Republic. Roughly 750,000 prisoners are incarcerated in nearly 400 camps and more than 30

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prisons in these regions. In the Urals and West Siberia, the prisoners are concentrated in industrial centers such as Angarsk, Barnaul, Chelyabinsk, and Nizhny Tagil. Prisoners in the Northwest region are in forced labor camps scattered throughout the logging areas and in some cities.

19. The distribution of prisoners by union republic does not conform to the distribution of population. Complete crime statistics are not published for the Soviet Union, and hence there is no way to ascertain whether the disparities result from different crime rates within the republics or from the transfer of prisoners from one republic to another. There are approximately 12 prisoners per thousand population in the Russian Republic, but only 4 per thousand in the Ukraine and Belorussia. Kazakhstan has 11 prisoners per thousand; the Central Asian republics have only 4 per thousand.

20. The disparities in the distribution of prisoner population tend to corroborate other information about prisoners being transferred from the non-

Russian republics of the European USSR to the eastern RSFSR, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. Such transfers are a source of irritation among the intellectuals of some nationalities, especially among a growing number of Ukrainian writers, journalists, and scientists. Soviet laws stipulate that only recidivists and those guilty of dangerous state crimes can be transported beyond their own republic boundaries.

21. In contrast to the United States, where many large prisons—particularly those of the federal system—are located away from urban areas, prisons in the USSR are exclusively an urban phenomenon. Large prisons are present in all but 5 of the 45 Soviet cities with populations in excess of 400,000. In the urbanized Central region, the Northwest RSFSR, and Central Asia, urban prisons account for more than 25 percent of all those incarcerated. The more populous cities, such as Moscow and Leningrad, have at least four large prisons. In some cities such as Odessa, labor camps have been built adjacent to old prisons, and

together they constitute massive penal facilities. From the evidence available, it appears that most Soviet prisons were constructed during the tsarist era. A number of new cities established during the Soviet period, such as Berezniki, Magnitogorsk, Nakhodka, and Navoi, do not have large prisons, but labor camps are situated in or near them. There are no indications that the Soviets have constructed any additional large prisons in recent years.

### The Forced Labor System

22. During the Stalinist era forced laborers were considered expendable and were wastefully exploited in low-return, labor-intensive activities. According to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the camps held 12 to 15 million inmates at their peak in the early 1950's. Others estimate that the number of prisoners during this period exceeded 20 million. The magnitude of the system has been drastically reduced since Stalin's day. While the penal system remains harsh, inhumane, and largely lacking in the rehabilitative character that Soviet authorities ascribe to it, there is no evidence that the wanton expenditure of human life characteristic of earlier times prevails today.

23. According to Soviet penal theory work is not regarded as punishment, but rather as a rehabilitative process to which the prisoner has a right and for which he is compensated. However, deductions for food, housing, and clothing, as well as for income tax are taken from his meager allotment, with the result that little or nothing remains. Despite meager food rations, prisoners are required to perform taxing work, especially those in the strict and special camps.

24. An assessment of the economic rationality of the contemporary Soviet forced labor system would require far more data than are currently available regarding the costs associated with the extensive physical facilities and the large numbers of support personnel required to run the penal system. The forced labor system does return to the Soviet economy a portion of the costs of the overall penal system. Moreover, the ability to shift prisoners into areas with short labor supply to perform essential construction or industrial functions is a profitable dividend.

25. Under Stalin an elaborate network of forced labor camps was established throughout the country. Particularly notorious were those that were situated in the Far North and Northeast, especially along the shores of the White Sea and in the basin of the Kolyma River. Although still widely distributed, camps are now being increasingly concentrated into the more

developed areas of the country, where labor needs are great. Even in Siberia, where forced labor is still used selectively in the north, most camps are concentrated around the urban centers astride the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

26. Numerous Siberian, Ural, Central Asian, and Kazakh cities<sup>1</sup> are actively utilized as dumping grounds for prisoners from the western regions of the country. Most of these cities have at least four labor camps and at least one large urban prison. Omsk and Tomsk—notorious as centers of forced labor in the Tsarist and Stalinist eras—each have seven camps; Barnaul and Krasnoyarsk have five camps each. Ninety percent of all forced labor camps are associated with industrial, logging, or construction activity. Mining and agricultural activities are carried on in the remaining 10 percent of the camps (see Map 5, Appendix E).

### Industrial Camps

27. There are more than 530 camps associated with some form of industrial production, and they account for over 50 percent of the total labor camp population (more than 900,000 prisoners). Industrial camps are engaged chiefly in woodworking, raw material and building material processing, and a wide variety of fabricating industries. The region with the largest number of prisoners involved in industrial activities is the Volga, where approximately 113,000 prisoners are engaged in various types of industry. There appears to be increased use of forced labor in industry in the Volga region, where 9 out of 57 industrial camps have been constructed since 1965.

28. All 13 camps in the Baltic region engage in some form of industrial activity, and all but one of the 12 Transcaucasian camps are industry-related. Most of these are probably older camps surviving from the Stalinist era. Other industrial camps that are remnants of this era appear in the heart of the European USSR in the Central, Central Black Earth, Donets-Dnepr, and Southwest Ukraine regions. Industrial camps constitute 80 percent of the camps in these regions and contain over 200,000 prisoners. Almost all industrial camps are located in urban areas.

### Logging Camps

29. Logging camps account for about 400,000 prisoners, or roughly 22 percent of the total camp

<sup>1</sup>Angarsk, Barnaul, Chelyabinsk, Kemerovo, Krasnoyarsk, Nizhniy Tagil, Novosibirsk, Omsk, Solikamsk, Sverdlovsk, Tomsk, and Tyumen' have heavy concentrations of forced labor.



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population. Over 260 camps are concentrated in the Northwest, Siberian, and Ural regions. In some places these camps are clustered into large colonies of 15 to 30 camps each and have rather large sawmilling operations associated with them. The largest logging colonies are near Zheleznodorozhnyy in the Komi ASSR; just southeast of Plesetsk in Arkhangel'sk Oblast'; northeast of Kirov; north and east of Berezniki in the Urals; east of Novokuznetsk; and northeast of Kansk near the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Certain places such as Ivdel' (population 30,000) in Sverdlovsk Oblast' and Mugreyevskiy (population approximately 10,000) in Ivanovo Oblast' are almost exclusively logging and sawmilling settlements, with nearly all activity being carried on by forced labor. Unlike industrial and construction camps, logging camps have remained stable in numbers in recent years.

#### Construction Camps

30. There are about 120 camps associated with various types of construction projects, overwhelmingly in urban areas. They account for about 225,000 prisoners, or roughly 13 percent of the camp total. The camps are most heavily concentrated in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, East Siberia, the Far East, and the Northwest. No active construction projects utilizing forced labor have been reported in the Baltic, South, Southwest, and Transcaucasus regions. Forced laborers in the construction industry work on a wide variety of projects with the majority engaged in general urban construction, such as apartments and public and institutional buildings. A number of small urban areas (50,000 to 100,000 in population) are almost entirely dependent upon forced labor for all major construction. These include Magadan and Petrovka in the Far East, Kyzyl and Pokrovsk in Siberia, Navoi, Shevchenko, and Zarafshan in Central Asia, and Vorkuta in the Far North. The same is true in several slightly larger cities such as Arkhangel'sk, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, Syktyvkar, and Tyumen'. In Bukhara, forced laborers have constructed the hospital, the Intourist hotel, and the airport, and are presently involved in building a library, Party headquarters, and a university. Construction of entire cities by forced labor—Navoi and Shevchenko, for example—is reminiscent of the days of Stalin when such cities as Magadan, Noril'sk, and Vorkuta were erected.

31. Forced labor is actively used in the construction of a number of large-scale industrial enterprises. In the

Central Asian city of Navoi, for example, a large chemical combine is being constructed largely through the use of forced labor, while in Astrakhan' a fabrication plant is being built. At Mogilev in Belorussia, forced laborers have been extensively used in construction of one of the world's largest polyester plants. The extensive Lepel' excavator repair works was probably also constructed by forced labor.

32. A number of camps, most of which are engaged in construction, have been located in proximity to sensitive facilities such as atomic installations, shipyards, and ICBM sites. However, there is no evidence of direct utilization of these prisoners within the facilities.

33. Forced labor was used extensively during the Stalin years in transportation projects, especially in the construction of railroads such as the Salekhard-Igarka line. Other construction projects, such as the Baltic-White Sea Canal, consumed large numbers of forced laborers. There is little evidence that forced labor is widely utilized at present in constructing roads, railroads, or other modes of transport.

#### Other Categories of Camps

34. Camps engaged in mining, agriculture, and other economic activities account for an estimated 200,000 prisoners or 11 percent of the total. Approximately 100,000 prisoners are confined in nearly 60 mining camps scattered in various economic regions. Fifteen are concentrated in Kazakhstan. Several of these camps are associated with gold mining, such as the large camps at the Aksu, Kushmurun, and Stepnyak goldfields. There are also manganese, asbestos, and phosphorus mines using forced labor in Kazakhstan. The Muruntau goldfield in Uzbekistan uses forced laborers. Coal is shaft mined by forced labor at several sites including the notorious mines at Vorkuta.

#### The Expansion of Forced Labor Since 1965

35. At least 85 camps have been constructed since 1965 (see Map 6, Appendix E). In addition, the size of some established camps has been expanded by the construction of more barracks. Together, these new facilities would provide space for well over 180,000 additional prisoners, an increase of more than 10 percent in the forced labor population. During this period the Soviet population increased by 5.6 percent. The current expansion reflects the rising incidence of criminal and social disruption and the

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Soviet concept that constructive labor is an essential element of social rehabilitation.

36. According to some reports, the physical configuration of several new camps differs markedly from the older ones. Whereas the majority of older camps are comprised of one-story buildings resembling military barracks, several of the newer camps depart from this standard model by incorporating modern multistory apartment-like buildings into the camp design.

37. The West Siberian, Volga, and Far Eastern regions have the largest number of newly constructed camps. West Siberia added 14 camps with capacity for about 32,000 prisoners, the Volga region 15 camps with a capacity for 25,000 prisoners, and the Far East 14 camps with a capacity for nearly 20,000 prisoners. In these regions several administrative subdivisions have had moderate to substantial outmigrations of population during the past decade, while much of Siberia and the Far East have experienced problems attracting and retaining labor. The construction of new camps in these regions may reflect a special effort to counter the nagging problem of labor turnover.

38. No camps are known to have been constructed in the Baltic, Southern Ukraine, and Transcaucasus regions since 1965, while the Central, Moldavian, and Belorussian regions have had only nominal amounts of new construction. These regions generally correspond with those regions having the fewest number of forced laborers, and with the exception of the Central region, all are non-Russian republics. Only in Central Asia and Kazakhstan, among the non-Russian republics, have substantial numbers of new camps been constructed. This anomaly may possibly be explained by the labor shortage existing in the area. Muslims are reluctant to seek industrial employment, and therefore prisoners are being used in that capacity.

39. At least one-half of the new camps are involved in various types of construction projects such as the aluminum plant at Krasnoyarsk, the machine-building plant at Pavlodar, the chemical combine at Navoi, and large fabrication plants at Astrakhan', Saransk, and Surgut in Tyumen' Oblast', and Dimitrovgrad (formerly Melekess) on the Volga River. A large plant is under construction at Mikhaylovka in Irkutsk Oblast', and a large-scale project that is probably related to mining is being constructed north of Zaybaykal'sk on the Sino-Soviet border. A number of newly constructed camps are also found in areas

where forced labor is utilized extensively on general urban construction projects. Cities in this category are Kagul in Moldavia, Lepel' in Belorussia, Navoi, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, Slavyanka, and Tyumen'.

40. Nearly 30 of the camps constructed since 1965 support various industries, including construction materials and woodworking. These camps can accommodate approximately 75,000 additional prisoners in the West Siberian, Volga, and Central Asian regions. Although some logging and mining camps have been constructed since 1965, they are probably replacements for camps abandoned in depleted areas.

### Living Conditions in Labor Camps and Prisons

41. Living conditions in camps and prisons vary according to the type of regime, location, quality of administration, and type of economic specialization, but on the whole prison life is extremely primitive and burdensome. There are indications that the conditions described in Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which deals with labor camps of the Stalin era, may still be a widespread reality. Prisoners, especially those serving in camps with severe regimes, constantly struggle with the inhumanly small food supply, overcrowding, harsh treatment by administrative personnel, and taxing work loads.

### Food

42. The shortage of food is the most pressing problem of prisoners in Soviet camps and prisons. The typical camp and prison diet is monotonous, consisting essentially of black bread, fish, wheat gruel, potatoes, cabbage soup, and small quantities of meat and sugar. Animal fats, fruits, and vegetables are seldom provided. Yuli Daniel, a former inmate in the Pot'ma<sup>2</sup> camps, related that his food was tasteless, monotonous, and contained few vitamins.

43. Food consumption of working prisoners varies between 2400 and 2800 calories per day, while the punishment ration is a meager 1300 calories (see Appendix C). Nutrition experts consider 4,000 calories per day to be a reasonable standard for persons engaged in heavy manual labor. The meager ration of those in camp punishment cells is described in the

<sup>2</sup>The Pot'ma forced labor complex, comprised of 16 camps, is located 225 miles southeast of Moscow. Nearly all foreign prisoners and most of the political prisoners are held here.

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following account by a religious dissident imprisoned in the Ukraine who reported that prisoners were served "16 ounces of black bread and 21 to 24 ounces of water-soup—the next day a bit of tasteless, cold food with no oil. The ration for 5 days is less than one day's food ration for a normal prisoner." Recently, a group of Soviet "political" prisoners, which included Simas Kudirkas (the Lithuanian seaman serving a 10-year sentence for trying to defect to the United States), appealed to the International Red Cross to improve living conditions in their Pot'ma camp. The appeal stated that "the entire system of camp detention is designed to transform human beings gradually into unthinking, frightened, and obedient animals, agreeable to do everything and anything." They added that "prisoners are for many years kept in a semi-hungry state under the threat of outright starvation." Thus, the camp administration wields a powerful means of exerting physical pressure, especially on political prisoners—a system of hunger escalation. Anatoly Marchenko, author of *My Testimony*, an exposé on Soviet penal institutions, asserts that the "application of this system results in emaciation and avitaminosis." As a result of inadequate diets many prisoners suffer from a variety of illnesses, age rapidly, and often loose their hair and teeth. Scurvy, for example, is widespread throughout the camps and prisons.

44. Prisoners who are permitted to receive supplemental food packages from relatives, or are able to purchase limited quantities of foods at the camp commissary, are fortunate indeed. The use of camp and prison commissaries is closely regulated. Soviet statutes have placed restrictions upon prisoners' usage of these facilities according to the severity of the regime. Other regulations permit prisoners to receive and send correspondence and to have general and private meetings with relatives. These privileges are, however, rigidly controlled by camp and prison authorities (see Appendix D).

#### *Housing*

45. Housing conditions in the camps and prisons, while varying widely, are generally crowded and unsanitary. A forced labor camp may consist of as many as 12 barracks or even more. Typical one-story

barracks house between 75 and 150 prisoners. The camp compound generally includes a number of ancillary and support facilities such as a messhall, mailroom, and storerooms, and sometimes an outdoor theater. The standard barracks are usually crude, old, one-story wooden structures lacking both central heating and plumbing systems. Cots are generally constructed of iron with wooden slats, and mattresses are of sawdust or straw. Double bunking is commonplace, and bunks are frequently jammed together into groups of four.

46. The 1961 Corrective Labor Statute guarantees only 19 square feet of living space per prisoner; the average cot is about 18 square feet. The Ukrainian journalist, Vyacheslav Chornovil, claimed that inmates in his Pot'ma barracks were allotted only 14 square feet apiece. Marchenko indicates that his cell in Vladimir Prison contained 5 men, each of whom was allotted approximately 27 square feet. Recent reporting from Moscow's Butyrka prison revealed that there were 40, and sometimes 60, prisoners per cell. Krasnaya Presnya prison, also in Moscow, reportedly was filled to capacity. Overcrowding also occurs in mental hospitals holding "political" prisoners. A political prisoner in the Orel Psychiatric Hospital indicated that the 8 patients in his cell had about 22 square feet each.

#### *Administrators*

47. Inmates suffer not only from the physical burdens of camp and prison life but also from the inhumane treatment imposed by corrections personnel, some of whom are holdovers from the Stalin era. Rank and file staff members have been bitterly denounced by many former prisoners for their cruel treatment of inmates. Camp administrators have an economic plan to fulfill, and as a result, prisoners are frequently overworked. Inmates who do not fulfill their norms may be subjected to even greater workloads or punishment. Guards employ stringent security measures, particularly when handling prisoners at the camps or at the work sites, since the escape of a prisoner could bring severe administrative reprisals. The concept of productive labor as a socially rehabilitative or educational force tends to get lost amidst these harsh realities of the prisoner's life.

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## APPENDIX A

### Chronology of Key Penal and Legal Reforms During the Brezhnev-Kosygin Era

- 1966 USSR Resolution on Measures for Intensifying the Fight Against Crime (Anti-hooligan and Anti-parasite Laws).
- 1967 RSFSR decree on the Compulsory Treatment and Corrective Labor Training of Chronic Drunkards.
- 1968 USSR Statute on Labor Colonies for Minors.  
Ministry for the Protection of Public Order (MOOP) renamed the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- 1969 Principles of Corrective Labor Legislation of the USSR and Union Republics.
- 1970 Restoration of the USSR Ministry of Justice.  
Revised RSFSR Laws on Vagrancy, Begging, and Parasitism.  
USSR Law Prohibiting the Purchase, Sale, and Exchange of Currency or Securities as well as Purchasing Objects from Foreigners.  
USSR Decree on Arbitrary Conviction and Deprivation of Liberty with Obligatory Assignment of the Convicted to Labor.
- 1971 Promulgation of the RSFSR Corrective Labor Code.
- 1972 RSFSR Law for the Compulsory Treatment of Drug Addicts.  
RSFSR Statute to Combat Drunkenness.

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## APPENDIX B

### Forced Labor Camp Regimes

Category of Prisoner	Work Assignments
GENERAL	
Those with light sentences	Light work such as sewing, carpentry, etc.
INTENSIFIED	
Those convicted for the first time of a serious crime	More difficult manual labor such as ditch digging, cement works or land clearing
STRICT	
Those convicted of serious state crimes, recidivists, and "politicals"	Heavy manual labor such as heavy construction or work in plants where there are health hazards
SPECIAL	
Those considered to be "especially dangerous recidivists," those whose death sentences have been commuted and "politicals"	The heaviest manual labor such as stone quarrying, lumbering, loading and unloading timber, earth removal, etc. Production norms that are assigned are almost impossible to meet

## APPENDIX C

### Daily Nutritional Norms for Prisoners

<b>Prisoners in Forced Labor Camps</b>	<i>Calories</i>
1 working prisoners in general	2413
2 working prisoners in ore-mining and timber	2828
3 working prisoners in camp punishment cells	2090
4 prisoners in camp punishment cells that "maliciously refuse" to work or fail to fulfill work norms	1324

<b>Prison Inmates</b>	
1 those under arrest, under investigation, having sentences reviewed, and those in transit	2143
2 convicts in general regime prisons (for those who work, an extra 3½ ounces of bread each 24 hours)	1937
3 convicts in strict regime prisons (with a reduction in the norm by 3½ ounces of bread each 24 hours)	1937
4 prisoners placed in punishment cells for disciplinary reasons	1324

Source: *Statute on Corrective Labor Colonies and Prisons of the RSFSR, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1961.*

**APPENDIX D**

**PRIVILEGES OF PRISONERS**

PRIVILEGE	Forced Labor Camps				Prisons	
	General Regime	Intensified Regime	Strict Regime	Special Regime	General Regime	Strict Regime
Amount of money prisoner can spend in camp store each month from personal earnings	Not more than 10 rubles	Not more than 7 rubles	Not more than 5 rubles	Not more than 3 rubles	Not more than 2 rubles	Not more than 2 rubles
General meetings with relatives	1 every 2 months	1 every 3 months	1 every 4 months	1 every 6 months	1 every 6 months	None
Private meetings with relatives	1 every 3 months	1 every 6 months	1 per year	None	None	None
Correspondence with relatives	Unlimited	Unlimited	Maximum 2 letters monthly	Maximum 1 letter monthly	Maximum 1 letter monthly	Maximum 1 letter every 2 months
Packages from relatives	1 every 2 months; 11 lbs maximum	1 every 3 months; 11 lbs maximum	None	None	1 every 6 months; 11 lbs maximum	None

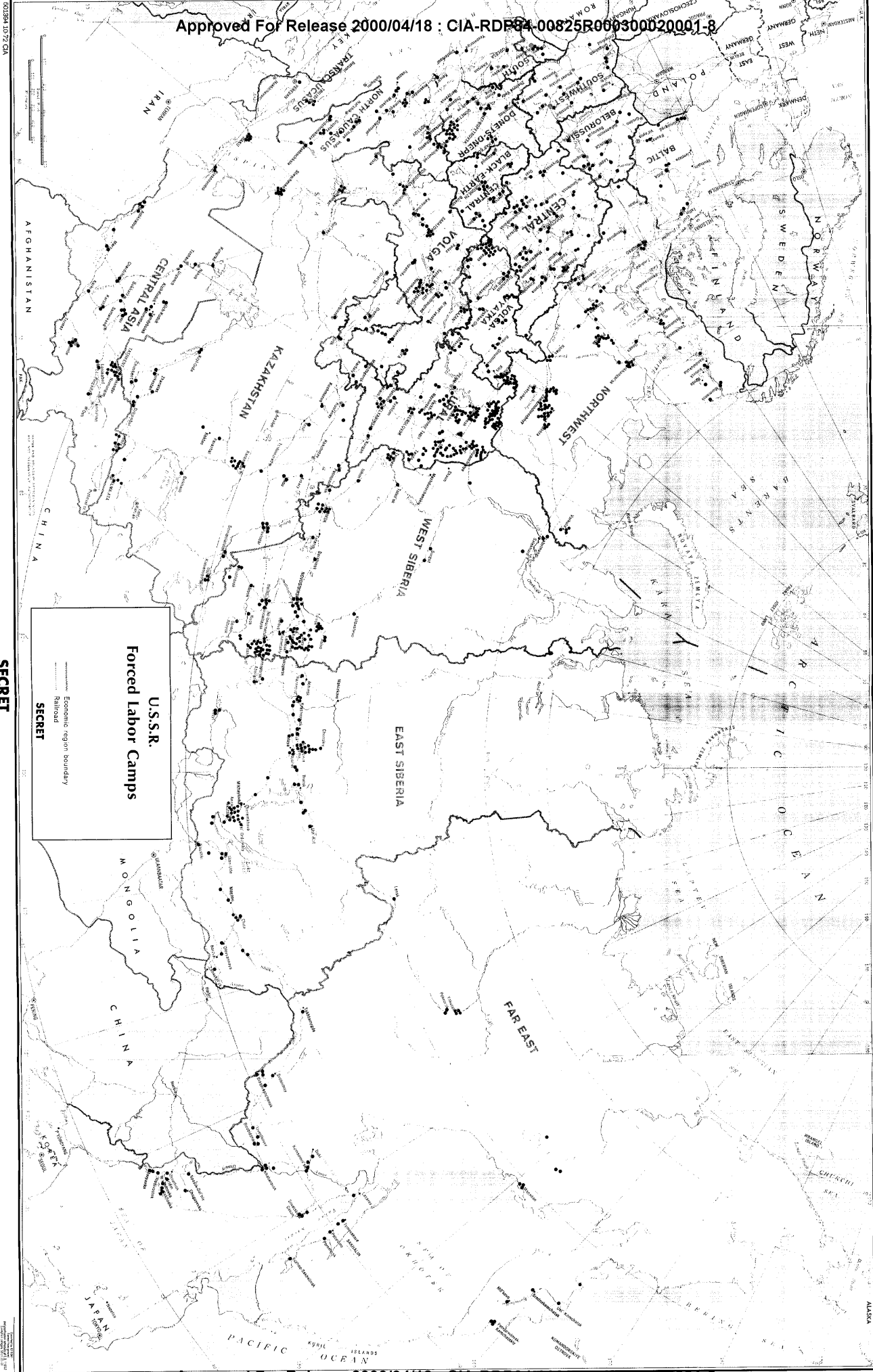
Source: *Statute on Corrective Labor Colonies and Prisons of the RSFSR, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1961.*

## APPENDIX E

### Maps

- Map 1. European USSR—Psychiatric Facilities Associated with Political Prisoners, 500947 (page 4)
- Map 2. USSR—Forced Labor Camps, 501394
- Map 3. USSR—Large Urban Prisons, 501393
- Map 4. USSR—Forced Laborers and Urban Prison Inmates, 501396
- Map 5. USSR—Number of Forced Laborers and their Economic Utilization, 501397
- Map 6. USSR—Forced Labor Camps Constructed or Abandoned since 1965, 501395





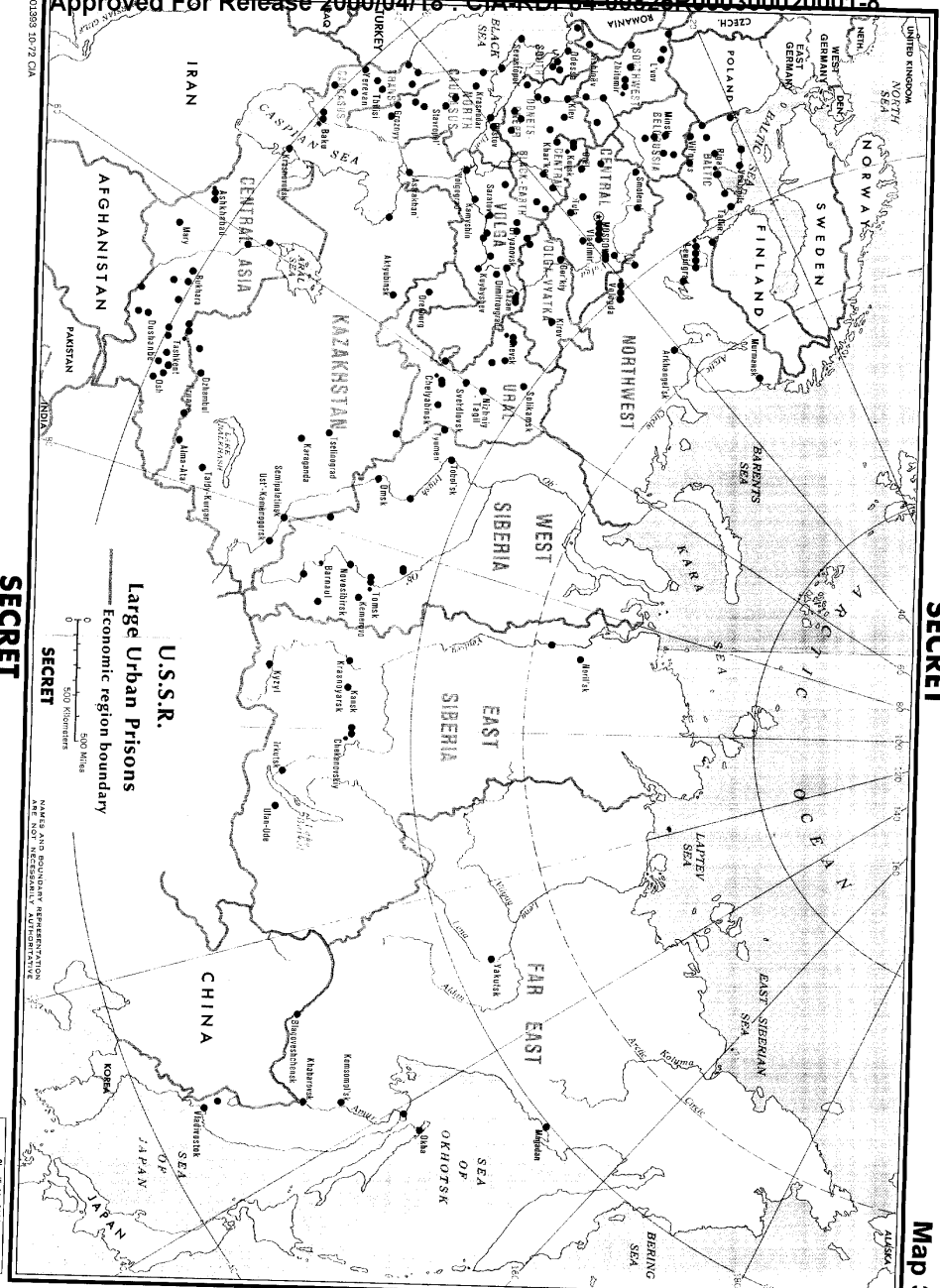
U.S.S.R.  
 Forced Labor Camps

----- Economic region boundary  
 - - - - - Railroad

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Map 2



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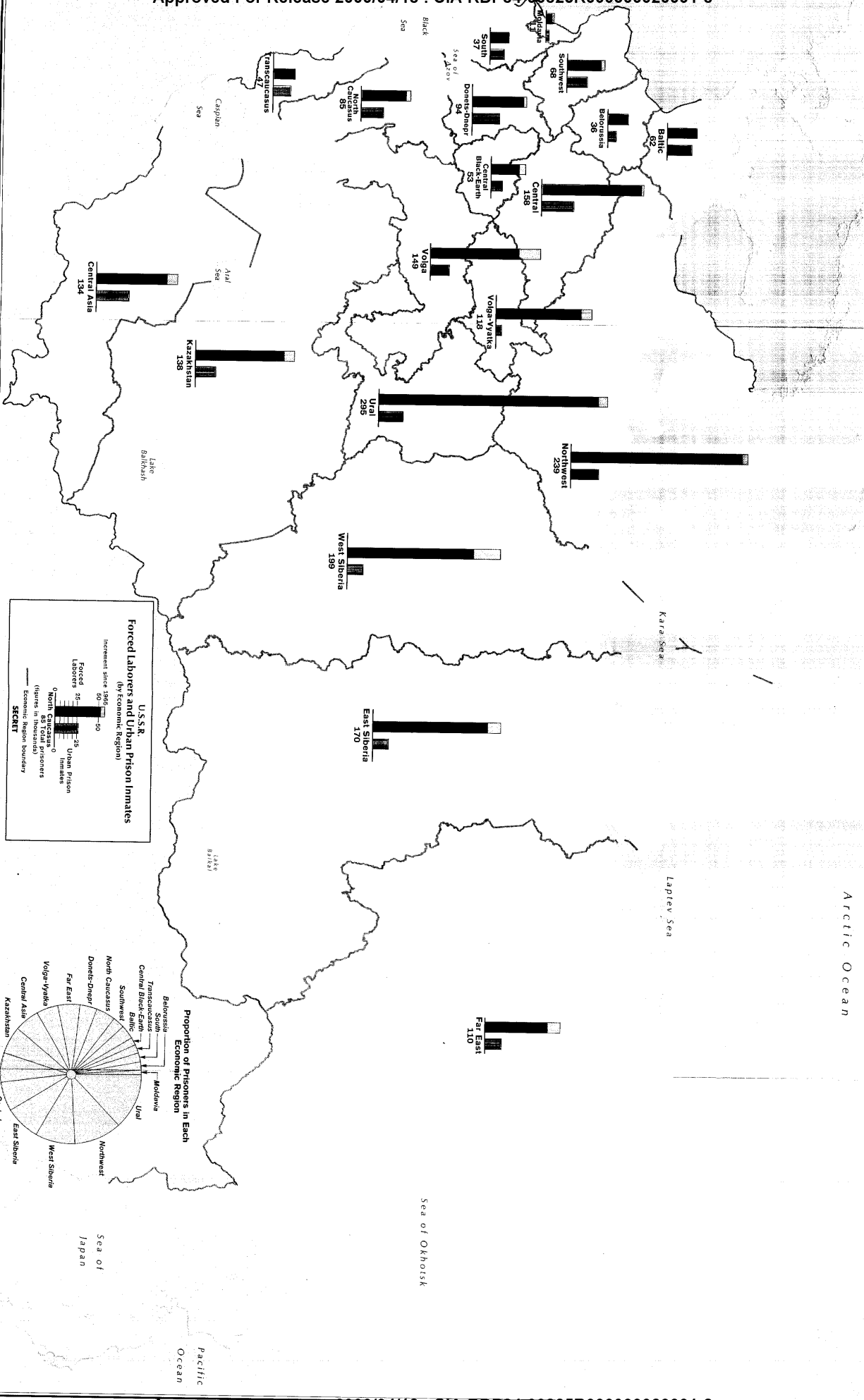
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Map 3

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 Distribution: 1000000  
 Distribution: 1000000

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Map 4

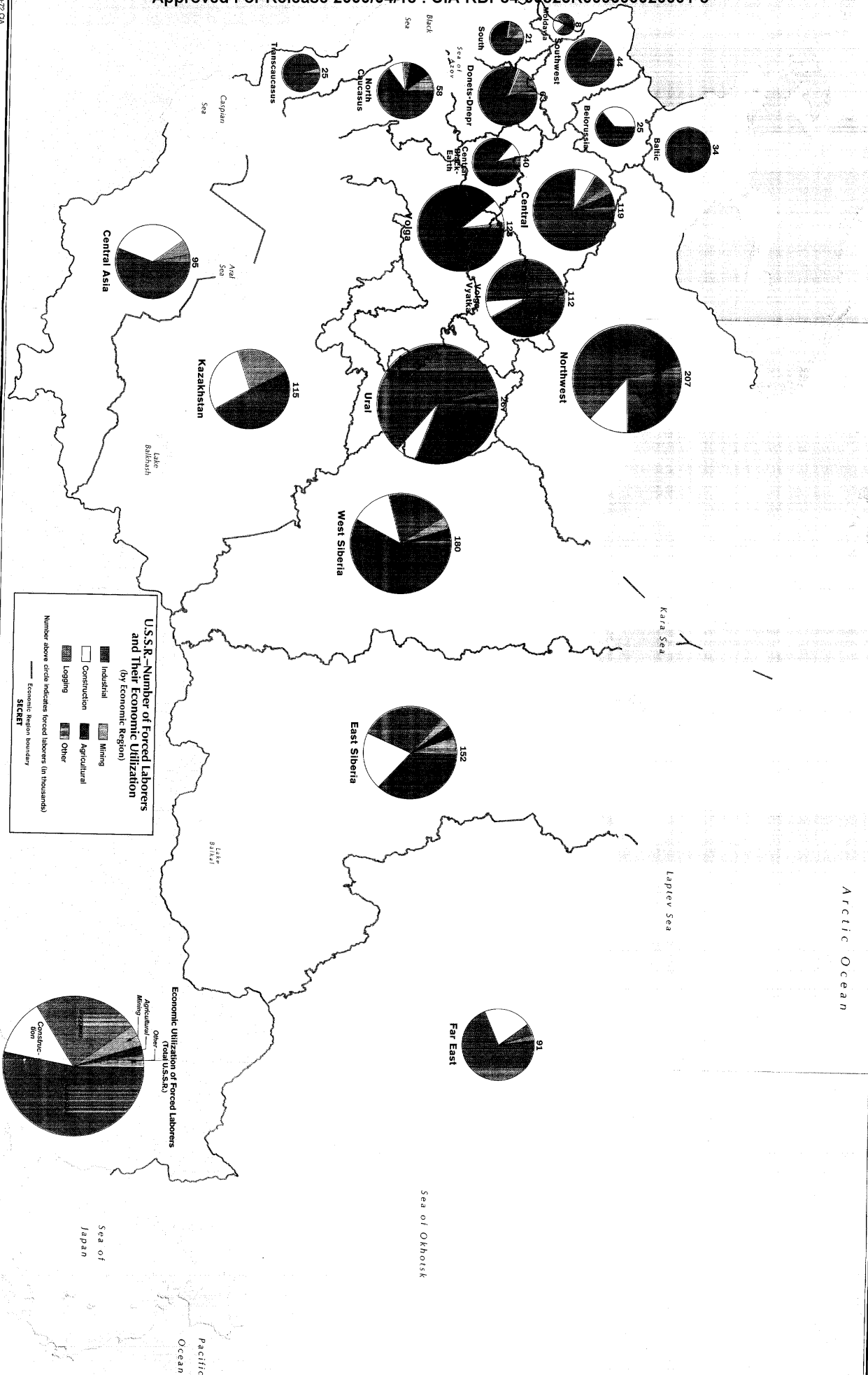


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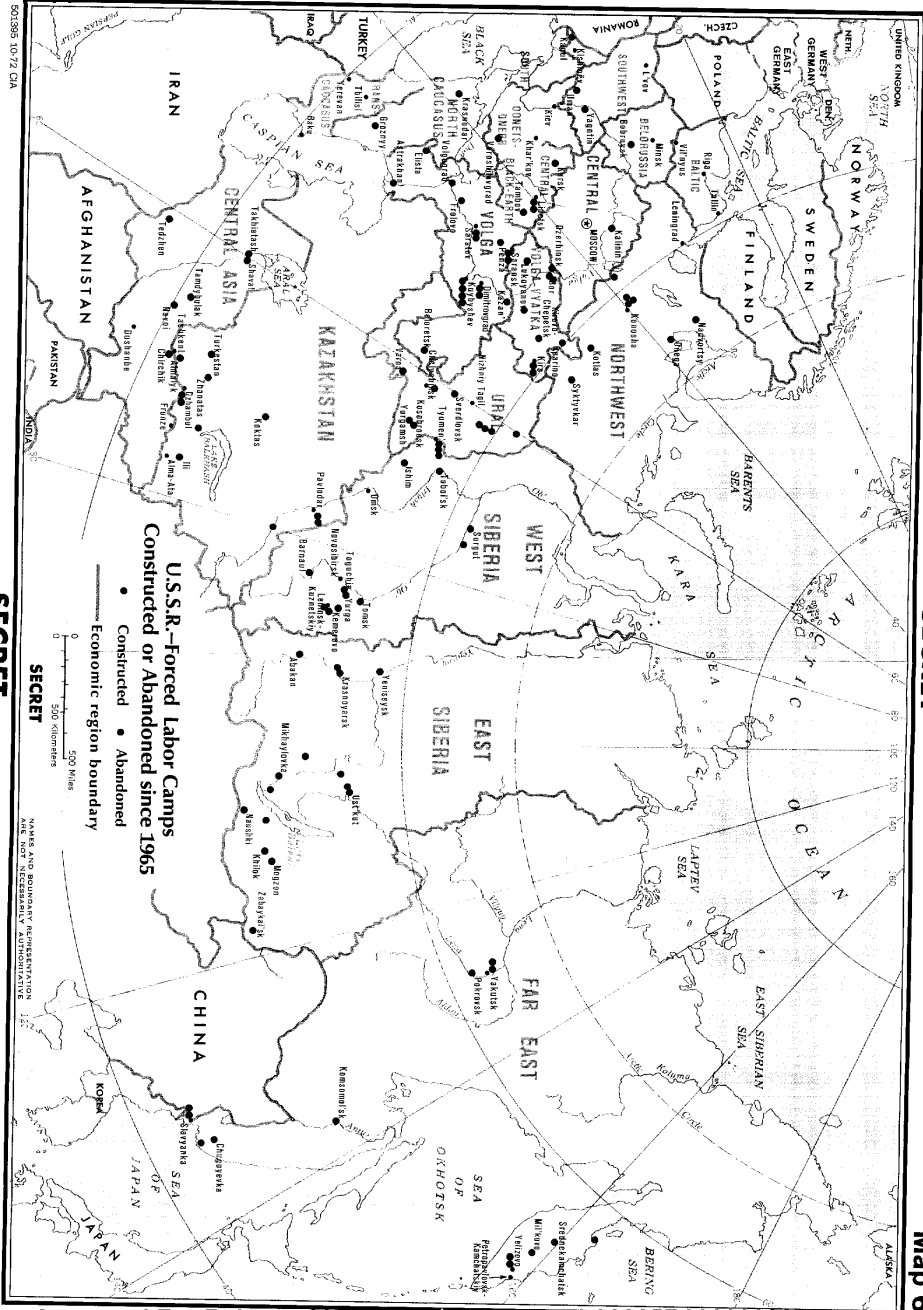
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Map 5

501897 10-72 OA



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**SECRET**

**Map 6**

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 declassification  
 Authority: E.O. 11652  
 Exemption category: 25 (1)(2)(B)  
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## *Memorandum*

TO :

DATE: 3 January 1973

FROM :

SUBJECT:

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██████████ has 42 copies of GR 73-1 and is making a supplementary dissemination. He will maintain a running list.

Record Center has an additional 49 copies.

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27 December 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: [redacted] Request for Special Handling of Forced Labor Camps and Prisons in the USSR

25X1A

1. [redacted] phone 7897, called me on 18 December 1972 to request that we withhold dissemination of above-cited study until at least mid-March 1973. [redacted] does not want our report to appear [redacted] at the same time (mid-January) that [redacted] will be giving extensive media exposure to a report, or series of reports, they have prepared based on the earlier, top secret version of our study.

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25X1C

25X1A

25X1C

25X1A

25X1C

[redacted] claimed that the problem of having [redacted] dissemination simultaneously had been discussed some time ago with [redacted] O/DDI.

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2. All above reported to D/BGI. Mr. King, after consultation with Paul Walsh, Acting DDI, instructed me to inform [redacted] that we would be willing to put a "Noforn" control on the study. I so informed [redacted] and he on 20 December -- after clearing the decision with [redacted] -- agreed that use of "Noforn" was a "good compromise" solution to the problem.

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3. [redacted] also asked that [redacted] be sent a copy of our study and hoped that their text and ours were not identical. I told him that we had made major changes in re-casting the top secret version -- which he used as a base for his material.

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[redacted signature block]

Chief, Geography Division

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