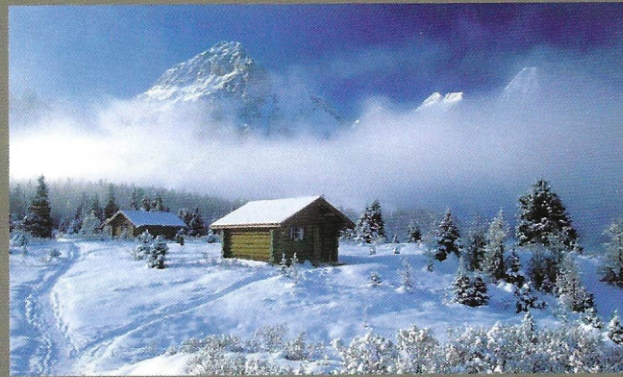


# EXILE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Forced Resettlement to Siberia



Exile was usually sudden. The NKVD arrived at a person's door and told them they were being banished. The unfortunate subjects might be allowed ten minutes to collect a few belongings. Then they were brought to train stations, herded into cattle cars, and transported east to Siberia. There was no due process, no interrogation, and no trial. Most, taken by surprise, did not bring adequate clothing for an Arctic winter, and faced a month-long train ride in freezing cold cattle cars.

Sometimes new exiles were taken to established villages where they squeezed into overcrowded barracks. Other times, they were stranded in forests or tiny villages and left to fend for themselves. If there were trees, they constructed wooden barracks. If there were no trees, then they made mud huts with thatched roofs.

Exiles were confined to their villages, or a 3-mile radius around their villages, but they were allowed to move freely within that zone. Unlike those in Gulag camps, they were not subject to daily roll call or abuse by guards. Twice each month, settlers had to check in with

the NKVD and report on their whereabouts and activities. They could write to their families, and their families could join them in their exile villages. Families could even live together. But their sentence was permanent. People were banished "in perpetuity," and were never supposed to return.

Exiles were still obliged to work, sometimes side by side with Gulag prisoners at work sites. Workers received bread rations. In one exile family of nine, only a father and an elder daughter worked, and their small allocation of bread had to feed the entire family. But exiles were often paid a little for their work, and they could use these wages to support their families.

Socially, exiles were shunned by others as "enemies, spies, or saboteurs." It was dangerous to get too close to these enemies of the state. If released, they struggled to find work and homes. They would often be given "wolves passports," which forbade them from living near a major city. They would be constantly subject to re-arrest. Exile was not just a lifelong sentence; it carried with it a lifelong stigma, too.

An old barracks in the Kodar Mountains, Irkutsk Oblast, Russia. Like Gulag prisoners, exiles slept on plain wooden boards with no mattresses or bedding.



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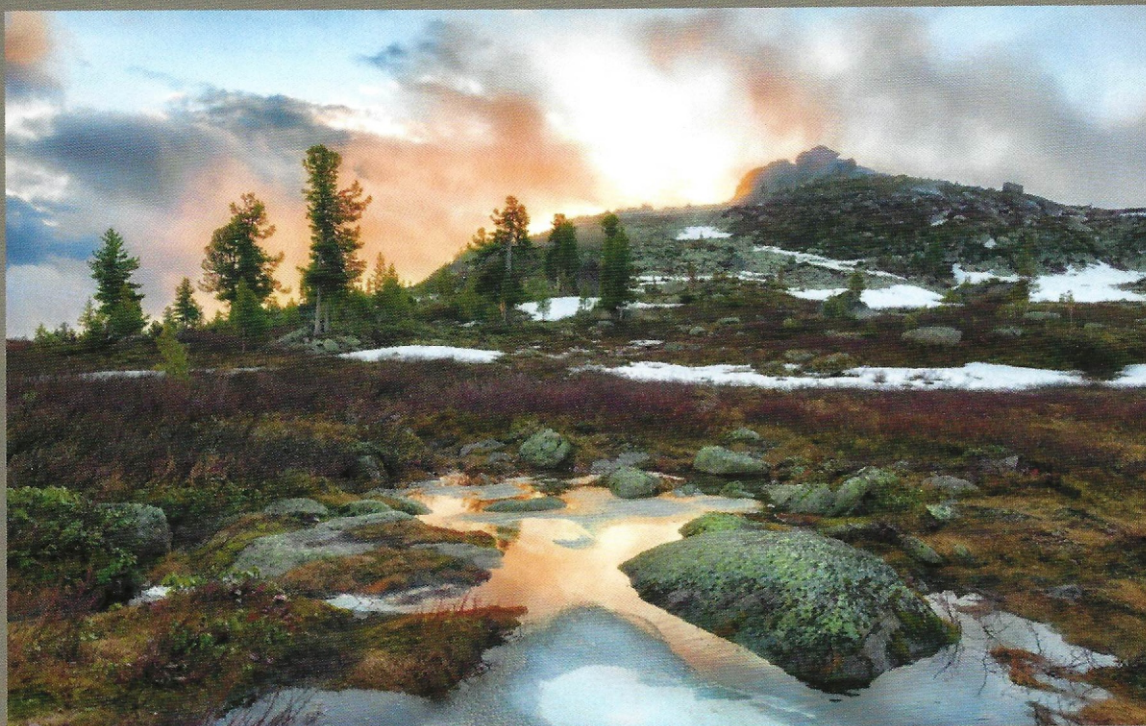


In 1948, Gerhard was exiled to the Irkutsk region in Central Siberia. It had been settled by prisoners and exiles and developed by forced labor.

As an exile, Gerhard may have worked on the fringes of one of the region's Gulag camps. Some exile villages were near major urban centers, and others were remote.

There were some notable camps and settlements in the vicinity of where he was sent, approximately 700 km north of Irkutsk. Ust-Kut was where Leon Trotsky had been sent as a political exile in 1900. Ust-limst was

notorious for its terrible conditions; tens of thousands of prisoners died there during the 1930s. Bratsk's 44,000 prisoners constructed a railroad from Tayshet to Ust-Kut in 1937, a project so deadly it was said that there was a dead man under every railroad tie. And Tayshet was the administrative center of the region, the center of a large camp system. Within Tayshet was Ozerlag, a MVD (secret police) special camp where in 1948 a large number of Japanese and German POWs were sent to work out their 25-year sentences.



# EXILE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Forced Resettlement to Siberia



A typical Siberian village near Tayshet, Irkutsk Oblast. Exiles were confined to their villages. The northern, unpopulated regions in the Far North were settled by exiles and developed using exile and prisoner labor.



Ust-Ilimsk Irkutsk Oblast



Tayshet, Irkutsk Oblast



Irkutsk, Irkutsk Oblast



Bratsk, Irkutsk Oblast

# EXILE IN THE SOVIET UNION

Forced Resettlement to Siberia



NKVD officers governed both prisoners and exiles. Exiles had to report to them twice a month.



Prisoners and workers at a timber work site. Different classes worked together.

The North had a stratified society. Prisoners, exiles, free settlers, and guards sometimes interacted in villages or at work sites.

Prisoners were at the bottom of the social ladder. They lived in Gulag camps and performed the hardest physical labor in mines and timber camps, or constructing railroads and roads.

Exiles were a step above prisoners. They lived outside Gulag camps, but limited movement. They had slightly better jobs and received small wages; but they

were still stigmatized by being “enemies of the state” or a particular ethnic group.

Free settlers were a step above exiles. These received good wages for their work, sometimes even “hardship duty” simply for working in such a harsh climate.

Party members and NKVD officers were at the top of the social ladder. They enforced the government's authority even in these remote regions.



A school of exiled German children who were deported with their families to Siberia in 1941.



Ust-Limsk in central Siberia. There were exile villages and free settlements on the outskirts of every large Gulag camp.