

of extreme production quotas, brutality, hunger and the harsh elements.” In another article on Norilsk I found on the Internet, titled “Life in the Freezer,” the author explains, “For two months of the year, the city is plunged into polar night, where 24 hours a day are in darkness and in the summer they have 24 hours of light.” The author, photojournalist Caroline McGuire, describes her sojourn in that city 250 miles north of the Arctic Circle.² According to McGuire, the average annual temperature is -10°C ,³ there are snowstorms 130 days per year, two entire months of polar night, that is, perpetual darkness, and twenty-four-hour daylight in the summer. These phenomena have great influence on the physical and psychological health of the city’s human denizens (polar night syndrome), resulting in anxiety, nervousness, drowsiness and insomnia. “Memoirists, poets, and novelists have all struggled to describe what it felt like to work in such frost,” Anne Applebaum writes. She cites a prisoner named Janusz Bardach as to how threatening the cold was: “Touching a metal tool with a bare hand could tear off the skin, and going to the bathroom was extremely dangerous. A bout of diarrhea could land you in the snow forever.” It wasn’t that much warmer inside the barracks either. Kazimierz Zarod remembered waking

2 Caroline McGuire, “Life in the Freezer: Inside the northernmost city on earth whose residents endure -55°C temperatures and two months of total darkness every year,” *Daily Mail* (London), January 26, 2016.

3 This average is reached because of the summer heat, for although the summers are short, the temperature can rise to 30°C . It should be noted that, according to McGuire, despite this short respite from the frost, the scourge of mosquitos and the deep mud that makes walking so difficult make the summer equally unbearable.