

up one morning unable to raise his head. The piece of material he had tied around his head and over his ears to keep warm was frozen to the wooden plank.⁴

McGuire notes that “Norilsk has no ground transport connections with the rest of the world. In the time of Stalin, the perilous road to Norilsk Gulag was known as the ‘road of death’.” Prisoners accumulated in the Krasnoyarsk transit camp were transported by boat on the Yenisei River to Dudinka, then a short train ride took them to Norilsk. Norillag, that is the Norilsk Corrective labor camp, operated from June 25, 1935, until it was closed down on August 22, 1956. An estimated 400,000 prisoners went through that infamous camp, of whom 300,000 were political prisoners. Quoting Adam Hochschild and Leo Kuper, respectively, Adam Jones has this to say about the three camp complexes located north of the Arctic Circle:

The number of victims claimed by the Kolyma camps alone was between a quarter of a million and over one million; in the lightly populated region today, “skeletons in frozen, shallow mass graves far outnumber the living.” Other names engraved on Russians’ historical memory include Norilsk, “the centre of a group of camps more deadly than Kolyma”; and Vorkuta, with a regime characterized by “extravagant cold,” “exhaustion,” and a “starvation diet” reminiscent of the Nazi camps.⁵

4 Both memoirists are quoted in Applebaum, *Gulag*, p. 223.

5 Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (London and New York: