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| COUNTRY GERMANY <i>C/S Only</i> | REPORT NO. 51A-10626 | (LEAVE BLANK) LV-145954 |
| AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT | | |
| SUBJECT Socio Political Conditions in the USSR | (Interviewer) METTLE, Austin (FN) | (Editor) WILLIAMS |
| AREA REPORTED ON VORKUTA, NIKOLAYEV, ODESSA | FROM (Agency) 7050 AISW (USAFE) | |
| DATE OF REPORT 8 - 12 Jul 54 | DATE OF INFORMATION From Mar 49 to Dec 53 | EVALUATION F-6 |
| PREPARED BY (Officer) J. L. FESER, Major, USAF | SOURCE 226756 | |
| REFERENCES (Control number, directive, previous report, etc., as applicable) (226756-51A-10623 (HICOG)) | | |

SUMMARY: (Enter concise summary of report. Give significance in final one-sentence paragraph. List inclosures at lower left. Begin text of report on AF Form 112-Part II.)

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

1. SOURCE was born on 3 Dec 08 in BERLIN (5231N-1324E). His general education made up 10 years of schooling. SOURCE was an industrial merchant by profession, which he practiced for 17 years. SOURCE had not spoken Russian prior to his arrest by the Russians, but acquired a fair knowledge of that tongue during his imprisonment in Russian jails and in prison camps, while held together with native prisoners. It is only natural that an intelligent person such as SOURCE, should have associated with the more intelligent native prisoners, which as a matter of fact were chiefly political prisoners. This circumstance helped SOURCE in picking up a good vocabulary in Russian. Although SOURCE did not speak Russian fluently and could not discourse on intricate subjects, he comprehended Russian well and could make himself understood in conversation on every day matters.

2. During WW II SOURCE served in BERLIN with a large Machine Plant, as a industrial salesman. In addition to his regular duties, SOURCE - as it transpired during the interview - worked as an informer for German military counter intelligence (Abwehr). This circumstance led to SOURCE's arrest by the Russians. Until Feb 47 SOURCE was held in concentration camps in SZG, whereupon he was shipped to Russia.

His confinement in Russia was this:

| Dates: | Camp No: | Type of camp: | Location: | Type of work: |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mar 47 - Feb 49 | 7099/13 | Penal PW Camp | KARAGANDA (4950N-7310E) | Laborer on housing projects |
| Feb 49 - Mar 49 | | Jail | KIYEV (5027N-3032E) | Inmate. Did not work |
| Mar 49 - Jul 49 | | Jail | ODESSA (4629N-3044E) | Inmate. Did not work |
| Jul 49 - Sep 50 | | Jail | NIKOLAYEV (4658N-3200E) | Inmate. Did not work |
| Sep 50 - Feb 53 | OLP 9 | Slave labor | VORKUTA (6622N-7008E) | Coal miner in Mine # 8 |
| Feb 53 - Dec 53 | OLP 15 | Slave labor | VORKUTA | Coal miner in Mine # 4 |
| Dec 53 - Jan 54 | Transit Camp # 114 | | ALMAZNAYA (4831N-3835E) | Awaiting repatriation, did not work. |

Throughout the whole time of his imprisonment SOURCE was held in common cells, in common barracks together with native political prisoners. While in VORKUTA, SOURCE worked in local coal mines in mixed work brigades consisting of political prisoners, actually free labor contracted for work in VORKUTA as specialists and semi

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free labor consisting of Soviet citizens - former prisoners - who had served their terms of imprisonment, were released but were denied the right to leave the district of VORKUTA. This circumstance resulted in a close everyday association with Soviet and foreign slave labor.

a. The first trial took place in NIKOLAYEV in Oct 49. It was a closed trial, without witnesses. Russians could produce no incriminatory evidence and based the trial on SOURCE's having something to do with German counter intelligence. The prosecutor demanded the imprisonment for 10 years. Despite good and masterful defense by the lawyer who handled SOURCE's case, SOURCE was sentenced to 10 years, as demanded by the prosecutor. He appealed to higher judiciary levels, was re-tried in Jan 50 by a Tribunal from KHERSON (4640N-3235E) (with participation of the same prosecutor from NIKOLAYEV), sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment in "ispravitelno trudovykh lageryakh" (correction labor camps).

Outwardly both trials were businesslike; the defendant was given opportunities to have his say. Nevertheless, they were just a bluff. Sentence predetermined beforehand.

SOURCE knew nothing about a release of prisoners sentenced for so-called "grave crimes against peace and humanity".

3. An intelligent, cooperative SOURCE, possessing critical and observant eye, deep insight and sage evaluation of political events in Russia, and general. SOURCE's vivid recollections and presentations of his experiences in Russia made the interview smooth and pleasant. No inconsistencies in SOURCE's statements have been detected.

B. SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD GENERAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS:

4. SOURCE regarded Ukrainians, Balts, the Moslem folks, Georgians and Armenians as the element particularly opposed to the Soviet regime. The Ukraine had been the richest province of Russia, before, populated by sturdy, hard working people possessing marked preference for private property, deeply religious. In her cultural and economic development the Ukraine stood higher than the Russia proper. Alliance concluded between the Ukraine and Russia some hundreds of years ago has been misused by Russia, who made the Ukraine a part of herself.

Dislike of Russia and aversion to everything Russian was developed among the Ukrainians met by SOURCE to a degree equalling a strongest chauvinistic hate. They uncompromisingly aspired to complete independence from Russia, which independence was long overdue. Similar characteristics applied to Balts, whose national culture and way of life were much different from those of the Slavic Russians, in whose minds the memories of happy days of recent independence were very much alive.

Russian culture and way of life were strange to Moslem folks populating the USSR, most of all to such advanced folks as Tartars, Azerbaidzhanians among whom the influence of Islam was strong, who enviously witnessed free and successful development of the Turkey. North Caucasian folks such as Ingushi, Cherkessy and others were orthodox, mountain folks with strongly pronounced love of freedom and easy going way of life, incompatible with the injustice, poverty and subjugation they were subjected to in the grind of collective farms set up by the Russians. Nomadic folks, such as Kalmyks, Kirghiz, Kazakhs and many other smaller tribes had peacefully and happily wandered about their boundless steppes, where there had been more sheep, camels, cattle and horses than people. Although culturally backward and living primitively by European standards, they were free, and happy. Then came the Soviets who took away their sheep and horse and everything, forced them to settle down, put upon them the yoke of semi-slave labor in factories and

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collective farms, forced them to live the way they deeply resented, as a way strange to their nature. The Cossacks, although ethnically Russians and Ukrainians, had constituted in Imperial Russia the richest strata of farmers, enjoyed a good deal of privileges. The overwhelming majority of Cossacks fought against Bolsheviks during the Civil War 1918-21, two divisions of them fought against the USSR in WW II on German side. Majority of them have been liquidated, those who survived and were exiled to Siberia were fanatically anti Soviet.

5. SOURCE supposed that the privileged intelligentsia and the communist party members constituted the mass of strongest supporters of the regime. As regards the age groups, SOURCE believed that the young generation, who did not know any other system and had no memories of the past days, who grew up under omnipresent communist indoctrination, view the present regime more agreeably than the older people do.

6. The widespread and deep discontent with the existing state of affairs was based prior to STALIN's death and afterward affecting all strata of the Soviet population, on all the following points: Collectivisation, forced labor, police terror, systematic shortages of elementary necessities of life, restriction of free circulation.

C. EVENTS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF STALIN:

7. Prisoners, as well as free labor hated STALIN, putting the blame for all the troubles at his feet. LENIN was not so much criticized. Many believed that if he were still alive the life would have been much different from that under STALIN. Many expressed their belief that LENIN was put to death by STALIN. Intelligent, prisoners, however, were inclined to believe it was not the matter of personalities that counted. They saw the evil in the communist doctrine. Who knows which way LENIN would have gone if he were alive now? In his time LENIN was capable of making a temporary concession to the people in the form of the NEP (New economic policy), STALIN could not do the same; the Soviet regime has by now gone too far away, burned the bridges necessary for retreat in economical as well as in theoretical fields. Any major turn aside, save a retreat, would make the total bankruptcy of communist teaching dazzlingly manifest even to those who, despite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, still believe in it, both in the USSR and abroad.

8. Having been apprised of STALIN's death, the prisoners and the free whom SOURCE associated with, made a sigh of relief. "Probably it will be better from now on", they thought.

9. The slave labor camp, in which SOURCE was interned at the time of the announcement of the Amnesty Act of 27 Mar 53, numbered about 1,800 political prisoners. One German and seven natives were actually released. All of the released had sentences of five or below five years. About 500 criminals were released at the same time from the slave labor camp at the Coal Mine # 3, which was manned by criminals. The 500 released made up 30% of the total number of inmates in that camp. The released criminals did not waste their time and celebrated the occasion by marauding the population. Several murders were committed and several women were raped. The release of so many criminals at one time was censured by the population.

10. Rumors about pending reform of the Criminal Code were afloat. The forthcoming reform was not brought about, insofar as SOURCE knew.

11. The prices dropped about 10 - 15 %, which was all too small a reduction to be satisfied with. Further reduction was hoped for.

12. The name of BERIA was not directly associated with the arrest of the

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"doctors-prisoners". Anti semitic feelings being widespread and apparently deeply rooted among all groups of prisoners (less of all among the Moslems) and free laborers, people seemed not to care. Bringing up charges against a man, then repudiating them, was so common under the Soviet system that people got used to happenings of this character. Some ignoramuses believed that the "doctors-prisoners" actually were after somebody in the government, but did not care.

13. The reaction of the Soviet population, free and bond, to the news of the 17 Jun revolt in SZG was entirely sympathetic and benevolent. "This is but the first explosion, you just watch what will happen later", "Good for the Germans, they do not want the kolkhoz serfdom",... Such expressions were typical for the general mood. Sixty Germans arrived in a slave labor camp at the Coal Mine # 3 (manned by criminals) shortly after the suppression of the revolt. SOURCE heard about the arrival of many more in subsequent months, but he did not meet them personally. There were arrant dunces who did believe the revolt was promoted and instigated by the "imperialists", but their number was negligible.

14. The majority of the prisoners were arrested and imprisoned at the time when BERIA held the reins of the police apparatus, which made them associate his name with their personal misfortunes. They had no reason to bemoan his downfall and were jubilant at the news of his removal. Those who believed in his guilt of an attempt to restore capitalism by means of employing the police force for dethroning the rest of the Politbureau were sorry for his failure to do so. Simultaneously with the news of BERIA's downfall security measures in camps were tightened. Number of guards in camps and number of escort guards was increased. Former chief of the camps of the VORKUTA district, General MVD (name unknown) was ordered to report to MOSKVA (5545N-3735E). Instead of reporting he shot his daughter and himself. MVD guards looked worried, stunned, confounded.

Treatment of prisoners greatly improved. Guards became polite, overlooked violations of discipline that would have been severely dealt with at other time. Many prisoners became sarcastic, arrogant. Many guards swearing at prisoners were silenced by thick hints at what they should expect from prisoners "soon". Other guards seemed to be impressed by such expressions as: "Wait my dear, you are here to day, but where will you be tomorrow? Do you know? Are you sure"? ... Apparently they were not sure.

• SOURCE knew of two instances when guards were maltreated by prisoners, but did not retaliate.

17. MOLOTOV and VOROSHILOV were regarded with less animosity than other members of Soviet government. SOURCE believed it was so because both men did not dishonour their names by direct participation in terror measures. The first was engaged in foreign policy, the second was a military. Intelligent prisoners and free laborers were aware of the fact that apart from STALIN himself, no other single "leader" was strong enough to influence the actions of the Soviet government. The country lived under the dictatorship of the communist party, which in turn was ruled by a narrow group of members of the Politbureau, whereas all other links of the party, from top down, had no other role but to obey to orders from above. MALENKOV was regarded not as a superleader, but simply as a figure put to the fore by the Politbureau, for the time being.

18. Soviet population was just as unhappy under the post-STALIN government as it had been under STALIN. The Soviet government had broken so many good sounding promises, that it lost the trust of the population. New promises were accepted with a skeptical, knowing smile. Measly sops made from time to time by the government in an attempt to buy favour of the population did not satisfy even the

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most undemanding people.

D. PURGES, RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND MASS ARRESTS:

19. SOURCE did know a number of Soviet citizens arrested for so-called "counter revolutionary activity", but he could not recall names and details of their cases. He heard of the existence of no organized anti Soviet political parties.

20. While imprisoned in a jail in NIKOLAYEV in 50, SOURCE met two prisoners who were members of the organization called "U.O.N.", the letters being initials of the "UKRAINSKAYA ORGANISATSIYA NATSIONALISTOV" (Ukrainian Organization of Nationalists). From the SOURCE heard that the organization carried out anti-Soviet propaganda activity, was organized in such a way that the ordinary members did not know who stood above them. One of the two prisoners had been the secretary of the communist youth organization's cell. SOURCE also heard about some terrorist acts, committed according to official version, by "fascists-Benderovtsy" (members of Ukrainian liberation movement headed by OSTAP BENDERA).

Some time in 53 SOURCE heard from a free laborer, that MVD tried to get hold of a secret radio transmitter operating from the VORKUTA district, but failed. As the rumor had it, the transmitter sent short wave coded messages.

21. SOURCE heard from prisoners that a small revolt had broken out in Georgia, shortly after the death of STALIN. He also heard about light partisan activity still extant in the Baltic states, most of all in Esthonia.

One day in Sep 53, when SOURCE was at work in the Coal Mine # 4, a group of 80 Ukrainians was called out from the mine, one by one, under some pretext forgotten by SOURCE. When SOURCE returned in his camp, he saw that the guards in the camp were reinforced and many barracks were being searched. Fourty more Ukrainians were arrested in the camp.

The same evening the whole group of about 120 arrested Ukrainians, in handcuffs, under strong guard, was marched out of the camp and never returned. It was rumored that the Ukrainians planned to attack the administration, get arms by disarming the guards and stage a revolt. Subsequently SOURCE heard that some Ukrainians were arrested in other camps.

Strikes movement that arose in VORKUTA in the summer of 53, swept into the SOURCE's camp, too. Prisoners refused to go to work or stopped and refused to go any further while en route to the mine. Meetings were summoned and promises of betterment of the existing conditions were made by Coal Mine administration. "You want us to give coal to the country", the prisoners shouted to the speakers, well we shall give her coal, but we want freedom". Except for a few strike leaders having been transferred to penal camps, no reprisal measures were employed. Conversely, the administration toned down, pleaded with the strikers, playing on their labor "honour", not to hamper the fulfillment of the plan of production of coal "so much needed for homes of our children and women, our workers and peasants".

It was apparent that MVD was caught by the strike movement by surprise, was afraid that by applying methods of direct suppression they would enrage the strikers, touch off a general explosion.

22. All groups named in this paragraph were represented in VORKUTA. Prisoners were purposely intermixed nationally, so that representatives of these groups could be found in every camp. Roughly estimating, the composition of camps in which SOURCE was imprisoned, was as follows:

Balts represented most numerous national group, closely followed by Ukrainians who were in turn followed by Russians. Germans were numerically on the fourth place, Moslems on the fifth. Members of former VLASSOV Army and Cossacks

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were represented in small numbers. They were treated worse than all others. Every camp was sprinkled with representatives of "People's democracies".

E. FORCED LABOR CAMPS:

23. From Sep 50 to Feb 53 SOURCE was imprisoned in the camp OLP # 9 (Camp Section, Pt # 9), which provided manpower to the Coal Mine # 8.

The camp consisted of about 60 wooden barracks, numbered 3,500 inmates, all political prisoners of a great variety of nationalities. All camp inmates worked in the coal mine. Camp was active in Dec 53.

From Feb to Dec 53 SOURCE was imprisoned in the camp OLP # 15, which provided manpower to the Coal Mine # 4. This camp consisted of wooden barracks, numbered 1,800 political prisoners of mixed nationalities. It remained active in Dec 53. There were six or seven more camps with political prisoners, all employed in coal mining, all accommodated in wooden barracks within the city of VORKUTA, two female camps located at south eastern outskirts of the city (females manned two brick yards), one camp for criminals, providing manpower to Coal Mine # 3. A great many camps were located north, northwest and northeast of VORKUTA. Looking in that direction at night, from the vantage point atop of a pile of slate, one saw "a sea of light" as SOURCE put it, each camp, each coal mine being brightly lighted. SOURCE heard that there were about 60 camps in the district of VORKUTA, which held over 200,000 prisoners.

Escort duties, outward guard duties were performed by MVD soldiers (red shoulder straps). Political administration and in a measure supply was in the hands of MGB soldiers (blue shoulder straps). Guards led a miserable existence. They were often shifted from one camp to another, apparently for change of scenery, but all the same the scenery was odious, the food was poor, the pay low. The guard earned 50 rubles per month, which was less than the amount earned by prisoners, could not cover most essential necessities. Majority of the guards were young, serving their compulsory service in MVD troops, far away from their dears, in a barren loneliness of northern Siberia. According to SOURCE's observations guards were far from being happy there. No existing camps were closed up and no new ones so far as SOURCE knew, were set up in VORKUTA during the time of observations.

24. In Camp OLP # 15 in 53 SOURCE encountered an Englishman, Mr. PODDINGTON. In its issue of 13th Jul 54 the "STARS AND STRIPES" in the article "Released Britons Describe Torture in Russian Camps", reported of the release of that man.

In Camp OLP # 9 SOURCE, in 52 met five Frenchmen. Four of them SOURCE did not know. The fifth was Mr. MOULIEN from PARIS, a small, thin, dark haired man of about 40 years of age. SOURCE talked with him and learned his history. During WW II the man was PW in Germany, worked in the firm "I.A.JOHN" in ERFURT (5100N-1102E) and got acquainted with a German widow there. Having been liberated at the end of the war, he married the widow and shortly afterwards went to BERLIN, to get in touch with French Repatriation Mission. In BERLIN he was taken prisoner by the Russians and remained in Russian hands ever since. In VORKUTA he worked as a turner. In Jan 50 he was transferred to unidentified camp. Other four Frenchmen remained in the camp in Feb 53 at which time SOURCE left it. There were two unidentified Dutchmen in the same camp and a group of 20 national Chinese, including two officers arrived in that camp at the end of 50 from unidentified place, remained in it all the time. SOURCE met no Americans in Russian jails and camps but from a driver he heard that some place about 30 km north of VORKUTA there was a "camp of silence" (a camp the inmates of which did not have to work, but were not eligible for mail privilege). According to the driver, the camp held Americans and British captured in KOREA. Circumstances of this info are these:

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Drivers hauling supplies and trucking them to various camps were ex-prisoners who had served their terms but were not allowed to leave VORKUTA. Acquaintance with drivers was always treasured, because they brought news about all new developments in other other camps. Groups of prisoners were used to load/unload supplies and during such assignments had opportunities to talk with the drivers. At one of such talks the existence of the said "camp of silence" was mentioned. The driver who brought this info was a trustworthy fellow; much other news imparted by him to prisoners was confirmed as true. SOURCE believed his info on the said camp was true, too.

In 49, in ODESSA, SOURCE shared his cell with three Spaniards. They belonged to a group of 50 Spaniards that had arrived in ODESSA for repatriation, but were after a while shipped by train elsewhere. The three escaped that lot only because they at that time had happened to be ill, were in a hospital. After their release from the hospital they were put in jail, where SOURCE met them. One of them was medical civilian doctor BOTE, a dark haired man of about 36 - 38 yrs. He got stuck in Russia on arrival there with a group of Spanish children, who were evacuated from Spain to the Crimea (Krym), and whom he escorted. The second man was merchant marine captain AUGUSTIN LLIONA, from BILBAO. He happened to be in ODESSA at the end of Civil war in Spain. His ship was confiscated by the Russians, he himself was put in jail. The third Spaniard was FRANCISKO LOPEZ from VALENCIA. He was the only one of the three who belonged to the republican army of Spain, was sent to Russia to be trained there as a pilot, was surprised in Russia by the end of the Civil War in Spain. Until 41 he lived free, somewhere near MOSKVA, then was picked up and imprisoned.

25. Segregation of political prisoners from criminals had been completed by the middle of 52. General conditions of imprisonment were in 1951/52 on steady decline to the worse. General regime of imprisonment was tightened, all windows in barracks occupied by prisoners were barred in 1951, doors of the barracks were locked from 2200 to 0500 hrs. Each prisoner had to wear large letter "R" ("REGIMNYI" Special regime prisoner) on the knee and on the sleeves. Later on, in addition to the "R" letter, the prisoner had to wear on his clothing his camp registration number. Wearing of own civilian pieces of clothing was prohibited. Mail privilege was denied. Every slight violation of discipline was punishable by imprisonment in special "isolation" on scanty ration of bread and water. Camp shops were almost empty.

Beginning Apr 53, the conditions of imprisonment changed for the better. Camp shop was bursting with food and commodities unavailable in the city. A restaurant was opened in the camp, for prisoners who could afford a decent meal for reasonable cost. Bread stood on the tables in camp messhall in unlimited amounts. Wearing of the "R" and of the serial number was abolished in Aug 53. Steel bars were removed from the windows and the barracks were not locked any more for the night. Soviet citizens were allowed to write and receive letters, and have visitors from home. Hundreds of wives, children, and parents of the prisoners arrived in VORKUTA from as far away as the Ukraine. Prisoners were granted town leaves, to spend a day or two with the family. On subsequent days the leaves were limited to a few hours daily. However, many wives of prisoners managed to stay in VORKUTA for weeks, seeing the prisoners almost every day, greeting him when he was marched to work. Prior to letting the prisoner go on a town leave, he would be trimmed in the barber shop, issued a fresh civilian suit and a pair of shoes. Those who possessed well preserved civilian suits might wear them. In Dec 53, shortly before SOURCE's departure from VORKUTA, German prisoners were allowed to write home and receive letters at the address VORKUTA 5110/36.

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"At the end of 1953 they treated us like one treats raw eggs", said SOURCE. It was rumored that in 1954 all prisoners- Soviet citizens would be free to go to work and back without escort, that the barbed wire would be removed from camps and the slave camp prisoners would be equalized in rights with privately living ex-prisoners, who had already served their terms. This was a sad news for Germans and other foreigners. It was evident that they could not expect to get an equal status with the Soviet citizens-prisoners. And indeed, rumors circulated that before long all foreign labor would be separated from native labor and that a considerable part of foreign labor would be transferred from VORKUTA elsewhere.

26. When SOURCE was imprisoned in a jail in NIKOLAYEV (OBLASTNAYA SLEDSTVENAYA TYURMA-REGIONAL INVESTIGATION JAIL) he came across another German prisoner, a former German SD man, name forgotten (SD Sicherheits Dienst-Security Service). That man was one of the first Germans who entered the same jail in 41, when Germans captured the city. From him SOURCE heard, that hurriedly retreating from NIKOLAYEV, the MVD had apparently no time or no means for evacuation of political prisoners imprisoned in the Old Section of that jail. When Germans entered the jail they found it full of blood and bodies. MVD had shot the prisoners right in their cells.

F. FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS:

27. Some natives in VORKUTA did possess radio sets and from them SOURCE confidentially heard that they listened to Western broadcasting stations, now and then. Principal difficulty in the way of listening to western stations was the overcrowding of houses, where single persons lived four to six persons in a room. Numerically small families had a separate room very seldom. The Voice of America and the Radio Liberation were not mentioned, but BBC and - to SOURCE's surprise - the German Nord West Rundfunk Station in HAMBURG (5335N-1000E) were.

In the jail in NIKOLAYEV SOURCE met a man from the region of ALTAY. From him SOURCE heard that the man had listened to the BBC and liked what he heard.

31. News about the 17 Jun uprising of German workers in SZG were broadcasted for hrs by Russian radio stations, were announced in Soviet press. SOURCE heard nothing about foreign radio station having been the main source of such news.

MISCELLANEOUS:

SOURCE advised to be very critical of fairy tales which German female prisoners spread in West Germany after their release from the USSR, about alleged rapes and abuse of them by Russian guards. "In as far as VORKUTA is concerned", said SOURCE, this is a damned lie". Guards only escorted females to work. At work the women were relatively free and worked in groups. Even an attempt to molest a woman was strictly and severely punishable. "In my group of repatriates there were many women", said SOURCE, many of them nursed babies or had young children. They were either whores or simply unbalanced women, who associated with males, of their own volition. None of them had been actually raped. Our own decent women repatriates knew this very well and regarded the dames who returned to Germany with children born in Russia with contempt.

APPROVED:

D.M. Allison
D. M. ALLISON
Colonel, United States Air Force
Commander

Matthew Warren Capt
FOR J. L. FESER
Major, USAF
Commander
7051 AISS

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