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S-E-C-R-E-T

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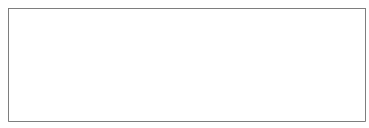
1. four reports covering various aspects of forced labor in the USSR from 1945 to 1955. 25X1

2. The titles and contents of the reports are as follows:  
a. Forced Labor Camps in the USSR: This six-page report provides detailed information on the organization of labor camps and on working and living conditions in camps in the area of Bratsk (N 56-02, E 101-40) and Tayshet (N 55-57, E 98-02) in Irkutsk Oblast. The bulk of this information concerns Ozerlag, Other camps described in the report are Kraslag near Tayshet, Minlag in the Vorkuta area, and Vyatlag near Verkhne-Kamsk in Kirov Oblast. 25X1

b. Transfer of Prisoners between Camps: This four-page report is a detailed account of the transfer 25X1

c. Decrees on Release from Forced Labor Camps and Improvement of Conditions: This three-page report provides information on decrees issued from 1953 through the fall of 1955 which affected inmates of forced labor camps. 25X1

d. Attitude of Soviet Prison Officials toward Suspects and Sentencing: This one-page report cites examples of the cynicism evidenced by prison officials regarding suspects and prison sentences. 25X1



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(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

*Forced Labor Camps in the* **SECRET**

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Ozerlag, 1951-55

1. The directorate of the camp is located in Tayshet. The camp is composed of six subsections which include 53 settlements or columns. The labor camp settlements are scattered along the route between Tayshet and Bratsk.
2. The camp is headed by the chief of the camp directorate who has the rank of lieutenant colonel, colonel, or general in the MVD. In Ozerlag the chiefs of the camp directorate are periodically changed; in 1955 the chief was a colonel.
3. The directorate of the camp is subordinate to GULAG in Moscow. It consists of the following sections: the planning-production section (PPO); the section for commissary supplies; the cultural-education section, renamed the political section in 1954; the medical section (SANO); the operational section.
4. Each subsection contains "units" which correspond to the sections of the camp directorate such as the cultural-educational unit of the subsection (KVCh), which was renamed the political unit in 1954, the medical unit, etc. The subsection has a chief disciplinary officer (nachal'nik rezhima).
5. The chief of each labor camp settlement is subordinate to the chief of the corresponding subsection. As a rule, he has a deputy. The chief disciplinary officer of a labor camp settlement is subordinate to the chief disciplinary officer of the subsection. The chief of the production-planning unit of the settlement often is a prisoner. The chief of the medical unit, as well as all the other unit chiefs, are civilians. The work superintendent, a civilian, is the deputy to the chief of production of a labor camp settlement and is called "prorab", an abbreviation of his full title "proizvoditel' rabot". The chief accountant of a labor camp settlement is a civilian.
6. The staff of all the units of a labor camp settlement, with the exception of their heads, is chosen from the prisoners. An exception is the planning-production unit, the head of which is often a prisoner, since apparently there were not enough civilian economists.
7. The chief of a labor camp settlement appoints the prisoners to fill the posts in these units, with the approval of the operational representative necessary.

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8. The number of prisoners in each labor camp settlement was different, and in Ozerlag ranged from 600 to 2,000. The size of settlements in other labor camps was different; for example, in Vyatlag in 1946-47 there were 1,500 to 3,500 prisoners per settlement, and in Minlag in 1948-49 there were 5,000 to 8,000 prisoners per settlement.
9. In 1955 there were 50,000 - 55,000 prisoners in Ozerlag. The majority, up to 80% were Soviet citizens, and the remainder were foreigners. The majority of the Soviet citizens were Western Ukrainians, Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Azerbaidzhanis, Tadzhiks, etc. There were no more than 10% of Russian nationality. This is generally true of special labor camps, which contain political prisoners. In ordinary labor camps the Russian predominate. Ozerlag belonged to the category of special labor camps.
10. The 1953 amnesty was for ordinary criminals. Approximately one-half per cent of the prisoners in Ozerlag were released. Up to 70% of the prisoners in Angarlag were released. They were released in one grand sweep, in approximately one week. Within the next three months the majority of them were rearrested for crimes which they had newly committed and returned to Angarlag. 25X1
11. [redacted] in Ozerlag, there was no change in the number of prisoners in the camp. Although prisoners were transferred from one labor camp settlement to another, the general number of prisoners remained about the same. An exception was the turning over of the 2nd subsection to Angarlag in November 1954. Approximately 4,000 invalids, settlements C37, C33, C31, and C46, were transferred to Angarlag.
12. The prisoners were employed in timber exploitation (lesopoval), at the sawmill, and in motor vehicle repair work shops, etc. They principally worked at timber exploitation and work connected with it. All the sawmills worked around the clock in two ten-hour shifts. There was a night brigade and a day brigade. Those whose sentence was 25 years were not permitted to work on the night shift during the summer since the authorities feared escapes. 25X1
13. Two hundred of the 600 men in [redacted] C43, were invalids. There were a total of 13 non-working invalids. The remainder were working invalids, who worked without norms and were paid according to output. In addition, there were invalids who worked on camp maintenance. Approximately 400 persons worked according to norms. They were divided into brigades, the largest of which were the sawmill brigades, the 12th and 13th, which contained 100 persons each. The production norms were in accordance with the All-Union scale and were the same as for free workers. The free workers' norms were calculated for eight working hours. The daily norms for the prisoners, who worked ten hours, were raised proportionately. In 1954 an eight hour working day was introduced for the prisoners also.
14. There were about 50 persons in the timber exploitation brigade, about 30 persons in the timber hauling (trelevochnaya) brigade, 20 in the stacking (sktabelevochnaya) brigade, etc.
15. Ordinarily the norms were overfulfilled, but mainly on paper. Each brigade leader would record for his brigade more output than had actually been produced. All, from the authorities to the prisoners, were anxious to overfulfill the plan, and consequently the authorities paid little heed to the accuracy of output records.
16. There were four towers at settlement C43. During the day there were sentries on only two of the towers, diagonally opposite each other, and at night there were sentries on all of the towers. In addition, there was a watchman (kontroler) on guard at the gates who controlled admittance through the gates, and the chief of the guard (karsavla). The sentries on the towers changed every two hours, but were on duty (nesut naryad) 24 hours the rest of the time they were in the guard installation. At night chained dogs ran around the barbed wire.

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17. The guard force (konvoy) both guarded the camp and escorted the prisoners to work. There were 100 persons on the guard force of settlement O43. A large brigade was escorted to work by six persons and one man with a dog.
18. The uniform of the guards (konvoiry) was the military uniform of the MGB troops: a blue cap, with a red band, and red shoulder boards and buttonholes. The color of the uniform was khaki. The guards were armed either with submachine guns or rifles.
19. The columns were escorted in the following manner: two guards in front, two behind, one of whom was the head of the guard, and one on each side. The guard with the dog followed the column.
20. Before the column of prisoners left, the head of the guard would meet them at the gate of the camp and warn them: "Be sure to go by fives, go arm in arm, carry out all lawful orders of the guard, do not leave the formation. A step to the right or a step to the left will be considered an escape attempt and weapons will be used without warning. The word "without" was emphatically shouted.
21. Until 1953 the guards' treatment of the prisoners was invariably rude and hostile. After Beriya's execution the attitude of the guards altered sharply. The guards escorting the prisoners often would strike up a conversation and chat with the prisoners, and tried to maintain an almost friendly relationship. From that time on the prisoners often went as far as to be rude to the guards: "Oh, you Beriya's dogs!" The criminals would shout: "Wait until the Americans come - we'll hang you all!"
22. Until 1952 if a guard prevented a prisoner's escape, he received a month's leave and 300 rubles. As a result it frequently happened that a guard would kill a prisoner for taking one step beyond the boundary of the zapretnaya zona, at work, for example, and then receive 300 rubles and leave. In 1952 this policy of giving leave and money was abolished, and immediately "escape attempts" ceased.
23. The following were civilian members of the administration of the settlement: the chief of the settlement, the deputy chief, the work superintendent, the senior accountant, the chief of the medical unit, who was a doctor or a doctor's assistant, the chief of the unit for commissary supplies, the chief disciplinary officer, the operational representative, the chief of the special unit, sometimes the chief of the planning-production unit, the instructor of the political section, formerly inspector of the cultural-education unit, and the foreman (naryadchik) in charge of the storehouse, a total of 12-13 persons. The position of foreman was a fictitious one, for which someone received money. In actuality the foreman was one of the prisoners who was connected with the chief of the special unit and with the operational representative. He was, in effect, the most influential prisoner in the camp.
24. About 100 persons from settlement O43 worked within the camp as tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, joiners, cooks, laundresses, orderlies, etc.
25. The barracks in settlement O43, as was customary in the other settlements of Ozerlag, were made of logs plastered on the inside and sometimes on the outside. The barracks were one story high, about five or six m wide, and about 40 m long. Usually each barrack was divided into two sections, each inaccessible to the other and each with one entrance. Each section had a washroom and usually a drying room (sushilka). There were two brick stoves in each section. A section was built to accommodate 50 persons, but in actuality often contained up to 70 persons. The prisoners slept on what were called "vagonki", double-decker wooden structures; two prisoners slept on top and two on bottom.

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26. Until 1952 the "guaranteed ration" was distributed to each prisoner, regardless of whether or not he had fulfilled the norm. It consisted of 122 grams of groats, 10 grams of flour, 20 grams of sugar, 75 grams of fish, 10 grams of something made of flour, such as macaroni, 500 grams of potatoes and vegetables, 15 grams of fats, 1 1/2 grams of a coffee substitute, 1.3 grams of tomato sauce, 45 grams of meat, and 650 grams of bread. From this the following meals were derived: breakfast - 700 grams of soup and 200 cc of kasha; dinner - 700 cc of soup and 200 grams of bread; supper 700 cc of soup and 200 cc of kasha. In the evening a portion of fish and 200 grams of bread were handed out. All these food products were of extremely low quality. In addition, it was permitted to substitute some products for others; for example, fish could be substituted for meat, cabbage for potatoes, etc.
27. Those prisoners who fulfilled over 100% of the norm were given a supplementary ration. There were several grades, each including 100 grams of bread, 200 cc of kasha, and 5 grams of sugar more than the next lowest one.
28. Beginning with March 1952 the camp was put on a basis of economic accountability (khozrasset), i.e. the prisoners were paid for their work on the basis of a reduced rate of output (po vyrobke po ponizhennoy tarifnoy setke). The quantity of food was increased: everyone was given daily an additional 800 grams of bread, 130 grams of groats, 10 grams of flour products, 30 grams of fat, 27 grams of sugar, 3 grams of tomato puree, 350 grams of potatoes, 500 grams of vegetables, 15 grams of meat, and up to 90 grams of fish. The food improved, but the practice of substituting some products for others remained. Moreover, there always was an inadequate amount of green vegetables and the prisoners all suffered from scurvy.
29. Stores (lar'ki) where food and tobacco could be bought were opened at the settlements. One could always buy bread at these stores, but the supply of other products was poor. There were expensive products, too expensive for the prisoners to buy, but rarely cheap products.
30. In the summer of 1955 the norms for food rations were again changed. The old norms were retained only for those who worked at basic enterprises such as forest exploitation, the sawmill, the motor vehicle repair work shops, etc. All invalids and prisoners engaged in subsidiary work began to receive less: 650 grams of bread, 13.5 grams of sugar, 12 grams of fat.
31. At settlement C43, as in all other settlements, there was one storehouse both for the prisoners and the garrison. The storehouse building was 15 x 20 m large. It usually contained a week's supply of food products. The food products were brought from the central warehouses of the Directorate or the subsection. In 1950 the products were brought to the storehouse by motor vehicles. Formerly they had been brought by horses and still earlier, prior to 1950, the carts bearing the products were drawn by men. Supplies for approximately 7 - 10 days were brought at one time. In addition, there was a vegetable storehouse at the settlement which was filled with potatoes and other vegetables in the fall after harvest. Usually the vegetables did not last until the next harvest.
32. The storehouse and also the vegetable storehouse were located in the working zone, where the shoe repair shops, carpenter work shops and smithies were. This zone was separate from the living quarters zone. The storehouse and the vegetable storehouse were not guarded other than by the general guard force from the towers.
33. The vegetables and the potatoes came from a sovkhos which belonged to the camp director. The labor in this sovkhos was also supplied by prisoners, usually women. The sovkhos's harvest was usually gathered late, and the produce reached the storehouses partially frozen, and quickly spoiled.

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34. In addition, the settlements themselves would often plant small vegetable plots. Subsequently the settlements maintained their own pigsties, but the meat from them was included in the norms. There were often interruptions in the supply produce. In such cases the following was done: if there was millet in the storehouses, the prisoners were given porridge made out of it for three months. If a supply of peas was brought in, they ate peas for three months.
35. The earnings of the prisoners were calculated on the basis of a reduced USSR scale of norms (po ponizhennym tarifnym normam SSSR).
36. Each enterprise where the prisoners worked paid the money earned by the prisoners to the camp. The camp deducted 60% of each prisoner's earnings for the upkeep of the camp. More was deducted from the remaining 40% as the upkeep of the prisoner himself, i.e. for lodging, food, clothing, and services such as light, heating, bath, barber, etc. The remaining money was given to the prisoner. For example: a locksmith (slesar) in a motor vehicle repair shop earned 1,000 rubles a month. The camp deducted 600 rubles for the upkeep of the camp. About 100 rubles of the remaining 400 rubles was deducted for food, 75 rubles for clothing, about 50 rubles for everything else, such as lodging, bath, barber, etc. He was given the remaining money. This was typical of a worker who was a specialist. The other workers received an average of 30-40 rubles a month.
37. Those who were employed in economic services, such as shoemakers, barbers, etc., and also prisoners who worked in the administration, were given a salary of 35 to 100 rubles a month.
- 25X1
38. Invalids who did production work were paid according to their output. However, only 50% was deducted from their earnings.
39. The amount of earnings depended on the profession and on the degree of fulfillment of the norms, if there were norms for that particular type of work.
40. In addition, for overfulfillment of the norm there were the so-called "zachety" (payments). For overfulfilling the norm by 105%, one day of the sentence was counted as two.
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- Those, such as cooks, tailors, etc., who performed work for which there were no norms, were given this type of compensation in accordance with the evaluation of their work: if the evaluation was good, one day of their sentence counted for two; if the evaluation was excellent, one day counted for 2½ or 3, depending on their duties.
41. Once a month, at a meeting, the chief of the special unit announced to the prisoners how many "zachety" each had. The prisoners were not allowed to leave the camp unguarded only within the work area and to work and back. If a prisoner communicated with a free man, both were punished.
42. In the neighboring villages there were many former prisoners who, after their release, did not have the right to go to other areas of the country.
- 25X1
- 43.
44. the population was hostile toward the guards (okhranniki). When the column would pass through a populated point, as at a station, the inhabitants would try to slip cigarettes and other items to the prisoners. They would reply to the guards' protests by saying "Shut up, dogs of Beria."

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However, this occurred only after Beriys's execution, since earlier the people feared that they themselves would be put in prison for expressing sympathy towards the prisoners.

45. Long distance transports were made in railroad freight cars. Three-decker plank-beds were installed in the cars, as well as a barrel with water, and a stove, if it was winter. The car was illuminated from above by two searchlights, and sentries stood on the wooden platform attached between cars.
46. If the transport was small, the prisoners were transported in stolypin cars with barred windows. Each compartment was locked by a door with bars, and a sentry (nadziratel' - chasovoy) was posted in the corridor. Up to 30 persons were crowded into a compartment for 13 persons. This was forbidden after 1953 and no more than the norm of 13 persons was put in a compartment. In recent years political ordinary criminals were separated on the transports.

#### Yvatlag, 1946-47

47. The camp directorate is located at station Losnaya, about 30 km from Verkhnekamsk, Kirovskaya oblast', Kayskiy rayon.
48. At that time, the camp had 20 subcamps and about 50,000 prisoners. [redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] in 1954, the number of prisoners in the camp increased to 70,000 or 75,000.
49. The prisoners worked on timber exploitation and on construction of the Verkhne-Kamsk - Kotlas railroad. [redacted] 25X1

#### Kraslag, summer of 1955

50. The directorate of the Krasnoyarskiy corrective labor camp is located in Reshety, a station on the main Trans-Siberian rail line, which lies almost on the border between Krasnoyarskiy kray and Irkutskaya oblast', about 80-100 km from Tayshet. The camp is divided into 24 sections, and each section is divided into 4 or 5 subcamps. Each subcamp has between 600 and 1,500 prisoners. The total number of prisoners in the camp is near 100,000.
51. The prisoners of Subcamp (logpunkt) No. 5, some 1,500 individuals, work in mechanical work shops, locomotive repair shops, and at the saw mill. The majority of the prisoners work on timber exploitation, which is the main occupation of the Krasnoyarskiy camp.
52. The majority of the prisoners, 95% of whom are former criminals, is Russian, the rest is made up of various nationalities of the Soviet Union.
53. Reshety station has an airport, which sends out small planes to watch out for forest fires.

#### Minlag, 1948-49

54. The camp is located some twelve km from Inta Station, which is about 300 km south of Vorkuta, and its administration is in Inta proper.
55. At the time, the camp had 7 subcamps, each subcamp had between 5,000 and 7,500 prisoners, whereas the total in the camp was approximately 45,000 individuals.
56. Between 1948 and 1954, Minlag was a special camp for political prisoners who were working chiefly in coal mines. The Minlag coal is poorer in quality than the coal around Vorkuta, and is used chiefly for heating purposes.
57. The camp has also a section in Abes where the invalids of the camp weave baskets, make chess figures, domino squares, etc.

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Attachment B

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*Transfer of Prisoners Between Camps* **SECRET**

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1. Usually, several weeks before a transfer of prisoners from one labor camp to another took place, rumors would start to run through the camp that a transfer was imminent. The compilation of lists would begin in the special section, and this could not be kept secret.

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2. [Redacted]
3. [Redacted]

were to be transferred to another column. On approximately 18 August lists of those included in the transport were posted, and it was seen that of the approximately 200 invalids on the column, about 70 were to be transferred to each of the following column, all located near Sosnovka: 033, 037, 046.

4. The prisoners who had to leave were released from work and turned in all the articles in their possession which belonged to the camp, such as their mattresses, pillows, blankets, sheets, quilted jackets. At the same time the accounting office settled the accounts of the prisoners, who had to sign a statement that they had no financial or other claims on the camp.
5. The departure did not take place until 19 September since it was not until then that railroad cars were supplied, and from the time they turned in their belongings until that date, approximately a month, the prisoners slept on bare boards.
6. On 19 September, all those who were to leave on the transport were ordered to go to the working area, where a fairly superficial search was made of both their persons and their belongings. Nothing was taken away from anyone.
7. The naryadchik (officer in charge of work assignments), reading from his list, ordered the prisoners to go to the gates. Five persons were let through the gates at a time, and after going through they fell into formation, with five persons to a row. Then the guards who were to be their escort took charge. They conducted another search of the prisoners and their belongings, making sure that the prisoners had no knives, metal spoons, or other metal objects which could be made into weapons. When the prisoners were transferred from one subcamp to another these searches were usually superficial, and were mainly regarded as a necessary formality.

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8. After the prisoners had been taken out of the camp, open trucks were supplied and 25 persons were put on each truck. Between the driver's cabin and the rest of the truck was placed a wooden, breast-high shield. There was a space of 75 cm between the cabin and the shield. In this space were two or three guards with submachine guns or carbines. The prisoners had to sit on the floor of the truck with their backs to the guards. In this manner the prisoners were taken to the place where they were to be taken, the station where the new city of Radishchev was being constructed, about three km from column C43. There the prisoners were put in three railroad cars, with about 70 persons in each car. These were two-axle freight cars, equipped for the prisoners' transportation. They had triple-decker wooden plank-beds, a barrel of water, and a stove made out of sheet-iron which was not needed in this case because it was warm outside. Between the cars were platforms made of boards for the guards. Three small wooden boards were placed over the small window in the car in such a manner that it was possible to see out of the car, but neither one's head nor one's arm could be stuck through. At the end of the roof of each car were two searchlights for illuminating the car at night from outside.
9. At 1000 or 1100 hours the prisoners were put on the cars. At about 1900 hours the cars set out, having been attached to a freight train. Until that time they had had no engine.
10. Before leaving the camp the prisoners were given their solid food rations for 24 hours: 1,100 grams of bread, 30 grams of sugar, and 150 grams of salted herring, which the prisoners ordinarily would not take.
11. In addition to the guards on the platform, there were other guards in a special car, which was also a freight car. There were two guards on each of the platforms between the cars. There were a total of 20 guards. The chief of the escort guards was an MVD lieutenant.
12. After traveling approximately 130 km, the train arrived at Sosnovka Station at about 0700 hours. There the prisoners were put off, and were met by the officials of the new subcamps. They were counted, their belongings were loaded onto carts, and, with a guard escort, they set off in formation on foot in the direction of the subcamps. Very old and very sick men were put on cart together with the prisoners' belongings.
13.  a column of about 70 men. The new guard force which escorted them, which was not the same as the one that accompanied the transport, consisted of 12 men with a shepherd dog. The distance from the station to subcamp C37 was one-half kilometer. 25X1
14. Upon arrival at the new subcamp, the prisoners were taken to the bath house, where the subcamp guards (nadzireteli) conducted a search of their belongings. Then the prisoners were asked to turn in at the store room all their belongings which they did not need every day. At the store room they were given a receipt for the articles they turned in, on which the valuable articles such as high boots, suits, etc., were specially mentioned with reference to quality: leather shoes, woolen jacket, etc.
15. While they were at the bath house the "sanitary processing" took place, including inspection for lice, boiling of underwear to disinfect it, and shaving of body hair. Beginning in 1953, the hair on the prisoner's head was not shaved if he did not want it to be. After the bath, the local physicians subjected the prisoners to a medical examination to determine their work capacity. Then the naryadchik assigned the prisoners to brigades in accordance with their work capacity, bedclothes were distributed, and the prisoners were assigned to barracks.

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29. "Stolypin" cars are usually attached to passenger-mail trains. They are routed on the main Trans-Siberian rail lines as follows: Krasnoyarsk - Novosibirsk and back; Novosibirsk - Sverdlovsk; Sverdlovsk - Chelyabinsk; Sverdlovsk - Moscow; Sverdlovsk - Kirov; Kirov - Leningrad; Kirov - Moscow. They are routed further on other railroad lines as follows: Moscow - Khar'kov; Khar'kov - Rostov; Khar'kov - Kiev; Kiev - L'vov; Moscow - Minsk; Minsk - L'vov; Moscow - Leningrad; Moscow - Kuybyshev; Kuybyshev - Chelyabinsk, etc. Usually a "Stolypin" car travels in one direction about three days.
30. Before leaving the transit prison, a prisoner is given solid food rations for three days. If the transfer was effected in large transports over a long distance, there was a kitchen on every train (eshelon) and the prisoners were fed en route.

S E C R E T

*Decreases on Release from Forced  
Labor Camps and Improvement  
of Conditions.*

*Attachment C*

**SECRET**

1. In the spring of 1954 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued decrees on release before the appointed time, on the release of invalids, on the reducing of the sentences of prisoners who had performed well at work and who had not violated the camp regulations, and on the release of minors.
2. These decrees were not published in the Soviet press. The representatives of the political section of the camp directorate who came to the camp did not read these decrees to the prisoners, but explained them to them. They arranged for meetings of the prisoners at the subcamps and announced that the policy of the Party and the Government in relation to the prisoners had been recognized as incorrect and changed: the bars were removed from the barracks windows, the barracks were not locked at night, the numbers were removed from the prisoners' clothes, easier work conditions were established for invalids, and penalty rations for failure to go to work were abolished. It was also announced that in accordance with the new decrees the prisoners would be able to reduce their sentence in the camp. In spite of the explanations, no one, including the authorities, knew how these new decrees would be put into practice. The prisoners learned the exact contents of the decrees at approximately the end of 1954 or the beginning of 1955. Until then each chief interpreted them in his own way.
3. At the end of 1953 the prisoners were informed that the Special Council, the so-called "troika" (three) which sentenced the accused in their absence and without a trial, had been dissolved. It had been acknowledged unconstitutional, and all cases upon which it had acted would be reviewed.

Early release

4. According to a decree, those prisoners who had a record of high work productivity and who had not broken the camp regulations would be eligible for early release after completion of two-thirds of their sentence. Their cases would be examined by a visiting court, and in accordance with the court's decision, a given prisoner could be granted an early release. If, subsequent to his release, during what would have been the remainder of the sentence, he commits another crime, the unserved portion of the sentence would be added to the new sentence. Prisoners released in this manner were sent to settlements (na poseleniye) where they were required to appear at the MVD special komendatura for registration.

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The release of disabled prisoners

5. According to decree, the camp authorities could consider disabled prisoners for release after a medical commission had established their total inability to work. Their cases were then examined by a visiting court, according to whose decision they might be released.

Reduction of sentence

6. On recommendation of the camp authorities, a prisoner's sentence could be reduced by a court decision, as a reward for good work and good conduct.

Release of minors

7. A minor is a person who, at the time he committed a crime, was not yet 18 years old. They were to be released by courts.

Light regime camps

8. In accordance with the decree, three types of camps were created: strict regime camps where those prisoners who did not show any signs of correction were sent, normal regime camps which employed the same discipline as the camps existing in 1954-55, and light regime camps to which were sent those prisoners considered eligible as a result of their work and conduct. There were no guard towers in light regime camps, and the prisoners went to work and worked unguarded. A nadziratel' (supervisor-type guard) was responsible for keeping order in the camp.
9. All the explanations of the authorities were of no avail, since no one knew how these decrees were to be put into effect. At long last it was explained that the court decrees were not enough for those who had been convicted under article 58, and that the approval of Moscow was needed as well.
10. In August and September 1955 two more decrees were issued. In the August decree it was stated that all persons convicted under article 58 who were disabled or had reached their sixtieth year were to be immediately released, without any court action, with the exception of those convicted under the following paragraphs of that article: 1 - treason, 2 - armed uprising, 4 - aiding the international bourgeoisie, 6 - espionage, and 8 - terrorism. In actuality it meant that all disabled prisoners and 60-year-olds who had been convicted under article 58-10-anti-Soviet propoganda, were released.
11. In the September 1955 decree it was said that with the exception of those who had directly participated in punitive detachments and expeditions, all those persons who had been convicted for collaboration with the occupation forces and who had served in German units and in military formations were subject to release. They were to be released without court action.
12. [redacted] in November 1954 the authorities recommended one person for pre-term release, and four persons for reduction of sentence. A representative of the political section of Ozerlag who came to a subcamp meeting, criticized the camp authorities for recommending too few persons, and stated that other subcamps had recommended many more for release. He further stated that they were to release or reduce the sentences of as many prisoners as possible. The camp authorities replied that the majority of the prisoners at the subcamp were disabled and that there were no prisoners who had excellent work records since the main work performed consisted of maintenance work within the camp. The representative answered that that attitude was not correct, and that if a disabled person did not refuse to work, and for example, heated stoves or sawed wood, he also had the right to be recommended for release or reduction of sentence. Upon hearing this, Junior Lieutenant VANIN, of the political

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unit of the subcamp, said: "We would recommend everyone for release with great pleasure, but we have been hearing talk about decrees for a whole year, and we don't know the meaning of them or what we are supposed to do. All this has caused a lowering of discipline in the camp, and up to now we have not heard of one case of release. The prisoners are expecting release from day to day, but no one, either in our subcamp or in the others, has been released. Even the representative of the prosecutor's office is unable to give us completely clear explanations. For example, the camp public prosecutor threatened to hold the authorities of the subcamps responsible for not having released those who have served two-thirds of their sentences. This indicates that the public prosecutor himself did not read the decree attentively, since it stated that court examination was required, and the camp authorities did not have the authority to independently release prisoners. All this leads to the conclusion that though it has been said that wood has been cut in the forest, when one goes to bring the wood home it turns out that there isn't any".

13. A couple of days after this meeting, the subcamp administration asked the council of the subcamp aktiv, which was composed of prisoners, to recommend to the camp administration 15 more persons for pre-term release and reduction of sentence.

14. The results were that of 19 persons recommended for release and reduction of sentence by the subcamp authorities, the Directorate of Ozerlag, permitted the review of the cases of a total of three persons. The application for the reduction of the prisoners' sentences was sent by the Directorate to Moscow, but in the three succeeding months, while source was still in the subcamp, no answer from Moscow arrived. 25X1

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16. Once, in 1954, a representative from GULAG came to subcamp 037 from Moscow and began giving the prisoners explanations of the regulations and the "payments" (zachety - compensation given to a prisoner for overfulfilling the norm by reducing his sentence a specified number of hours or days). Among the prisoners was a German who had been sentenced to life imprisonment. As a joke, he asked the representative of GULAG: "and what about zachety in my case - I have a life sentence?" The representative, undisturbed, answered: "They are still taken into consideration". The prisoners responded with explosive laughter, but the representative did not understand that he had said something stupid.

S E C R E T

*Attitude of Soviet Prison Officials  
toward Suspects and Sentencing*

*Attachment D*

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1. In 1945 one of the men arrested [redacted] asked the interrogator during an interrogation in the Lefortovskaya prison why the interrogator was screaming at him, that he, [redacted], was a suspect not proven guilty, and therefore did not deserve such treatment. To this the interrogator replied that any man walking on the street was a suspect, but a man who was already in prison was finished. 25X1
2. In 1955 at Kraslag, Reshety station, some thieves (blatnyye) were talking to the prison warden, and told him that one of their friends had been sentenced to five years for an attempt to leave the USSR. The warden said that that was not possible, the sentence for escape attempts was 25 years. But a thief explained to him that, according to the law, the sentence should be between 3 and 8 years, and his friend got away with 5 years. To this the warden replied that the thief did not know what he was talking about, because if the sentence for attempted escape were only five years, everybody in the USSR would make attempts to escape abroad.
3. In 1954 the chief of one of the Ozerlag subcamps asked a prisoner about the length of his term. When he found out that the prisoner had a 25-year sentence, the chief asked what the prisoner's crime was, and when the prisoner replied that he was not guilty, the chief said that that was not possible, innocent persons received ten years, not 25.

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