

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WARNING: INFORMATION REPORT NOT FULLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE
REPORT CLASS [REDACTED]
DIST: 04 MAY 1985
COUNTRY: USSR
SUBJ: SOVIET PRISON POPULATION
DOI: 1955-1979
SOURCE: [REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE THE PERCENTAGE OF CONVICTED INDIVIDUALS IN THE USSR WHO COULD HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS POLITICAL DISSIDENTS BECAUSE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO ADMIT THAT ANYONE WOULD HAVE CAUSE TO SHOW DISSENT AGAINST THE STATE. THE RECORDS OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO DID COMMIT POLITICAL CRIMES WOULD PROBABLY INDICATE THAT THEY HAD BEEN CONVICTED OF DRUNKENNESS OR HOOLIGANISM, OR THAT THEY HAD EXHIBITED INSANE BEHAVIOR AND HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO A SANATORIUM, MANY OF WHICH WERE JOINTLY SUBORDINATE TO BOTH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE KGB. AT ANY RATE, THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE PEOPLE CONVICTED AS POLITICAL DISSIDENTS WAS VERY SMALL AND CERTAINLY LESS THAN ONE HALF OF ONE PERCENT OF ALL CONVICTIONS. COMMENT: SOURCE FOUND THIS QUESTION VERY DIFFICULT TO ADDRESS BECAUSE HE WAS A DEFENSE ATTORNEY FOR CIVIL CRIMES ONLY, AND DID NOT HAVE THE SECURITY CLEARANCE REQUIRED TO DEFEND THOSE ACCUSED OF POLITICAL CRIMES.

2. IT WAS NOT REALLY POSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE WITH ANY ACCURACY THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SOVIET CITIZENS WHO WERE IN THE OVERALL PENAL OR CORRECTIVE LABOR SYSTEM, BUT 600,000 OR MORE WERE PROBABLY SERVING TIME IN PRISONS AND ANOTHER 4,000,000 WERE PROBABLY INCARCERATED IN CORRECTIVE LABOR COLONIES. POSSIBLY AN ADDITIONAL 1,500,000 INDIVIDUALS WERE CONDITIONALLY SENTENCED AND WORKING IN OBLIGATORY LABOR WHILE ANOTHER 100,000 WERE SENTENCED TO WORK AT THEIR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT CONFINEMENT BUT AT REDUCED WAGES. COMMENT: SOURCE WOULD NOT HAZARD A GUESS AT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN CORRECTIVE LABOR COLONY SETTLEMENTS, BUT BELIEVES THE NUMBER 100,000

WOULD BE TOO LOW. IN ADDITION, HE BELIEVES THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE
CONDITIONALLY RELEASED FROM IMPRISONMENT AND WORKING IN OBLIGATORY
LABOR WOULD BE GREATER THAN 500,000, BUT DECLINED TO ESTIMATE THE
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THIS CATEGORY.)

