

[REDACTED] AUGUST 21, 1982]

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USSR: Alleged Use of Forced Labor on Pipeline

The Soviets are denying widespread West European accusations that political prisoners are being used to build the Siberian gas pipeline to Western Europe. [REDACTED]

The allegation, which has been given considerable attention by West European media, evidently was first made early this month by a human rights organization based in West Germany. The French and West German Governments have instructed their Embassies in Moscow to determine the validity of the charge. The Soviets yesterday again denied the accusation in an article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, calling it a "dirty lie" intended to disrupt agreements with West European countries. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] political prisoners are not used on pipeline construction because they are not eligible for parole. Paroled prisoners convicted of bribery, robbery, or other crimes occasionally are employed on such projects as manual laborers or service personnel. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] parolees are used to help build compressor stations but not to lay pipe, because that requires mobile crews. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is under strong pressure to provide parolees for pipeline construction projects, which are particularly important in national economic plans. [REDACTED]

Comment: The Soviets are plagued by serious labor shortages and may be using some of the 2 million people in forced labor camps, as well as parolees, to perform such unskilled tasks as clearing forests for important pipeline construction projects. There is no evidence, however, that any of the estimated 10,000 imprisoned political or religious dissidents are being used for any phase of construction on the Siberian export pipeline. [REDACTED]

-CIA, DIA, NSA-

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