

**SECRET**

Report of Interrogation: No. 5875  
P/W: HILGER, Gustav  
Rank: Counsellor of Embassy  
Unit: Foreign Office  
Captd: 19 May 1945, Salzburg.

16 November 1945  
I/O: Capt. Halle

Veracity: Believed reliable

Report: Answer to Periodic Intelligence Questionnaire, MIS Sep-Oct 1945.

Question USSR #12: What is the contemplated size of the Red Army after demobilization? To what extent will problems of absorption in civil economy hinder the demobilization?

Answer #12: Most inclusive calculations have been made for the strength of the Red Army by the proper German military departments. P/W assumes that there has been no change in the statistics known to 1st Lt. Dr. Zinnemann, who was employed on the War Economy Staff. According to P/W's knowledge, he is a P/W.

As far as P/W remembers the number of men old enough to bear arms in the USSR was estimated about 29 million by the Germans. Of these, deducting those persons claimed by industry and the government bureaus, and also taking into consideration the number of casualties, there were about 12.5 million still in the Red Army at the end.

According to certain information, the authenticity of which P/W is not able to prove, the Soviet government planned to have a peace time strength of 3 million men in the Red Army, meaning that about 9-10 million would gradually be discharged.

The problem of absorbing these men into industry, which is a complete state monopoly down to the smallest and tiniest section, or is under the immediate supervision of the state, operating according to fixed plans determined by the government, is no problem at all in the USSR. Besides, there has always been such a great lack of labor in the USSR that nearly half of the industrial workers have been women. During the war, the percentage of women in industry has risen to 80% and more. In the Soviet Union even before the war women were employed in the regular work program with no consideration as to the type and heaviness of the work to be done. During the war they were employed in many places which had formerly been predominately the sphere of men, e.g. on the railroads and in transportation in general. After the war, the Soviet government for biological reasons will place importance on replacing women performing heavy work by men, thus turning them to a greater extent towards their natural function. The Soviet government is so certain of the inexhaustible need of man-power by industry in the USSR that, for the time being, it does not even consider releasing German POW's who are able to work.

The plans of the Soviet government for rebuilding what was destroyed by the war and the further industrialization of the USSR are tremendous. There are indications of this in Molotov's speech of 6 November 1945. The contents of the new 5-year plan which the Soviet government intends to start will be more exact details about which P/W knows nothing, as P/W does not have the necessary Soviet publications.

P/W does not doubt that Soviet economy will very quickly absorb the majority of the demobilized Red Army soldiers. There will be no lack of work for them, such as there will be in housing. There has always been an extra

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ordinary lack of housing in the Soviet Union - one might even say catastrophic. As a result of the destruction caused by the war, and in conjunction with the return of the soldiers, this problem will reach proportions which are quite beyond the scope of a western imagination. The Soviet government will have to give serious consideration to this problem. Much of the success of reconstruction in the USSR will depend upon the solution of this problem.

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