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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT NO.	OO- <i>B</i> -3137953
SUBJECT	US Tourist Arrested in Minsk/Under Surveillance During Stay of Five Days/Denied Visit to Relatives/Drugged in Hotel Byelorussia/Head Waiter in Hotel Official of Secret Police/Large Number of Soldiers in Minsk	DATE DISTR.	
		NO. PAGES	3
		REFERENCES	<i>Case 50943</i>
DATE OF INFO.	Jul 59		
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	Minsk Jul 59		

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE: US citizen, traveling in the USSR as a tourist.

Source, who speaks Russian, traveled to the USSR to see relatives and to collect pictures and material for lectures. He is not a professional lecturer but does it more as a hobby. He is a second-generation Soviet with relatives living in the area of Novogradok.

1. During a recent trip to the USSR [July 1-17, 1959], I spent five days in Minsk. My purpose for being in Minsk was to attempt to contact relatives living in the vicinity of Novogradok. I had been assured by a man named Rogov at Intourist headquarters in Moscow that this could be arranged and by the time that I had reached Minsk that it would all have been taken care of. But as I had learned to understand, the Intourist in Minsk had never heard of me or Rogov and nothing had been arranged. In fact, I was informed that it would be impossible for me to travel to Novogradok. I was given a series of excuses about road conditions and lack of suitable transportation. These excuses, coupled with "come back tomorrow" type of promises, managed to consume the five days I was scheduled for Minsk. I made several attempts to reach my relatives by telegraph. One such telegraph cost me a ruble a word, but I heard nothing from them and I seriously doubt that it was delivered. I've heard nothing from my relatives since returning to the US.
2. My wife and I spent our time in Minsk wandering about the city taking pictures of buildings and people and visiting points of interest, of which there are few. We made several attempts to visit the factories in the area but each time I was told that it was a holiday or that it would be impossible for one reason or another.
3. On our second day in Minsk (either 12 or 13 July 1959) my wife and I were in the vicinity of the railroad station. We were interested in getting a picture of some landmark that might have been there for many years so that I could bring the picture back to my uncle who formerly lived in the area. We spotted such a building. Completely in the open and not attempting to be secretive about it, my wife snapped a picture of the building. Almost immediately a man we had not particularly noticed before began yelling at the top of his lungs that we were spies taking pictures of the railroad yards. We were, of course, arrested and brought to the police headquarters. The officer before whom we were ushered after being kept waiting for almost two hours, demanded the film. I put up an argument which was to no avail. I gave up the film. Before the Soviet police official knew I could speak Russian he said to one of his assistants that all these American tourists are spies sent over to take pictures. My offer to unload the camera, which seemed to puzzle the Soviets, was at first turned down. However, later on I was taken by the police to

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a camera shop where the film was developed. The film, as I had contended, was harmless and, although they kept the film, I was allowed to return to my hotel (The Byelorussia).

4. After that incident, my wife and I were under continuous surveillance during the rest of our stay in Minsk.
5. In the hotel dining room where we ate most of our meals, my wife and I became acquainted with a Soviet couple who were eating at the same table with us. They, in turn, introduced us to the orchestra leader, who also was very anxious to talk with us. During the course of our conversation the orchestra leader asked, among other things, if I would be able to take a letter out of the USSR with me to mail to a relative in the West. I told him that I would. He said that he would see me again before I left Minsk.
6. The couple that we had met asked us if we would like to visit their apartment and have dinner with them the next night. We agreed and set a meeting place.
7. We noticed that everywhere we went the next day we were followed. The couple to whose house we had been invited for dinner met us at our hotel. As we were about to get into a taxi to leave for their apartment, I noticed that the man who had been following us that of the day climbed into another car and stayed a short distance behind us as we drove along. The Soviet couple mentioned the fact that we were being followed. We stopped for cigarettes to see what the "tail" would do. He stopped and waited until we resumed our trip and then followed along. At this point the Soviet couple thought it better that we not go to their apartment for obvious reasons, and so returned to the hotel. In the dining room at the hotel, the orchestra leader again came up to the table. Almost in a whisper he said that something must be up for the place was full of Secret Police. He left almost at once and did not stay to talk. He did say, however, that he had thought over about the letter and that he would not be sending it out with me.
8. During the course of the evening I had a very friendly chat with the headwaiter in the Hotel Byelorussia dining room. He was very gracious, offered all kinds of help and was very solicitous about what had happened to me when I told him of being arrested. When I returned to my table one of our Soviet friends asked me what we had talked about and then told me that the headwaiter was the head of the local Secret Police and that he was at the hotel only during the summer tourist season.
9. On the third day of my stay in Minsk, the Soviets really took care of us. My wife and I had again invited our friends to the hotel for dinner. We were sitting at our table sipping champagne. Both couples of us left the table to dance. Upon our return to the table my wife suddenly became violently ill and rushed from the table to our room. As she was leaving I too became ill with sharp pains in my chest. I rushed to the men's room, where I vomited. I noticed that on this occasion, as on subsequent trips to the men's room when I was struck by waves of nausea, I was followed. I later (I believe it was in Warsaw) related this story to an official of the Canadian Embassy to whom I was introduced. He told me that this was a favorite trick of the Soviets when foreigners became too friendly or had prolonged conversations with Soviet civilians.
10. Again, on the fourth day, we were followed by a man in a car when we went to a recreation area known as the "Minsk Sea" for a swim. This time the "tail" parked his car as we had done and came to the water's edge near where we were swimming. He made motions as if to test the temperature of the water with his hand. He completely ignored us, but as far as I know he was never out of his sight.

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11. I was never allowed to contact my relatives, which was the purpose of my visit, nor was I allowed to go anywhere or see anything that was of more than casual tourist interest. I did, however, notice the large number of military personnel that was in the city of Minsk. They were everywhere I went; I could not estimate how many I saw, but I do recall being impressed with the number. One man with whom I struck up a conversation said he was a Soviet Army officer and that he was stationed in the Novogrudok area.

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