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The following report is based on the interrogation of British Junior N.C.Os and Privates (ex-Prisoners of War) evacuated through RUSSIA and arrived U.K. 7 May 1945.

Period covered by Report - January - April 1945.

N.B. Many of the men had been overrun in January by the Russians but had not been evacuated immediately. Consequently they had had the chance to see what Russian occupation meant for POLAND and GERMANY.

#### RUSSIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLES:

Same as to the Germans - except no evidence of Polish males being taken en masse to RUSSIA.

#### RUSSIAN ATROCITIES:

Russian atrocities towards both nationalities are on a scale which men, who have been prisoners in GERMANY for five years, had not imagined possible. It is an everyday occurrence for Russian soldiers to go into a house, shoot the children and rape any women - regardless of her nationality. It is almost unknown to see a sober Russian soldier and the officers are practically as bad, so that their main preoccupation is loot and rape - producing a reign of terror - which affected all areas and took place at all times.

#### STARVATION:

The situation seems to be that stocks of food are exhausted, practically all cattle have been looted by the Red Army, there is no rationing system and even if there were, rations would not be available. Food supplies are so lacking that a black market has practically ceased to exist.

#### ORGANISED LOOTING:

The organised looting of EASTERN GERMANY was reported by men who had come from E. PRUSSIA, DANZIG, THORN, BREMBERG and SILESIA, and would appear to ensure that neither GERMANY nor any occupying power would be able to make any industrial use of the country for many years to come.

#### FACTORIES:

As soon as the Red Army arrives in a town the systematic removal of all factory plant commences. To do this all German women are conscripted and with considerable speed the machinery is loaded onto trains and evacuated to RUSSIA. The complete stripping of all the plant of SCHICKAU of ELBING had certainly been completed by 8 March, SIEMENS of DANZIG has been cleared and other men report that all factories in the UPPER SILESIA area including REUTHER, BOHEK, LABND, GLEWITZ and the synthetic oil plants at BLECHHAMMER and REIGERSFELD were being stripped and by March a very large proportion had been taken away.

#### MINES:

Stories about the mines vary. Some say that they had seen pumping machine being sent East by rail and that some of the mines in UPPER SILESIA /are getting ....

are getting flooded, but in March the HOHENZOLLERNGRUBEN at BEUTHEN were certainly being worked with German women in a pitiful condition.

#### MALE GERMANS DEPORTED:

It appears that all the work is being done by German women and that all German males (including Volksdeutsch) between the ages of 17 and 50 (some say 60) have been deported to RUSSIA.

#### TRANSPORT:

Men who travelled by rail from CRACOW to ODESSA report that the trains in which they travelled were frequently put into sidings while trainload after trainload of loot went past going East. This was mostly seen between CRACOW and LWOV. The trains might contain German male civilians (not prisoners of war), factory machinery, furniture, farm machinery, horses, sewing machines, in fact anything.

In view of the fact that unskilled German female labour is used to remove the machinery, some men express doubt as to the ultimate value of the machinery to the Russians.

#### RAILWAYS:

As regards transport, men reported that east of CRACOW there is considerable movement on the railways. A great many German goods wagons have been converted to Russian gauge and also quite a number of German locomotives. At an engine shed 32 kms. from ODESSA on the line from LWOV six new-type German engines were seen being converted to Russian gauge. With the help of large numbers of locally conscripted female labour, the transfer of railways to Russian gauge is quickly pressed on, as soon as territory is occupied. The laying of the lines is done in a crude manner. In LABAND in March all possible welding equipment had been requisitioned by the Russians and it was said that it was being used for welding points. Russian gauge was seen to operate up to the following places on dates given:

SPROTTAU (SILESIA)	16 Feb - <i>incorrect</i>
INSTERBURG	13 Mar
RESNIA (nr. POSEN)	end of Mar.
KILDENBURG	beginning of Mar.

Those men who saw the Russian gauge operating up to RESNIA travelled from this town to BEALSTOCK via WARSAW. There were two tracks Russian gauge and one track German gauge. The latter appeared to be used and the rails were not rusty. Coal was everywhere scarce and engines were fired with wood.

#### MILITARY EQUIPMENT:

Practically all military equipment appeared to be from the U.S.A. with a certain amount of British. The Russian troops thought it was Russian as all possible American and British trade marks had been removed or painted over. One ex-P/W had served for six ~~months~~ <sup>weeks</sup> with the Armoured Corps of the 1st Ukrainian Army between end of January and beginning of March. The light tanks and armoured cars were of Russian manufacture. These troops were drunk most of the time and very anti-British. Few Russian aircraft were seen, except a few bi-plane transport aircraft. Bombers bombed BEUTHEN and men say they saw captured German aircraft used to bomb BRUSLAU. Few German prisoners were seen and the Russians did not seem to bother to take prisoners.

#### RUSSIAN ATTITUDE TO BRITAIN and AMERICA:

Many Russians went out of their way to make it clear that they despised the British and Americans. Russian officers and other ranks / frequently ....

frequently said that BRITAIN was next on the list to be dealt with. The British ex-Pa/W certainly seem to hate the Russians with a loathing far greater than their hatred of the Germans. Several men were quite frank and said that they would like to have a crack at the Russians. Practically all made it clear that the Russians were the crudest barbarians who devoured everything like locusts, despised all other nationalities and they did not see how the plight of those countries over-run by the Russians could be worse than it is now. Their hatred of the Russians seemed to be caused more by the generally barbarous attitude of the Russians towards the Poles and others than by the poor treatment which they received from the Russians.

M. I. 9.  
12 May 1945.

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Lieut.-Colonel, G. S.

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REPORT OF INTERROGATION OF CERTAIN  
BRITISH PERSONNEL RECENTLY RETURNED

FROM ODESSA

1. Certain features re-occur in the depositions of all soldiers interrogated. These are:
  - (a) That they were robbed of their possessions, particularly watches, rings and other attractive objects by the Russian troops.
  - (b) That the same action was taken by Russian troops towards the civilian population of Austria and Poland.
  - (c) Polish and Austrian women were, on many occasions, raped by Russian officers and other ranks.
  - (d) The Red Army derives its rations from the local populations of the areas in which it is stationed.
  - (e) British P's.W. were given very little help by the Russians. Energetic action was necessary on the part of the ex-P's.W. to get either food or transport facilities from the Russians. The attitude of the Russians towards British and American ex-P's.W. is either indifferent or hostile.