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FOREIGN DOCUMENTS DIVISION

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INTERVIEW REGARDING CONDITIONS IN OCCUPIED LATVIA

1. Date of Interview: 17 May 1962; at Kalamazoo, Mich.
2. Information about the interviewed person: Mrs. Amalija ARTMANIS, 70 years old; left Latvia 2 years ago. Lives with her son, Mr. Adolfs ARTMANIS, 2315 Portage St., Kalamazoo, Mich. In Latvia she spent the greater part of her life at the Ligatne Paper Factory, where her husband worked until his retirement; he continued living there after being retired. He is now deceased.
3. Ligatne Paper Factory.

After World War II, the director of the factory was a certain VOLKINS, a Latvian from Russia, who spoke Latvian fluently. He was extremely very friendly towards the Latvians and was anti-Russian. During his time, not a single Russian worker is said to have been hired by the Ligatne Paper Factory. So at that time the Ligatne Factory was completely Latvian. When Volkins died (shortly before Mrs. A. left for the US), he was replaced by another Latvian from Russia, who was more considerate towards the Russians, and at that time some Russians were again being hired for work. Mrs. A. still believes, however, that even now Ligatne is one of the most Latvian (as regards the nationality of workers) factories in Latvia. Mrs. A. was in Sloka at one time, and according to her the Sloka Cellulose Factory already had many Russian workers. Mrs. A. believes that the influx of Russian workers into Latvia depends on how responsive the Latvian employers or enterprise directors are.

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During the 1949 deportations, the workers of the Ligatne Paper Factory were hardly touched at all; at that time the deportees were mostly farmers. Mrs. A. believes that about 150,000 persons may have been deported from Latvia at that time, as the deportations were very widespread.

The Ligatne school (7-year) had both Latvian and Russian children in it. There is a kindergarten for the children of factory workers, where the children stay all week and are sent home to their parents only over the weekends. All the children are brought up in an anti-religious and Communist spirit. The children are forced and persuaded to join the Pioneers and the Komsomol. Mrs. A. believes that a large number of Latvian youths are forced to go along with Communism, as there is no other way to make a better living. What the young people feel in their hearts is a different matter.

The parents of former "Legion members" do not receive any pensions in Ligatne. Her husband's pension was 700 rubles (in the old currency) per month, but after her husband's death Mrs. A. received 300 rubles a month. Men received a pension at the age of 60, and women at the age of 55. Of course, everyone continued working after reaching that age, because then the income would be higher. In that case, the worker received, in addition to his pension, a salary of 200 rubles.

The Ligatne Paper Factory now has four machines. The fourth one, which is quite modern, was installed by the Russians. The factory operates continuously, in three shifts. The quality of the paper is said to be the best in Russia and most of the product

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is shipped to Russia.

The factory is guarded day and night. The factory grounds are surrounded by a fence and one can enter only by a gate. The guards are not armed; their main duty is to see that no fire breaks out and to guard against thefts. Stealing is being cultivated on a large scale, as it is everywhere in the Soviet Union. Cigarette paper is stolen most of all (according to the Russian custom the smokers roll their own cigarettes); the paper is called "White Gold". It was stolen mostly during the first postwar years, when it had a high price on the black market and when it was more difficult for workers to get along than during recent years.

Alcohol is consumed in terrific quantities.

#### 4. Other Information

There are not many Russians in the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, because they are lazy and the work on the farms is hard. In general, there are not many people left on the farms. The farm buildings are very run down, and few new ones are being built. The wages are disproportionately small (the income in general) and therefore the people flee from the country to the cities.

In Mrs. A.'s opinion, the mail is not inspected very much. In the country there are still many Latvian postal employees, and in any event the censoring of mail is not as strict as in the cities.

There are always some rumors going around. Mrs. A. does not know who spreads the rumors (and for what purpose). Maybe the Communists themselves spread them. While she was there, for example,

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a rumor went around that the British were in Riga and that the Communists (Russians) would have to leave Latvia. There were also frequent rumors that Riga was being evacuated, and so forth.

The military personnel is stationed mostly in the cities. There are no troops in rural areas.

Foreign radio broadcasts, especially Voice of America, are heard very frequently. Mrs. A. believes that everyone ~~does~~<sup>hears</sup> it who has a chance. Although the broadcasts are jammed, one can hear them quite well.

Mixed marriages (with Russians) seldom take place. In that respect, there is no danger of Latvians being Russified.

Mrs. A. had not heard anything about restricted areas where civilians were not allowed to enter. In her opinion, there are no such areas along the Vidzeme coast.

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Mrs. A. is not very talkative. She mostly just answers questions. Besides, most of her life was concentrated around one place, the Ligatne Paper Factory, and therefore she has not made many observations.

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