

ITEM NO.4523/56

MK
April 28
II-3765

POLAND

MORALE AND GENERAL MOOD (2000)

ARMED FORCES (0300)

Purges (0612)

STALINOGROD BECOMES KATOWICE ONCE MORE.

SOURCE STOCKHOLM: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Middle of April 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: Unfortunately we are unaware who is source of this interesting report, how much of it is wishful thinking and how much real truth.

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Until quite recently letters addressed to KATOWICE were returned to the senders and if anyone asked for a ticket to KATOWICE at a railway station, he was brusquely told that such a town did not exist.

Now all this has changed. The letters are forwarded to the correct address and the tickets to KATOWICE sold without any difficulty. The inhabitants in this city feel that it will soon bear the name of KATOWICE again although nothing official has been said on the matter to date.

There are even other changes which can be coupled to the recent events in the Soviet Union. STALIN's pictures are gradually disappearing from the walls, even in military barracks. There have been no orders to this effect, people are doing it spontaneously, but in a quiet and unostentatious way. Nobody wants to be the last to remove the vestiges of the "STALIN cult," but neither do they want to appear too eager for fear of the still possible consequences. BIERUT's pictures can still be seen in military barracks, but they are no longer draped with crepe.

A certain nervousness can be observed among officers of the Polish Army and their Russian politruks, especially among

(More)

those who distinguished themselves by persecuting the soldiers who had not shown sufficient respect for STALIN in the past. The higher command is trying to ease their position by transferring them to other units.

The generals and other officers, who had been kept in prison without any trial and are now released, get indemnities more or less corresponding to the pay they would have got if they had been in service instead of in prison. They also get jobs and even holidays from these, but hitherto none of them have been admitted back into active service.

The general feeling in the whole of the country is one of excitement and anticipation. Edward OCHAB is hated by everybody, and the Poles are convinced that his days are numbered. The government seems to feel very uncertain itself. It appears reluctant to introduce any violent and conspicuous changes and prefers to leave the initiative with the public.

End.