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OSS Numbered Bulletins Jan-May 1944

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



18 April 1944

GERMANY: Rivalry Between Ribbentrop and the SS

The appointment of Weesenmeyer as a special envoy to Hungary is generally interpreted as a setback for Ribbentrop. Long associated with the SS, Weesenmeyer was involved in the Jewish persecutions in Poland, and later acted as a Hungarian specialist in the Reichskanzlerei. His appointment, says the OSS representative in Bern, is a further step toward bringing German diplomacy under the Nazi Party organization, rather than under the Foreign Office. Germann Neubacher, the special envoy to the Balkans, is a man of the same general type.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Bern, 17 April)

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18 April 1944

GERMANY: Concentration Camp for Prominent Hostages?

According to a German report, says the OSS representative in Bern, Hitler has given orders to establish a special concentration camp in Southern Germany, where prominent business men, bankers, and politicians from occupied territories are to be confined, especially those who have had close relations with Britain and the U. S. It is believed that Hitler will hold these men as hostages for his own safety.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Bern, 17 April)

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7 April 1944

HUNGARY: Resistance; Pogroms; Food Confiscations.

The OSS representative in Bern reports the following comments of a neutral traveller who has just arrived from Hungary:

While in Budapest during the first days of the occupation, the informant spoke German in ordering his meals at a restaurant; the waiter refused to serve him until he explained that he was not German, but a neutral. The Hungarians are showing their passive resistance in a great many ways, particularly by being slow and inefficient.

A hunt for Jews is on, too. The informant called a business friend who is a Jew, and the latter's wife, sobbing, said that her husband had gone away and begged the informant not to try to see her. The informant is of the opinion that Germany is putting all her energy into making this the most efficient pogrom of them all, and is looting Hungary of all food stuffs she can get her hands on.

The informant saw very few German troops in Budapest, but the Gestapo was everywhere.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Bern, 5 April)

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By SR Date MAY 5 1975

*Source shows to National Security*

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

5 April 1944

Germany: Eyewitness Account of the Situation in Berlin.

The following eyewitness report, which is rated A-2, is by a reliable informant who recently spent a day in Berlin:

With the exception of the Schlesischer Bahnhof, which is still unscathed, all the major railroad stations in Berlin have been completely demolished. All the rail traffic seemed to be running on a punctual schedule, however, and the informant's train was on time at every stop. Where there are no stations, rail tickets must be procured from the police and only emergency cases and special pass holders are permitted to buy tickets. The appearance of the rolling stock was clean and in good shape. Only about 25 percent of the subway system is in use; the remainder has been converted into giant shelters and a tremendous machine repair shop. In most of the city, the street cars are running.

Both Charlottenburg and Templehof are entirely demolished, without a single building left standing. Half of the buildings on Unter den Linden are destroyed. The Legation Quarter, the Tiergarten, the Luftfahr Ministry and Gestapo Headquarters are all completely demolished. Not a wall is standing at the airport, which is a shambles. The Moabit Criminal Courts are demolished. Informant claims he drove in a cab through central and west Berlin for a distance of six miles without observing a single house standing. For the most part, the population of Berlin is living underground. They have evacuated all of the small children. The older children and the women are working 16 hours a day. All food is rationed, although on a generous basis. Every item of clothing is also rationed.

The essential business of Berlin functions doggedly, although some of the Ministries, the Luftfahr included, have moved to Vienna. Tremendous "slave" labor forces, for the most part Russians and Poles, are in evidence everywhere doing safety demolition and clean-up work. These men are forced to stay out in the open during raids, since there are not enough shelters available for everyone in Berlin.

Source reports that a relatively accurate and gloomy picture of the war situation is being given to the general populace. This results in a fabulous fear of the Russians and in despair of victory, but also in a drugged reaction as though from morphine, and there is no sign of collapse. Everyone is convinced that the only way out is to fight to the end and there is a glimmer of hope that England and America may turn against Russia once they see that the Soviet is about to assume complete control.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Baghdad, 2 April)

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29 March 1944

Palestine: Raids on Police Headquarters.

During the attack on police headquarters in Jerusalem on 23-24 March, the explosions uprooted a tree in the yard and blew out the lower front of the headquarters, which is one of the most solid buildings thereabout. Plate glass was shattered for a block on both sides of Jaffa Road, and, as a precaution against more live bombs, the road was shut off. In Haifa, the CID building was blown up and a number of English policemen were injured. Four bags of high explosives were discovered in the headquarters of the Jaffa police, which was evacuated. The building was destroyed by subsequent explosions. The south wall of one house, constructed of modern ferro-concrete, was completely blown out. In various parts of Tel-Aviv, gangster-fashion attacks were made on the police, one of whom was killed and two injured. The Mayor and municipal functionaries have indicated their horror at these attacks, which they believe were carried out by the Stern gang.

The OSS representative in Jerusalem comments that it is not known whether Irgun Zva'i Le'umi (National Military Organization) took part in these raids, which were carried out in the commando manner by the Stern gang.

(OSS Official Dispatces, Cairo, Jerusalem, 26 March;  
both rated A-2)

[OSS analysts in Washington are inclined to believe that Irgun, which has a membership of from two to three thousand, is carrying out these bombings. The political clearheadedness employed in fixing upon the targets to be destroyed and the technical skill in organizing the bombings seems to surpass the somewhat haphazard methods of the Stern gang.]

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28 March 1944

Iraq: Reaction to Wagner Resolution.

The OSS representative in Baghdad reports that on 27 March the controversy over the Wagner resolution reached its peak with a furious attack on the US in the Majles. The Opposition leader, Salmon Sheikh Daoud, said that the US should establish a Jewish State in America if it was so fond of Jews. Nuri made only a feeble response. As a result of all this, public opinion is now persuaded that protests from the Middle East forced General Marshall's actions, indicating the fear of the Arab world which exists in America. A very trustworthy source states that US prestige has never before been so low.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Baghdad, 27 March; rated A-2)

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14 March 1944

Cairo: Reaction to President's Reported  
Statements Concerning Palestine.

Cairo newspapers have carried surprisingly little comment on the statements with regard to Palestine and the White Paper attributed to President Roosevelt by Rabbis Wise and Silver after their recent interview with him, to the effect that he was pleased that Palestine had opened its gates to Jewish immigration, that the White Paper had never received U. S. approval, and that the U. S. people and their Government deeply sympathize with the concept of a Jewish National Home. There is, however, widespread discussion of the report in Cairo. The public appears either to disbelieve it or to withhold fire pending confirmation of the facts. The Reuters dispatch carrying the report has not been carried by the English papers. One of the native papers comments that it is difficult to reconcile Roosevelt's reported statements with Kirk's assurances to Nahas that the Wagner resolution does not represent official opinion.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Cairo, 12 March)

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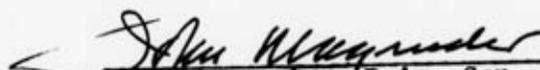
13 March 1944

To: Colonel L. Mathewson  
White House Map Room

Subject: Reports Received in OSS, No. 110

Submitted herewith are some additional items received from our secret sources abroad.

Unless otherwise indicated, the items of information transmitted are reports just as received from agents, and have not been evaluated as to degree of reliability other than as stated.

  
John Magruder, Brig. Gen.  
Deputy Director, OSS  
Intelligence Service

Enclosures.

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11 March 1944

Hungary: Attitude Toward Germany.

The OSS representative in Bern submits the following information from a person extremely well informed on Hungarian conditions:

Hungary is still at a loss what to do. Many people, formerly pro-German or who believed in German invincibility, have now changed their minds. In general, the aristocracy, the higher clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, and most of the Socialists are pro-Allied, although there are still some radical Nazis among the left element of the latter group. Pro-Germans still dominate the army, although some important changes have recently been made. Pro-Germans are also found in the rank and file of the bureaucracy, and in the non-Jewish middle classes, many of whom are of German origin, and in the lower ranks of the clergy, except for the Unitarians, who are all anti-German. The Hungarian peasants are mostly anti-German, but there are some half-million Swabians who are completely pro-Nazi.

The position of the Jews in Hungary is anomalous. Naturally they wish to see the Nazis beaten, but they are frightened of a German occupation of Hungary, which would mean their liquidation. Therefore they are trying to persuade Kallay to be cautious, so that the end of the war can be reached without German occupation, even though this might result in Hungary's being treated at the peace negotiations as an impenitent ally of Germany. This same attitude is maintained by some members of the upper strata of society, who, though anti-German, feel they too would be liquidated in the event of a prolonged German occupation.

The present idea of all parties except the Communists is to defend the Carpathians, alone if possible, and even to decline offers of assistance from Germany. However, if the Germans come in unsolicited and even unwanted, it is difficult to say what Hungary would do. Many Hungarians still try to believe that the Anglo-Saxons are so anxious to keep Russia out of the Balkans and the Mediterranean area that they would hastily revise their war policy if the Russians were in the Carpathians.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Bern, 9 March)

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By SR Date MAY 5 1975

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6 March 1944

Nazi Europe: Propaganda Maneuver for Compromise Peace;  
Anti-Catholic Measures.

The Germans, according to a generally reliable informant, are spreading stories among the population of the occupied countries about how ruthless they will be as soon as the Allied invasion starts: coastal areas will be flooded, towns turned into fortresses, and the entire country laid waste. The purpose of these stories is said to be to make the peoples of the occupied countries bring pressure on their governments-in-exile to persuade the Allies to make peace before the invasion. The argument is that if peace is made now, the Germans will retire quietly to their own territory. If not, they will destroy everything in their retreat, as they are doing in Italy. This propaganda is having some effect, according to source, who states that some people who had hoped for invasion in these occupied countries are now beginning to dread it.

Under the pretext of combating separatism, rigorous measures are being taken against Catholics throughout southern Germany and Austria, according to a report rated A-3. Efforts are being made to remove priests from their parishes; hundreds of searches have been made of the homes of priests, and even of churches; and in Munich numerous Catholic personalities have been arrested on the charge of committing crimes against the unity of the Reich. Further persecution of everything Catholic and of suspected hostile groups is to be expected, says this report.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Bern, 3 March)

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29 February 1944

By SR Date MAY 5 1975

Iraq and the Plans for Arab Union

The following information has been received from the OSS representative in Baghdad:

1. Resentment of Senator Wagner's Resolution -- The resolution which Senator Wagner introduced in Congress recently, favoring the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine and abrogation of the White Paper, has caused a great commotion among political groups in Iraq. Nuri Pasha, the Iraqi Premier, is quite unexcited about it, but Foreign Ministry officials are absolutely furious, and over Nuri's signature personal wires have been fired at Taft, Wagner and the Iraqi Ministry in Washington, serving notice that passage of the resolution by the US would be regarded by the Arab nations as almost the equivalent of a declaration of war. British interests in Baghdad are also making a good deal of the incident, says the OSS representative, and exploiting it out of all proportion to its significance.

2. Resentment of American Oil Plans in Saudi Arabia -- The present American oil plans in Saudi Arabia, including the building of a pipe line, are apparently regarded as an obstacle to the plans for Arab Union, since they have twice called forth bitter comment from Nuri Pasha's personal advisor, Judge Lloyd. It is his opinion that the old age of Ibn Saud, the lack of strength in his sons, and the friction among them, all mean that without the present advent of American money and oil to enhance Ibn Saud's power and pride, Mecca would have been no potential threat to Nuri's Arab plans.

3. Nahas Pasha to be Nominal Head During Impending Discussions, Says Nuri -- In an off-the-record conversation, Nuri Pasha has said that it is his plan to have Nahas the nominal leader in the Arab Union discussions. Nahas has an ability to speak freely and to be at ease in public which Nuri himself does not possess. However, Nuri hinted that he was confident he would not be replaced as final leader by Nahas, who lacks the intelligence and energy. "Believing that he sees in Nahas a future tool of some value, Nuri is attempting to iron out the personal rancor of recent months.

(OSS Official Dispatches, Baghdad, 26 and 27 February, rated A-2)

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5 February 1944

ARAB UNION: Plans of Nuri Pasha; Policy Toward Jews.

Nuri Pasha's method of working toward an Arab union consists of making moves progressively. The first step was the inception of collaboration between Iraq and Syria, and that was followed up by collaboration with the Trans-Jordan. At the time of the Lebanese crisis, the Trans-Jordan Parliament, too, tried to gain independence for the country. The latest step is Nuri's attempt to weaken Britain's hold on Iraq by revising the treaty with the British. At the conference next spring he hopes to see established a general council of the proposed Union.

With respect to the Jews, Nuri sees that the great need of the Arab world is technicians and a literate working class. This is the first time that Nuri has acknowledged this need, R & A analysts observe. The technicians must be imported from elsewhere, just as Russia imported technicians during the six years prior to 1933. Nuri hopes to use the Jews for this purpose; not only would he built up Arab strength, but he would counter the demands of the Zionists and Jewish Revisionists by offering the Jews far more extensive territory for settlement than is available in Palestine. The Jews would be assured protection and local autonomy, and guaranteed cultural, economic, civil and religious freedom. They would be given what amounts to an industrial and manufacturing monopoly, the center of which is bound to be in Palestine.

Nuri no longer counts on French or British pledges. His goal is security for Arabs from Cairo (or even Tangier) to Basra, following the Atlantic Charter.

OSS analysts comment that this plan has certainly many important features, but one has to bear in mind that Nuri is at present declining in power. If his prestige were ascending, something might really come of it.

(OSS Official Dispatch, Baghdad, rated A-2)

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18 January 1944

Zionism in the U. S.: Jewish Commonwealth Issue, etc.

The advocates of an uncompromising program, who came into control of the Zionist movement in the U. S. at the American Jewish Conference last September, are now pressing plans for a wide campaign to range public opinion behind their demand for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, has come to believe that mere opposition to the British White Paper (which decreed an end to Jewish immigration to Palestine after 31 March 1944) might give the impression that official Zionist organizations would be content if the terms of the White Paper were abrogated. The many non-Zionists and anti-Zionists who had joined Zionist committees simply in order to oppose the White Paper are to be asked to resign if they cannot also go along wholeheartedly on the Commonwealth issue.

The decision to concentrate on this issue, which has not yet been made public and to which large groups of the U. S. Jewish community are vigorously opposed, is apparently connected with rumors that Dr. Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization, has been assured in London that either the White Paper will be withdrawn or that some way will be found to vitiate it before it becomes operative on 31 March. It is reported in American Zionist circles that Weizmann had a satisfactory conversation with Churchill (arranged by Smuts, a consistent and militant friend of Zionism) before Churchill left for Cairo and Tehran.

Nevertheless, a new plan, which the Zionists oppose (and which the British Colonial Office denies), to partition Palestine into a Jewish, an Arab, and a "neutral" zone is believed by American Zionists to be under consideration.

(OSS, Foreign Nationalities Branch Memorandum, 13 Jan.)

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10 January 1944

Italy: Vatican Conflicts with the Axis.

It is reported from Rome, but unconfirmed, that the aviator who bombed Vatican City was Botto, the Undersecretary of State in the Fascist Republican Government.

It is also reported that the Fascist and German police made a house-to-house search on Saturday, 23 December, at the Collegio Lombardo, which is Vatican property, and supposed to be immune. The searchers found on the premises a number of radical refugees, among whom, it is reported, was Robeda, one of the heads of the Communist Party. About 15 people were arrested. The fact that these persons were found here is of no little embarrassment to the Vatican.

The Benedictine monastery of Cava dei Tirreni near Salerno was reportedly looted by the Germans before the Allied advance, its precious library set on fire, and the abbot and a bishop taken to an unknown destination. Intervention in their behalf by the Vatican has so far been of no avail.

(OSS Official Dispatch, via Radiophone, Bern)

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