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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

# POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY

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# POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY

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## WESTERN EUROPE

*French-Allied Relations*

Relations between the Allies and the French National Committee appear to have reached another impasse with the breakdown of negotiations concerning the civil administration of France after invasion. French hopes of an agreement on this issue had soared following Secretary Hull's radio address of 9 April; the Committee had instructed French press and radio services not to comment on "delicate" political questions, and the tone of such often critical organs as Radio Brazzaville had distinctly moderated. The British ban on code communication to and from the British Isles has, however, precipitated a rupture of negotiations and caused a marked deterioration of the political atmosphere.

While recognizing that the British action was dictated by security reasons, French observers evidently felt it as a rude blow. Officials at Algiers claimed that the ban placed the FCNL in a peculiarly disadvantageous position, since, unlike most of the exiled administrations, it did not have its seat in Great Britain and therefore especially needed to communicate abroad. Indeed, the impossibility of private communication between London and Algiers was given as the immediate reason for the French General Koenig's breaking off discussions with General Eisenhower.

The British restriction has irritated the FCNL for other reasons. The necessity of falling back on British communication channels has largely cut off communication between the FCNL and the resistance movement in France; even before the Committee's formal statement, Interior Commissioner d'Astier de la Vigerie pointed out that the British action "makes it difficult for us to direct Resistance and tends to weaken Resistance as a factor in the war." Probably the chief reason behind the FCNL's drastic step, however, is the blow to the already acute French national sensitivity. While the French object to using British code and channels on the ground that they are overloaded and slow, they object much more on grounds of national pride; the British requirement appears to them as an infringement of French honor and sovereignty, implying that the Committee is still not regarded as even a provisional government. The implication that France is classed among the small European powers instead of among the great world powers is considered too plain to be overlooked.

*Counter-Invasion Measures in France*

Reports from the continent indicate that the Germans feel substantial fear of French popular uprising at the time of invasion by Allied forces. German authorities in Vichy are said to calculate that a considerable proportion of their available divisions will be required for internal control of France, in addition to the troops necessary to combat the invading army. Advance measures are currently being taken to prevent the adult male population of the large cities from actively aiding the

Allied cause; several special "assembly centers" are said to be under construction in the Paris area. At the same time, in an attempt to remove more men of fighting age from France, Germany is increasing its pressure for further labor deportations. Several reports have referred to a demand by Labor Commissioner Sauckel for one million additional workers in 1944, while an official document states that Vichy has agreed to send 11 contingents of 90,000 men each.

In support of German counter-invasion measures, the Vichy regime has declared that the French people must maintain "absolute respect for the armistice convention" in the event of Allied landing; "French authorities must not only forbid any French participation in battle, but must also abstain from any cooperation with invasion forces, establishing only indispensable relations for the protection of local French interests." Police control in France is now said to be entirely in the hands of the Gestapo, aided by the *Milice* of Joseph Darnand. According to reliable information, the occupying authorities have issued an order that in no circumstances should the *gendarmarie* or *Garde Mobile* be employed for internal security purposes; in some cases, the order continues, the members of these bodies should be disarmed because of ties with the resistance movement.

The campaign of the Gestapo against the French Resistance appears recently to have been stepped up, again suggesting uneasiness over the anti-Nazi underground. The widespread character of resistance activities is indicated by the substantial numbers of arrests of "terrorists," "Communists," etc., in numerous regions of France. According to an admission of the Paris *Matin*, the Auvergne region and parts of the Dordogne are controlled by the *maquisards* to the extent of excluding penetration by Vichy representatives.

From a clandestine source which quotes Vichy figures it appears that the resistance movement has paid heavily for its successes. In 1943 52,000 arrests by the Gestapo are reported. Of these individuals 860 are known to have been executed, 28,672 imprisoned for varying periods, and 9702 released after a few months; the fate of the remainder is not known. Other recent estimates have placed executions by the Germans since the 1940 armistice as high as 100,000. It now appears confirmed that the resistance delegate to the Consultative Assembly, Médéric, was apprehended by the Gestapo on a trip back to France and committed suicide while in custody.

A new Vichy law increases the penalties for aiding resistance activities. Penalties of two to five years imprisonment, forced labor, and fines up to 100,000 francs are provided for membership in secret groups, hampering of industrial or agricultural production, inciting others to disobey the government, participation in disorders, or providing meeting places for subversive groups.

Finally, the German-controlled press and radio of Paris and Vichy are engaged in a propaganda effort to discredit the Resistance in the popular mind. The theme of this effort is the "terroristic" character of

resistance activities; newspapers carry prominent photographs of carnage at the site of a train wreck, while stories are circulated of the *maquis* reign of terror in Haute-Savoie. It would appear that at least some of the activities referred to are not carried on by the Resistance but by bogus "resistance" groups formed or sponsored by the Germans and collaborationists.

#### *Decline of Dutch National Socialism*

Recent indications point to considerable disintegration within the Netherlands National Socialist Party. The NSB organ *Zwarte Soldaat* (Black Soldier) admits that the defense section of the Party (the *Weer Afdeling*), whose members were at one time the most vociferous of all Dutch Nazis, is suffering not only from a thinning of its ranks but also from a weakening of its fighting spirit. Deterioration of morale appears, in fact, to be spreading throughout the National Socialist movement. Two intra-party espionage agencies have been set up to curb defection, and party leaders have established an over-all investigation committee for the same purpose. This committee, headed by prominent Dutch Nazis, has the function of deciding whether persons found guilty of disloyal acts can remain in the Party "without lowering the Party's prestige." The NSB leader, Anton Mussert, has also redefined rules for admission to NSB political and paramilitary formations. The preamble to Mussert's measure, stating that it is issued "in the interest of maintenance of order and discipline in the NSB and to protect it against abuses," clearly reflects the failing health of the Dutch Nazi organization.

#### *Belgian Underground Railroad*

Information recently received from London representatives of the Belgian resistance movement sheds light on the development and functioning of the underground railroad long maintained in clandestine opposition to the German occupation. Coming into existence immediately after the capitulation of the Belgian Army in 1940 and operating for a long time without outside help, the system had as its primary objective the escape of Belgians to Allied countries. At present its main function is the return of grounded Allied airmen to England.

The network now comprises two distinct units, one to rescue and harbor Allied refugees, the other to arrange their escape. The first unit retains custody of an airman until contact is established with London and the individual's identity confirmed. When this security measure has been accomplished, he is transferred to the second group for forwarding to Britain. A representative of the underground is currently in England conducting negotiations looking to speedier identification. The effectiveness of the system of clandestine communication between Belgium and the British Isles is attested by the expanding activity of the underground railroad, the German penalties imposed for aiding Allied personnel, and the recent increases in Nazi rewards for the surrender of Allied airmen to the *Wehrmacht* authorities.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

*German Troop Morale Remains Firm*

An analysis of 232 letters written during November, December and January by German soldiers at the fronts and on leave reveals a firmer attitude than that shown in German civilian correspondence during the same period. The soldiers' letters contain numerous complaints of battle conditions and show some concern over home front bombings. On the other hand, they indicate little desire to be taken prisoner or to criticize German leadership, and show slight susceptibility to Allied propaganda.

Letters from the Eastern Front do not express hope for a speedy victory over the USSR, as they did before last summer, but they reveal no slackening in the will to resist. Men on leave, even the wounded, express this same attitude. They continue to manifest a feeling of solidarity with comrades at the front, a sentiment which apparently is strengthened by the experience of home front conditions.

Letters from German soldiers in the Balkans disclose a feeling of isolation, intensified by Partisan disruptions of postal connections. This trend, confirmed by interrogations of German prisoners captured in the Balkans, is reminiscent of the conviction of isolation which influenced the German debacle in Tunisia last year.

*German Propaganda and the Neutrals*

In the face of Allied pressure for greater cooperation from the neutral nations, German propaganda appears to be following an indirect and essentially defensive policy. Current Nazi procedure seems to be directed towards winning the postponement of all decisions by the neutrals lest they develop to Germany's disfavor. If a decision is made, Nazi propaganda refuses to recognize it as final or unlimited in application.

With Portugal and Sweden, Germany now is following the first course. German propaganda pressure is veiled and indirect. In the case of Portugal, Nazis propagandists stress Portuguese concern lest acceptance of the British demands could be considered an inimical act by Berlin. Constant German references to Allied pressure on Portugal and to Portuguese nervousness suggest that the Germans have little confidence in the outcome.

With regard to Sweden, the Germans are arguing that acquiescence in Allied demands for embargoes would constitute a violation of neutrality; here the appeal is basically on moral grounds.

In reference to Turkey and Spain, which have already yielded to Allied pressure, the Germans are endeavoring to minimize the significance of the agreements reached. While insisting that Turkey has not been forgiven for suspending chrome deliveries, Berlin is trying to make it clear that this act represents no impediment to continued trade relations. Turkey is even being courted in the political field. The country is

described by *Transkontinent Presse* as a "distant member of the family," a European "factor" claiming "equal rights," and is invited to reconsider its present alliance with Britain in view of the fact that "Germany pursues no aim which Turkey could consider as aimed against her."

In contrast to the strong diplomatic protest of the Berlin Foreign Office against recent Spanish concessions to the Allies, the German propaganda reaction has been confined to indirect and restricted criticism. Spain is pictured as victimized by the Allies, rather than disloyal to her honor and neutrality. German propaganda treatment of the Spanish situation is notable for its implicit admission that Allied pressure today is stronger than European solidarity.

#### *Tibor Eckhardt and the Future of Hungary*

Tibor Eckhardt, former leader of the Hungarian Smallholders' Party, has put forward the names of a number of Hungarians whom he considers competent and disposed to cooperate with the United States and Great Britain. The list includes four generals, General Rudolf Andorka, General Vilmos Nagy, General Naray-Szabo and General Alajos Beldy. With the exception of Beldy, director of the paramilitary *Levente* Youth organization, all are general staff officers. Andorka is a former minister to Madrid, and Nagy a former minister of war. All except Beldy are described by Eckhardt as anti-Nazi; Beldy he pictures as an apparent collaborationist who is actually pro-British and pro-American. General Nagy is reported by independent sources to be a Hungarian Nationalist with liberal leanings.

Two scholars on Eckhardt's roster are Endre Fall, former university professor and now director of the Hungarian League for Revision, and Professor Oyula Szekfu, the foremost living Hungarian historian. Independent sources, however, describe Fall as a pro-Nazi. Szekfu, said by Eckhardt to be the former editor of the liberal daily *Magyar Nemzet*, is said by other sources to be a Christian legitimist historian who is considered a liberal in Hungary.

Eckhardt himself has been proposed as head of a Hungarian resistance committee. It is reported, however, that he would not be likely to accept such a post, and that his selection would not have Allied approval. The Allies, for the present at least, do not appear to be encouraging the formation of any Free Hungarian movement. This is reported to be due to the fact that so far no concrete evidence of resistance in Hungary has emerged, and no effective liaison seems to have developed between home front elements and Hungarians abroad. The future Soviet attitude toward free Hungarians has also not yet been indicated. However, each of the Allies appears to be canvassing the opportunities which may appear for fostering Hungarian resistance in the future, and devoting some attention to various potential leaders.

## SOUTHERN EUROPE AND THE NEAR EAST

### *Italian Resistance Movement*

Reports from German-occupied Italy attest the continued vitality of the local guerrilla movement directed against the neo-Fascist government and the German occupying forces. Several communiqués emanating from a new "National Resistance Committee" are cited in the Swiss press. It is not yet known whether this Committee is connected with the north Italian Committees of National Liberation, which have acted as spearheads of the resistance movement. Hitherto the Liberation Committees have concerned themselves mainly with political organization, while associated "Committees of Agitation" have been charged with fomenting resistance on the labor front. The new organization may have been created to satisfy the recognized need for a central directive body to coordinate guerrilla action. Such a group would be well suited to establish closer cooperation between the partisan movement and the new government in southern Italy.

Extensive Catholic participation in the north Italian resistance movement is reported from many sources, both hostile and friendly. Some representatives of the lower clergy have long been active in sheltering and assisting partisans and escaped prisoners of war. Members of the Christian Democratic Party and the Italian Catholic Action organization are also directly engaged in resistance activity, according to recent reports.

The neo-Fascist authorities, whose efforts at forcible suppression of the guerrillas have had little success, have launched a vigorous psychological and propaganda campaign aimed at persuading the *maquis* fighters to return to their homes. In contrast with earlier Fascist efforts to identify the resistance movement with foreign influence, the present aim is apparently to discourage partisan reliance on outside help. The Rome radio and press confidently assert that the Allies will discontinue supplying "money and arms" to the partisans because they no longer consider their activities to be of military or political value.

### *Plans for New Greek Government-in-Exile*

The Greek Government in exile's delay in broadening the base of its representation has resulted not only in the now suppressed mutiny but also in increased restiveness on the part of guerrilla groups inside Greece. It is reported that on 17 April EAM bands attacked and dispersed an EKKA detachment. Colonel Psarros, commander of EKKA, was killed and his organization is now regarded as defunct. The EAM attack was apparently motivated by the rejection of terms it had offered to EKKA in connection with EKKA's alleged pro-German activities. The Germans have already begun to exploit this incident for psychological warfare, and high British sources regard the situation as extremely serious.

Meanwhile, Premier Papandreou, with strong Allied support for his position, is reported to be attacking his government's problems more vigorously than did his predecessor. The leaders of the Liberal (Venizelist) Party in Cairo remain unreconciled to the new premier, whom they regard as a British tool, and have made no effort to conceal their displeasure over the British pressure which compelled Venizelos to resign. Nevertheless, Venizelos was at length persuaded on 29 April to make a statement supporting Papandreou and his attempt to form a government of national unity.

The British expect the forthcoming conference for the expansion of the Government to be held in Syria or Lebanon, thus avoiding the interference from local Greek activity which might be expected in Egypt or Palestine. Ambassador Leeper will be present in order to advise Papandreou, especially in regard to the guerrillas, but the British will take no other part in the conferences except to insure security. Publicity will be held to a minimum.

The program which Papandreou will present includes reorganization of the Greek armed forces in the Middle East; amalgamation of the guerrilla bands under a unified government; insistence upon adequate relief during the German occupation; maintenance of order with Allied aid, both during and after the period of liberation, in order to insure the people freedom to choose their own government and constitution; economic rehabilitation of Greece with the aid of the Allies; and complete restoration and stabilization of the country's frontiers.

This program, Papandreou believes, has so wide an appeal that few of the delegates from Greece will care to oppose it, especially if they know their opposition will be reported to the Greeks and to the world. It appears to meet the fundamental demands of the EAM and the PEEA (the EAM's political committee), always provided that Papandreou plans to include EAM or PEEA representatives in the new cabinet. The main difficulty, as Papandreou himself foresees, lies in the implementation of these policies. Each faction may be expected to covet the key posts for its own representatives, with the command of the guerrillas and the administration of Greek civil affairs occasioning the strongest rivalry. There is no indication that the PEEA, which has already made far-reaching plans for the administration of Greece, can be persuaded to relinquish its present hold or its plans for the future. The atmosphere for the negotiations has not been improved by the publicity emphasizing Papandreou's impatience with the EAM and his acceptability to the British, who are resolutely opposed to the EAM.

The Russian attitude toward recent Greek developments may be reflected by the diplomatic correspondent of the London *Daily Worker*, who described the anti-Russian Papandreou's appointment as a "breath-taking political bluff." On the other hand, Foreign Commissar Molotov has now answered Mr. Churchill's protest against Soviet newspaper

articles favoring the Greek mutineers, stating that the USSR has too little information on Greece to warrant the expression of an opinion. The Tass Agency, he explained, has the right to publish articles such as those in question, since they were based on reports from reliable informants; but in deference to Churchill's wishes the Agency has been ordered to be more careful in checking its facts. However, despite this apparent acquiescence to the British, it is not unlikely that the Soviets have already achieved the effect they desired among the Greeks by making clear their attitude in favor of the EAM and the mutineers.

### *Franco-Lebanese Crisis*

A fresh crisis in Franco-Lebanese relations has been precipitated by the riot of 27 April in Beirut. In the presence of a large crowd gathered to welcome a newly-elected deputy to the Lebanese parliament, a Moslem Syrian member of the French air force fixed a French flag over the entrance to the parliament building. The apparent purpose was to force the new deputy and others to pass under the flag as a token of submission; in the ensuing melee, the Syrian and five others were killed, twenty were injured, and the French flag was trampled upon. During the session of parliament immediately following, the French authorities were accused of complicity in the incident.

On 29 April Beynet, the FCNL Delegate General, addressed a memorandum to the Lebanese government, casting the blame for the bloodshed on the Lebanese police, who were said to have fired into the crowd, and requesting assurances that the reported affronts to French dignity were due merely to individual actions which had escaped the control of the Lebanese government. The Lebanese reply of 1 May rejected these contentions and placed full responsibility for the incident on the French authorities.

Lebanese government circles, as well as certain Anglo-American observers, are inclined to believe that the incident was part of a deliberate plot to discredit the native government and possibly to remove it from office. The situation is complicated by the fact that there are, in effect, two conflicting French policies in the Levant today. Official FCNL policy, as established by Catroux after the dismissal of Helleu, is based on cooperation with the native governments and plans for their eventual independence. However, a strongly rightist group of local French officers and civil officials regards this policy as British-dictated, and fears that it will result in the abolition of French vested interests in the Levant. This group is reported during recent months to have provoked a series of incidents designed to undermine the authority of the Lebanese government and to furnish an excuse for perpetuating French control. It appears, moreover, that Beynet himself has been increasingly influenced by these local French officials, upon whom he must depend for advice and for the execution of his directives.

## THE FAR EAST

*Chinese Suspicion of Soviet Union*

Fear of active collaboration between the Chinese Communists and Soviet Russia appears to be a growing preoccupation of Chinese foreign policy. Reliable reports reveal an increasing effort on the part of Chinese leaders to enlist American sympathy for China's opposition to the Soviet Union. The Chinese have steadily insisted to United States officials that the recent border incident in Sinkiang was part of a concerted plan among the USSR, Japan, and the Chinese Communists to stifle China's vital interests. Chiang himself is reported to have affirmed the existence of such a three-party anti-Chinese agreement. Similarly, Ambassador Wei exhibited great personal emotion over the menace of Russian encroachment in the Far East, which he thought indicated by the recent Soviet-Japanese Sakhalin agreement.

*Gandhi Released*

The British India Office last week announced the unconditional release of Mohandas K. Gandhi, aged leader of the Indian National Congress party, from his imprisonment at Poona. Held with about fifty other leaders since August 1942 for threatening a civil disobedience campaign unless immediate Indian independence was granted, Gandhi has suffered extremely poor health for several months. His condition was pronounced critical by Bombay Government physicians who examined him on 30 April. Various influential groups in Bombay had recently urged Gandhi's release as a humanitarian gesture. Colville, Governor of Bombay Province, is reliably reported to have been the chief instrument of pressure on London and Delhi authorities. The official announcement stated categorically that the release was authorized exclusively on "medical grounds," indicating that no alteration of British policy was involved.

British officials undoubtedly feared that Gandhi's death in prison would permanently consolidate his position as a popular martyr and arouse resentment that might lead to illegal demonstrations. Nationalist Indians insist that the British would have been held responsible for the tragedy and that British and Indians could never afterwards have reached an understanding. However, even Congress extremists admit that a severe disturbance of law and order is unlikely as things now stand. Independent observers suggest that public approval of the official economic administration in India has increased to such a point that the Government could safely adopt a policy of releasing all the Congress internees. Absence of political unrest following the release in January 1944 of Mrs. Naidu, active and outspoken member of the Congress Working Committee, probably tended to reassure the Government as to the feasibility of freeing Gandhi.

*Purge of Indonesians in NEI*

Japanese broadcasts last week indicated that the Military Administration in the Netherlands East Indies has been forced to take steps against non-cooperative Indonesian civil servants. Tokyo informed the home audience that "cases are to be frequently found" in which higher Indonesian government officials "lack sincerity" in fulfilling their duties. A broadcast to Java announced as remedy for this condition a "provincial investigation system" designed to remove non-cooperative Indonesians from office and to select more zealous collaborators.

Japanese occupation policy in the Indies has aimed from the beginning at changing Indonesian government personnel as little as possible. Many Indonesian officials formerly loyal to the Netherlands East Indies Government have undoubtedly carried on their jobs. Therefore, open evidence of non-cooperation among this group at present must indicate increasing resentment toward Japanese administration. A thorough purge in the higher ranks of the Indonesians would, however, create a serious administrative problem, since no Japanese-trained government employees are yet available. In this situation, announcement of the "investigation" may well be intended to intimidate disaffected elements in advance rather than to carry out a reorganization of the administrative system. In either case, announcement of the purge is a symptom of Japanese failure to secure satisfactory collaboration among NEI Indonesians.