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*File - Franz Riedweg
216 MP*

25 February 1947

MEMO TO: Messrs. Barz and Stubing
Office of Military Government
Nurnberg

FROM: A. L. Petersen

SUBJECT: Anti-Swiss Activities of the SS.

1. You will recall our conversation of several months ago, with respect to the above subject, in which you agreed to place me in contact with the proper persons to obtain certain information of War Crimes value. I did not prepare the necessary memorandum for you at that time because of certain current developments in the case which I was preparing, which, I feared, would render such a memorandum inaccurate and possibly premature. The delay was occasioned by the arrival in Nurnberg jail of the supposedly dead Ostuber, Franz RIEDWEG, Chief of the Germanic office of the SS and erstwhile Swiss citizen.

2. I am now inclosing this covering letter and the required memorandum, attached, in duplicate, with the request that it be forwarded to those persons in Switzerland who can make the inquiries and/or investigations indicated in such memorandum. If it should develop that a trip to Switzerland is absolutely necessary to establish the necessary contacts and to exploit the War Crimes aspects of these anti-Swiss activities, I should appreciate being advised of the fact at the very earliest opportunity.

3. May I take this opportunity to thank you both for your very helpful cooperation in the past and in this present connection?

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SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2001 2006

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A. L. Petersen
War Crimes Attorney

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FOR COORDINATION WITH DoD

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MEMO:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am preparing a War Crimes case against SS Ogruf. GOTTLOB BERGER, Chief of the Main Office of the SS (SS Hauptamt) and a number of his associates. One of the principal offenses with which these men can be charged is the planning of aggressive warfare and attendant and subsequent economic spoliation and spoliation of manpower of the countries involved. This was achieved principally through political means, by fostering fifth column activities before the country's occupation and by sponsoring puppet governments after such occupation. It was also achieved by the spreading (with ulterior motives) of ideological propaganda propagating the notion of a pan-Germanic Europe. These activities of BERGER took place in France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Estonia, and even in the neutral countries, Switzerland and Sweden. Activities along these lines were conducted primarily from the "Germanic Directorate" (Germanische Leitstelle), a branch of the Main Office of the SS, of which BERGER was chief. SS Ostufaf. Dr. Franz RIEDWEG, erstwhile Swiss citizen, was chief of this Germanic Directorate until September 1943. One of his two successors was SS Ostufaf. Erich SPARMANN. Both of these men are now in custody in Nurnberg and will be tried along with BERGER.

While the best evidence of participation in the planning of an aggressive war and subsequent spoliation by BERGER and his associates would seem logically to come from the countries in which their above mentioned activities culminated in the Military occupation of the country, this has been difficult to prove because the SS completely destroyed the Berlin office files of the Germanic Directorate. The activities referred to would therefore be relatively innocuous if it were not for the occasional distribution of top level correspondence pertaining to this question, preserved in the files of Himmler and other high ranking Nazis.

Because of the difficulty of proof outlined above, the political and propaganda activities of the Germanic Directorate, if tied in with an actual plan to commit aggressive warfare, would be of immense value to me even though such plan may never have been carried out. Such a plan existed with respect to Switzerland and is referred to and quoted in part in Part 1 of the Swiss publication entitled "Report of the Council to the Federation Regarding the Anti-Democratic Activities of Swiss and Foreigners in connection with the War Events 1939 - 1945 (Motion Boerlin) (Bericht des Bundesrates an die Bundesversammlung über die antidemokratische Tätigkeit von Schweizern und Ausländern im Zusammenhang mit dem Kriegsgeschehen 1939 - 1945 (Motion Boerlin).

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I had heard of this report and after telephone conversation with Col. Colzair (attached to the staff of General Page, the American Military Attache at Berne) I was referred to a Mr. Blum who procured this publication for me. Presumably, the persons to whom this memorandum will be referred are familiar with this Swiss report, therefore, it will not be discussed in detail. I am interested in the information contained in pages 54 - 103 of the report, but in particular in pages 91 - 103. In these pages, it is disclosed that the Germanic Directorate, in addition to its cultural activities, was developing a plan for the military occupation of Switzerland and preparing lists of friends and enemies of Germany who, after the invasion of Switzerland, were to be respectively either employed or annihilated. Incriminating documents are quoted in part in this report.

I understand that Switzerland was the only country that had a full time paid agent in the employ of the Main Office of the SS (in the Germanic Directorate) and that the incriminating documents, the most select (for Swiss purposes) of which have been included by reference in this report, were obtained by raiding the German Consulate at Berne, at the right time, upon information furnished by this agent. I understand further that the lists of pro-German Swiss elements whom the Germans intended to employ after their invasion and occupation of the country, includes the names of some of Switzerland's most distinguished families.

In connection with the foregoing matters, it is requested that the persons to whom this memorandum is forwarded ascertain the following:

1. Whether the Swiss have in their possession any files of correspondence to or from the Germanic Directorate and/or its officials, or papers of any other agency of the SS Main Office which may deal with the germanic question. Interest is not confined to Switzerland but to any of the so-called "Germanic" countries. Information is desired whether such files are available either for microfilming and authentication en toto, for transmittal to Nurnberg, or whether such files are available for an on the spot screening.

2. Information to the same effect is desired with respect to the group of documents, affecting Switzerland, from which select excerpts were referred to in this report. Since many prominent Swiss names are mentioned, the Swiss may not wish to make these documents available to us. If inquiry be made, it should be explained to the appropriate officials that it is possible under court rules, prevalent at Nurnberg, to introduce such documents in closed session and limit their distribution. If possible, the entire set of documents should be microfilmed, the microfilm adequately described in a certificate of authentication to be attached, and transmitted to Nurnberg. If this is not possible because the files are too bulky, it is requested that arrangements be made for their screening from a War Crimes standpoint, either by a member of your staff or by someone designated by the undersigned, depending upon the amount of work involved.

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7. It is requested that the Swiss authorities disclose the name of the paid agent who was in the employ of the Germanic Directorate and that this agent be questioned regarding further documents which he may have seen or conferences which he may have attended implicating not only the Germanic Directorate, but the Main Office of the SS as a whole, which may be of value to me in preparing this case. An attempt should be made, in any event, to secure the services of this agent as a voluntary witness in the coming trial of BERGER, RIEDWEG, SPANNANG, et al. Since this again may not be considered practical if the agent in question is still actively engaged in intelligence work, it should again be called to the attention of the appropriate authorities that testimony in a closed session of court is possible.

4. The defendant RIEDWEG, notwithstanding his political activities and service in the SS, claims still to be a Swiss citizen. He states that he was interrogated by Polizei Kommissar Maurer of Kreuzlingen and a police officer from the Berner Bundes Polizei in October 1946 in Paderborn, and claims that he cleared his position completely with these officers and was assured that he could go back to Switzerland unpunished and take up a civilian profession. Accordingly, he is non-cooperative and belligerent. It is requested that a statement be obtained from the appropriate Swiss authorities regarding their attitude towards a possible return of RIEDWEG to Switzerland and the likelihood of his indictment there at such time. A positive stand on the part of the Swiss would be of extreme value in overcoming RIEDWEG'S reluctance to testify in the hope that he will be turned over to Swiss custody.

5. If there are any past or pending treason trials of Swiss citizens in which the Main Office of the SS is implicated, either through its Germanic Directorate or through its activities in recruiting the Swiss citizens for the Waffen-SS, I should appreciate being informed of that fact in order that copies of the record in such cases may be obtained. My interest is both in the evidence introduced and in the possibility of securing witnesses for the BERGER case.

Inasmuch as the same problem of proof confronts me in connection with each of the occupied countries, it is desired that the foregoing be accomplished, so far as possible, without my having to go to Switzerland, or if this is not completely possible, that the necessary arrangements for the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes be made with the appropriate Swiss and American authorities prior to my departure upon such a trip in order to avoid any waste of time.

I should very much appreciate all possible assistance which the persons to whom this memorandum is forwarded may be able to give me in

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this connection.

I and my associate in the preparation of this case, Mr. E. H. Dobbs, can be reached at Nurnberg, Telephone No. 61216.


A. L. Petersen
War Crimes Attorney

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