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HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES TIGHTEN BORDER CONTROL,
USE FORCED LABOR TO STRENGTHEN DEFENSES

NEW MINE FIELD, REINFORCED BARBED WIRE ON AUSTRIAN BORDER -- Munich, Hungary,
19 Jan 51

The new Austrian border fortifications were designed in the Ministry of the Interior under the supervision of Laszlo Piros. A reinforced barbed wire fence follows the border, 2 meters from the line on the Hungarian side. The wire fence consists of parallel lines of barbed wire 20-25 centimeters apart, fastened to staves alternately 1.5 and 2-meters high. Supporting wires lead from the staves of the outer fence to the tops of a line of fence posts which are 2 meters behind the outer fence and are spaced 10-12 meters apart.

The staves of the outer fence are equidistant from the posts. In addition, the wire fence is crossed with a network of fine wires, some of which lead to mines. The construction and support is repeated on the inner side of the line of fence posts. The area between the wire fences is strewn in an irregular pattern with contact and lighting [star shell] mines. The minimum distance between mines is 2 meters. A 10-meter deep zone behind the inner row of stakes is kept freshly plowed and raked to show footprints. The mines are in poor condition and have sunken because of the autumn rains.

About 300-500 meters behind the barbed wire are watchtowers, spaced according to the terrain. There are no watchtowers between the Budapest-Vienna highway and the Lajta canal. The first watchtower in the zone of the Hegyeshalom State Security Authority (AVH) border guard is about 1.5 kilometers south of the intersection of the border and the Budapest-Vienna highway.

The watchtowers consist of a 12-meter wooden tower topped by a 2-meter high wooden booth with windows and a pointed roof. On top of the roof is a battery-powered rotating searchlight with a range of about 500 meters.

At present, the only guards in the border zone are patrols. This winter, the patrols consisted of two guards armed with submachine guns and accompanied by a dog. The only watch kept on the above-mentioned route is during the night, and then, very irregularly. The searchlight of the above-mentioned tower is turned on once for about an hour during the night.

- 1 -

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STRICTER CONTROL OF SHIPS LEAVING HUNGARY -- Munich, Hungaria, 19 Jan 51

Certification of boats and personnel leaving and entering Hungary and of foreign boats crossing the country is now under the supervision of AVH (State Security Authority) border police. Boats leaving for the West are examined at Szob and those leaving for the East, at Mohacs.

Regulations on ships leaving the country have been made unusually strict. For instance, boats carrying coal from Dorog to Csepel, are inspected as thoroughly as those which will land at a foreign dock. Since the trip is a short one, this may happen several times a day. Ships leaving the country for Austria or Czechoslovakia undergo a 2.5 hour inspection.

An AVH official escorts all foreign ships, except those of the USSR, between Mohacs and Szob. Since no Hungarian authorities may board Soviet vessels, ships of the USSR have become the focus of the black market and smuggling on the Danube.

The identification papers of ships' crews, written in seven languages, are examined at each border no further identification or procedure required. However, in Yugoslavia these papers are considered passports, and are stamped at each crossing of the Yugoslavian border.

Members of the crews of foreign ships may land in Hungarian ports only with the written permission of the AVH, and for a maximum of 4 hours. As for Yugoslav ships, however, only the captains are allowed ashore in Hungary.

The party representative on board Hungarian ships a noncommissioned member of the crew, is the only one who goes ashore in a foreign country. Even the captain must get permission from the party representative to leave the boat. New cadres of comparatively uneducated men are being trained to command river boats.

FORCED LABOR BATTALIONS TAKEN TO WEST AND SOUTH BORDERS -- Munich, Hungaria, 12 Jan 51

By the end of December, the number of labor battalions, the organization of which was begun in November, had increased to 25. These battalions have been constantly on the move and apparently consist of unreliable army reserves. At the end of January, labor battalions organized in different parts of the country were sent to the western and southern boundaries to work on new fortifications.

To prevent the leakage of news from the interior of Hungary, the entire winter will be spent in reconstructing and strengthening border defenses. Laszlo Piros, a Russian and former trade-union leader, supervised the planning of the border defenses in the Ministry of the Interior. Piros has been made commander of the border guards, who have come to be despised even among the State Security Authority police.

NEW USSR ARMED UNIT IN HUNGARY -- Munich, Hungaria, 19 Jan 51

The week before Christmas a USSR armored regiment equipped with 50 of the latest model T-34 tanks arrived at Nagykanizsa and camped in barracks south of the city. At the same time, Hungarian mechanized artillery units stationed in southern Hungary moved to the western border and are billeted in villages in the vicinity of Szombathely and Koszeg.

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- 2 -

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