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Digest of Report

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This report describes the organization and activities of Unternehmen (Operation) Zeppelin, RSHA intelligence unit formed in 1942 to train and employ PW Caucasians and Asiatics from the Soviet republics of central Asia as agents against the Soviet Government. Such agents were used to obtain essential elements of information about Russia's war industries, to spread anti-Bolshevik propaganda, to carry out sabotage missions, and to apprehend Russian agents. Units composed of these agents were also used in military operations on the Eastern Front.

The report also contains information about the organization and operation of Russian intelligence groups which were active in the areas bordering the Sea of Azov.

The particular attention of US counterintelligence agencies is called to Section 6 of this report.

The source of the information is Heinrich (Heinz) FINER, former head of Hauptkommando Sued (Chief Command South), one of the major field units of Uniternehmen Zeppelin.

Evaluation: C-2

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BIOGRAPHY OF SOURCE

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Form in ST. PETERSBURG, Russia, of German parents. Later attended school in ST. PETERSBURG.

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Attended college; received law degree. Became an editor the St. Petersburger Zeitung; cousin, Paul S. von KUEGEL GEN, editor in chief at the time.

1914-1922

Arrested as German subject, deported to OIONETS; escaped after Bolshevik revolution, went to ST. PETERSBURG; later became a member of German Central Committee for Repatriation of German PWs and Civil Internees; later appointed chief of a subcommittee at BOIOCOE. Returned to BERLIN arwrote articles against Communism; made chief of press department of Entiropes evik league.

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1923_1929	Joined Nuntia, a camouflaged intelligence office of the German MIS, then under Col von BREDOW, and served as consultant on Eastern problems.
1930-1932	Joined NSDAP; served in Press Center of SS Gruppe Ost supplying intelligence about the East to higher German head-quarters.
1933-1938	Transferred to Gestapo; sent to Gestapo school for Krim Koms (police officials); assigned. on graduation, as chief of Amt III-D, RSHA (counterintelligence matters related to the USSR, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Far East). Made trips through Germany and Austria to integrate police services of these countries.
1938	Appointed Pirector of Security Police.
1939	Appointed director of special courses for counterintelligence work at the School for Security Police and Security Service Officers.
1940-1942	Worked at Main Regional Office, Gestapo, VIENNA. Later ordered to EERLIN to take part in Unternehmen Zeppelin.
1943	Appointed commandant of Camp Sonderlagen T at BRESLAU-OSWITZ Later became 1c (intelligence officer) of Hauptkommando Sued section of Unternehmen Zeppelin, and subsequently, chief of Hauptkommando Sued.
1944	Transferred to Amt VI_G, RSHA, to take charge of work on documents captured in Russia. Worked in same capacity at MARIAHOF in southeastern Austria.
May 1945	Arrested in Bavaria, while visiting family, taken to TRAUN_STEIN, and later interrogated by American officers.

REPORT

1. General Assignment Given to Unternehmen Zeopelin by the RSHA

Intermehmen (Operation) Zeopelin, hereinafter referred to as VZ, is the name given to the organization and activities of an RSHA intelligence group assigned during the war to train and employ Russian PWs to obtain economic and political information about Pussia. The UZ group was a unit of Amt VI* of the RSHA, and transmitted its information to the highest echelons in BERLIN through Referat VI C 2** of Amt VI. According to EMMER, the work carried out by the group was considered the most important intelligence operation on the Eastern Front.

The essential elements of information to be obtained by the UZ group concerned the status of the food supply within the USSR, possible increase in again-cultural production by state farms in the USSR, potentials of the Soviet coal and petroleum industry, significant anti-Soviet movements within the USSR, and the best means of using anti-Soviet propaganda within the USSR.

^{*}Department VI of the Reich's over-all intelligence and police security service. This department controlled the foreign political intelligence service. In 1944, several of the department's subsections (Referate) were training and using agents and special troops to carry on subversive activities and sabotage in foreign countries.

^{**}Referat VI C 2, a section of Gruppe VI C of Amt VI, RSHA, compiled and evaluated information about Russia. Poland, and the Baltic States. Gruppe VI C of Amt VI handled all matters pertaining to the Russian and Japanese spheres of influence.

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Chain of Command, Unternehmen Zennelin

Central Administration, BERLIN, 1942

Amtsleiter, Amt VI, RSHA, BERLIN

Chief of Central Administration Chief of Referat VI C 2, Amt VI

Intelligence Officer

Radio Communications Officer (In BERLIN, the UZ made use of the radio facilities of Amt VI)

Field Administrative Units, 1942

Hauptkommando Nord (Chief Command North) Staff GIA Troop Unit (700 men)*

Hauptkommando Sued (Chief Command South) Staff

1 Troop Unit of Asiatics (350 men) Training Camp BERDYANSK

Walter SCHELLENBERG

SS O/Stubaf (Lt Col) later, SS O/Stubaf

H/Stuf (Capt) TEICH

SS Stubaf (Maj) SIEPEN

1 Troop Unit of Caucasians (200 men)

Chief: SS Stubaf KRAUS

Military Unit of Hauptkommando Nord

Chief: ROEDE; later, FENNER; later, HUBIG

Auxiliary or Cooperating Units

Industrial Interrogation Center, BRESLAU-OSWITZ Central Camp for UZ Troops, KREUZBERG, Silesia

Turkmen Training Camp (location not given) The Wannsee Institute of Referat VI G, Amt VI Stab WALLI**, a unit under control of Admiral CAMARIS

Chief: Stubaf KURRECK

Chief: H/Stuf ZING Chief: VACHME TELI

The UZ military unit assigned to Oberkommando Nord, which was in operation in the area of PSKOV and later in the area of RIGA, was called the Gil Troop, after its leader, a Russian. Agents in this group were Russians who had expressed themselves as anti-Soviet, but had not been thoroughly investigated by the Germans. The Germans suspected that some had volunteered merely to obtain the large sums of money which the Germans usually gave agents whom they were about to commit. Later, a number turned out to be Bussian agents or pro-Sovie These murdered their German leaders and made their escape. A number of former Russian officers and NKVD men offered to murder important Russian commissars. Their offers were taken seriously, large sums of money being given them to accomplish their missions. However, nothing ever really came of these missions.

^{**} Stab WALLI and UZ exchanged information about identification papers and documents, such as passes for foreigners, military passes, and membership cards for Communists and Komsomol members. However, the two units duplicated each other's work. There was no real integration of their work and no specific pro vision was ever made to have the units inform each other of the latest developments with respect to intelligence obtained about Russia.

3. Screening and Selection by Unternehmen Zennelin of Asiatic and Caucasian Agents

At the time UZ became an organization, Russian PWs to be used as agent informants were taken from a number of PW camps and sent to the Central Could prisoners in KREUZEERG, Silesia. The future personnel of Hauptkommando one of the field units, was drawn from PWs who came from the territories of Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tadzhikstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia. Russian PWs who were knowledgeable concerning essential elements of information but who were unsuitable for use as agents were sent to the UZ interrogation cand (Sonderlagen T) at BRESIAU-OSWITZ. These latter were usually technicians, engineers, scientists, etc.

Of the many PWs originally selected for UZ, very few were suitable for agent work, principally because the Soviet authorities had already weeded out the anti-Communistic intelligentsia, leaving only anti-Communists who were illiterate.

4. Training by Unternehmen Zeppelin of Asiatic and Caucasian Agents

a. Training by Central Administration of UZ, BERLIN

The basic training of Caucasians and Asiatics as agents of UZ was often carried out without regard to a real system or set of principles. Some of the camp commanders treated their men in a very military manner, while other camp commandants paid little attention to military discipline and laid more stress on personal hygiene. In general, PW trainees from the Soviet republics of Central Asia were given military drill, ideological lectures, and were sometimes permitted to listen to news broadcasts in German from the Berlin radio stations. Many of the trainees could not understand a word of German, and it was the exception rather than the rule for PW trainees to hear their own language used in a news broadcast from BERLIN.

Turkmen were ridiculous. However, he did everything in his power to arouse in them a feeling of nationalism by teaching them to be proud of their past history and by inciting them against the USSR, pointing out to them that although the present Soviet Government had relieved them of some of the burdens imposed upon them by the Tsarist Government, the Soviet Government would never grant complete independence to the republics of Central Asia. It was also pointed out to the Turkmen that the Turkmen intelligentsia had been liquidated or exiled whenever it was discovered that they advocated complete independence for the Turkmen Republic, and that the languages spoken in the republics of Central Asia had been Russianized to the extent of substituting Cyrillic letters for the Latin letters.

A training feature regarded by FENNER as very effective was the sending to BERLIN of groups of twenty to thirty PWs from the republics of Central Asia is show them the glories of the city and to impress upon them that Allied bombing was ineffectual. These men were taken on guided tours and shown the mosque in BERLIN. Although many of them were indifferent to the religious significance of the mosque, all of them were impressed.

^{*} According to information contained in Appendix B, FR 31, CSDIC (WEA) BAOK, dated 21 January 1946, "the dept of Gruppe VI C which from the end of 1942 onwards became known as Unternehmen Zeopelin gradually evolved from the Mussenerganisation! of the Gruppe, and dealt exclusively with interrogation and selection of Russian PW volunteers, with a view to employing them as agents in the front-line operations."

At the conclusion of such trips, convivial parties were given by the leading personalities of the Central Administration of UZ for the important personages of the nationalities represented by the visiting group of PWs one of these meetings, there were present a number of members of the Turn National Independence Committee; including TELL KAYM CHAM, the leader of Committee and a close collaborator of Prof. TENDE, of the German Eastern try. Speeches were made in the German and Turkmen languages. However, many the PWs from Kazakhstan and Kirgistan were unable to understand German or Turkmen.

The same general procedure was followed for other groups, including Georgians, who were brought to EERLIN. The Georgians, particularly, enjoyed the favor of the RSHA, as many had previously moved from PARIS to BERLIN, hoping that by cooperating with the Germans they might eventually win independence for Georgia. Among the leading Georgians living in BERLIN and helping the Germans were EDIA and ACHRETELI, the last-named having at one time been ambassador to BERLIN of the Independent Republic of Georgia.

As an aid to training PWs from the republics of Central Asia and other areas of Russia, publications and articles containing propaganda, which were issued by the various committees for independent republics of Central Asia, werdistributed to the various camps and advance units of the UZ. Some of these publications proved of inestimable value, especially those which assessed conditions within the various territories of the USSR from a nationalist point of view. Among such papers were two Turkmen journals, one Georgian, one Armenian, one Azerbaidzhanian, and one for the small minorities in the northern Caucasus.

The journals showed that the USSR had taken every precaution to avoid a possible awakening of nationalist feeling in any of the territories under its control. In particular, the journals stressed that the USSR had fostered the various languages of the minorities to make sure that there would be no common language among them. In connection with this, the German Government first used the literary language common to the entire area in Central Asia. Later, it used the language particular to any area where minorities were settled. This second procedure was taken on the assumption that because of the efforts of the Soviet Government, many of the minorities had drifted away from use of the common literary language. However, the German Government printed all its pamphlets in Latin letters, not in Cyrillic.

Although the younger generation of PWs from the republics of Central Asia were indifferent to attempts to create a Pan-Islam movement in fact making of those from Kazakhstan belonged to the Besboshniki (League of Atheists in Russia) - all of them seemed anxious to fight against the Soviet Government FENDER notes that of the 350 Asiatics under his command, only 25 observed the religious teachings of Islam. However, among all the Mohammedans there was each dence of a common religious bond.

In connection with its efforts to arouse these PWs by making use of their religious feelings, UZ stressed that the German Army was reopening the mosques in those areas of the USSR which it had conquered. UZ pointed out its similar action by the Red Army was taken mainly for the propaganda value in foreign countries, particularly in Allied countries. It also pointed out that the Soviet Government had recognized in religion a vital force which could be made use of in the fight against Germany.

FEMER is of the belief that had the end of the war not come so quickly Germany would have won for itself a number of Mohammedans to act as agents in fomenting unrest among the Mohammedan groups within the USSR. Time was of the essence, and Germany did not have enough time to educate and train such agents.

b. Training of Asiatic Agents at Sonderlagen T. BRESLAU-OSWITZ

While commandant at Sonderlagen T, BRESLAU-OSWITZ, FEMER trained PWs from the republics of Central Asia to use small arms, dynamite, and W/T apparatus. The PWs were given courses in the German language and in the ancient and

modern history of their countries. They were indoctrinated with anti-Communist dideas, and it was made clear to them that development of their own countries with be possible only after Bolshevism had been wiped out.

FEN ER permitted his PW trainees two leaves a week from camp, feeling this would strengthen their trust in German leaders. At the same time, he retained that such leaves jeopardized the security of UZ operations. In some instances, such leaves resulted in a higher veneral disease rate among the trainees.

5. Organization, Duties, and Activities of Hauntkommando Sued.

a. Organization

Hauptkommando Sued was organized in March 1943 under command of SS Stubaf ROEDER and was established in BERDYANSK shortly thereafter. In October 1943, the organization was moved to VOSNENSK, in December 1944 to ODESSA, and later, shortly before the Russians recaptured ODESSA, to PRZEMSYL, Poland.

The chief component units of Hauptkommando Sued in 1943 and 1944 were as follows: a main command unit, and suboffice command units. The components of the main command unit were an administrative and housing section, an intelligence section, a radio unit, a documents section, outpost units, two military units, and groups of agents. The main command unit retained the title Hauptkommando Sued. The suboffice units were located in the area of the immediate front, at KHAPKCV, STALINO, SLAVYANSKAYA, TAGANROG, SIMEIS, and KERCH. An advanced outpost or suboffice was stationed at KRYMSKAYA, on the Kuban Peninsula. All the suboffices were organized like the main unit, only less completely and on a smaller scale.

b. Duties and Activities

Respective components of Hauptkommando Sued undertook the following duties and activities:

(1) Administrative and Economic Section

The administrative and economic section fed and housed the staff of Oberkommando Sued and the military units attached to it, and clothed and armed various UZ units which were committed by Oberkommando Sued.

(2) Operations Section

The Operations section planned the committment of Georgians and other Caucasian groups.

Operatives for the Caucasian area generally were sent to the vicinion of TIFLIS and KUTAISI, Georgia. Some agents were also flown to northern Georgia where known anti-Russian and anti-Bolshevik peoples or groups lived. Attempts were made to contact Mohammedan groups in the Caucasus, and for this purpose prisoners from the regions of Karachi, Dagestan, Azerbaidzhan, and Cherkess were available as agents. The members of the Mohammedan groups were poor sources information, but excellent at making propaganda and in fomenting trouble or ouganizing partisan groups.

(3) Intelligence Section

The intelligence section was in charge of counterintelligence work, made propaganda, carried out the ideological training of agents to be committed, planned and organized the commitment of Asiatics from the republics of Middle Asia, and maintained intelligence liaison with German Army Groups South and A until ordered by Central Administration, UZ, to desist from doing this last-mentioned service. The section also maintained liaison with naval intelligence units stationed at MARIUPOL and ODESSA.

Information obtained from field agents was condensed into reports which were sent weekly by plane or courier to Central Administration, UZ, RERLIN.

The more important information was radiced directly to the RSHA in HERLIN.

General Intelligence redorts were also sent to the intelligence officers of the Army Group Northern Ukraine and Army Group Southern Ukraine.

Before sending off agents on long-range action, the intelligence section treated them especially well. Small festive parties were organized the agents, during which they were decorated with the East Medal especially struck off for such volunteers. FINDER usually accompanied his agents by plane from BEPDYANSK to TAGANROG, and parted with them at TAGANROG after handing them Korans. The agents were then flown on to the point from over which they were to parachute down.

Each agent group usually consisted of four to five men, one of whom was a W/T operator. The men were allowed to choose their own group leaders. In groups assigned important missions, there were two W/T operators. Each group had specific instructions, and some of the groups took along huge quantities of propaganda material, generally thousands of pamphlets or magazines which had been published in EERLIN by the National Committee of United Turkmen.

The intelligence section sent several groups of agents to the area of the estuary of the Ural River. Other groups were flown to the region near the mouth of the Imba River, about thirty miles east of GUFLV. All these groups were told to reach the naphtha district of the Emba. Some of the groups were ordered to cut the pipeline which ran north from the Caspian Sea to the naphtha districts. For security reasons, these last were dropped by plane at a considerable distance from the districts in which they were to operate. All of the groups maintained contact by wireless, some for many months. Some groups reported propaganda successes. Other groups established relations with persons of influence in SAMARKAND and TASHKENT. But the sabotage groups were not able to damage the pipeline during the period in which FENNER was intelligence officer. In general, the information which these groups sent by wireless to FENNER was on no great value.

FENTER states that the security of his missions was often jeopardized because plane transportation was lacking for agents who were waiting to leave on a mission. The agents became nervous and mistrustful. In one particular case, a group of Georgian agents were forced to wait for several weeks before a plane became available to transport them to their place of commitments. During this time, the men were often drunk, and FENNER believes that Soviet agents successfully approached them and obtained information about the undertaking. He also learned that one Georgian, becoming impatient with the delay had proposed to a comrade that the two betray the group to the Soviets after the place of commitment had been reached.

DYANSK with liquor and tobacco to act as informants. The fishermen, Ukrainford and supposedly anti-Soviet, reported that at YEISK, on the eastern side of the Sea of Azov, they had been approached by Fussian intelligence men whom they recognized as former members of the MAVD and had been ordered to tell exactly what German and Fomanian units were in BERDYANSK. As soon as FENNER obtained corroboration of the presence of a Russian intelligence unit at YEISK, he because convinced that a major Russian move would be made against BERDYANSK. After the cking his information and surmises with those of the nearest counterintellingence unit of the German Army, FENNER then informed the commandant at BERDYANGK to be particularly watchful for increasing counterintelligence and sabotage activity on the part of the Russians.

FENNER's maintenance of liaison with army intelligence bore a great deal of fruit until the Central Administration of Unternehmen Zeppelin ordered him to stop. For instance, the secret orders given to a Soviet armored corps fell into the hands of an outnost unit of FEMMER. The information therein was immediately passed on to the intelligence officers of German Army Groups A and South. In return, officers of these units informed Hauptkommando South of resistance movements in Dagestan and northern Georgia, which could be utilized by Hauptkommando Sued.

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Hauptkommando Sued also cooperated with naval intelligence units at MARIUPOL and ODESSA. The work of the naval intelligence unit at ODESSA paralithat of Hauptkommando Sued, although on a smaller scale respecting commitment agents by plane. However, the naval unit funneled more agents through the lines.

(4) Radio Unit

The radio unit trained W/T operators for use with agent groups and equipped these groups with W/T sets. The unit also maintained communications will groups in the field and with the Central Administration of Unternehmen Zeppelin at BERLIN.

(5) Documents Section

The documents section forged Soviet identification papers for use by agents of Oberkommando Sued. Some of the best men in Amt VI, ESHA, were placed a the disposal of Unternehmen Zeppelin, for forging Russian identification papers. Former Soviet officers who professed hatred of the Soviet Government were also employed in this work. Captured documents, often in badly damaged state, were successfully counterfeited, large numbers of Russian stamps were made, and paper of the same quality and color as that used by the Russians was obtained. As a rule, it was easy to match the paper used on genuine Russian identification paper as the scarcity of paper in Russian had led to use by the Russians of almost any kind of paper. However, some Russian identification papers and documents were printed on excellent paper, in which case the Reich Printing Service was able to supply similar paper for use by the documents section.

Once, Hauptkommando Sued captured an entire set of secret documents belonging to a Russian division, containing instructions for verifying and chesting identification papers and showing the precise places where entries were to made on soldiers' passes. Some of the agents of Hauptkommando Sued were able to report that identification papers forged on the basis of the information contains in the captured documents had been checked repeatedly by Soviet specialists and had not been detected.

Whenever information about changes in Soviet systems of identification was obtained, Hauptkommando Sued immediately reported this to Amt VI, RSHA.

(6) Military Units

Under Oberkommando Sued there were two military units made up of beat considered unsuitable for use as agents. One group numbering about 350 Asia was used for a time to guard the immediate vicinity of the EERDYAMSK camp. Lake this unit and the other military unit, consisting of about 200 Georgians, we used in the lines. The groups were also helpful in capturing Soviet sabotage agents. In combat, the Asiatics were excellent, unlike the Georgians.

In general, FENGER was always against making these two units an integral part of Unternehmen Zeppelin, and he finally succeeded in convincing higher headquarters that his point of view was right.

6. Russian Intelligence and Sabotage Activities

After Hauptkommando Sued undertook operations on the Eastern Front, it notice that Russian intelligence and sabotage activities kept increasing. Russian age were parachated almost nightly into the Berdyansk region. Within one period of ten days, seven groups of five men each were dropped behind the German lines. However, with the help of the Ukrainian police or UZ military units, twenty-eign of these agents were captured by Hauptkommando Sued.

Hauptkommando Sued learned that Russian counterintelligence headquarters at YEISK had been assigned to cover an area equal to that occupied by o
German army or army group at most. This was much smaller than the area covered
Hauptkommando Sued. FENER interrogated the captured agents and learned the
following:

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- a. The mission given to the agents was primarily sabotage, including destruction of railroad track, overpasses, underpasses, etc. Obtaining information was of secondary importance, and this information was limited to German troop movements, arrival of reinforcements from Germany, and the appearance of anti-German partisan groups. (At this time, the population in the Southern Ukraine was anti-Bolshevist, a condition which did not prevail later.)
- b. The Russians operated on the principle that the larger the numbers committed, the more likely the chances of success. Of the persons committed by the Russians, many were forced to accept the assignment. Some had been jailed on suspicion of being pro-German or unfaithful to the Fatherland and had been released only on their promise to redeem themselves by volunteering for such a mission. Others had made defeatist remarks. Others had come from concentration camps in Russia. Others were natives of the Ukraine, had been forced to volunteer, but had determined not to act against the Germans.
- c. As a rule, except for the leader of any group of Russian agents, none of the members knew any details about the mission nor had received any training, equipment, or money. Few carried weapons. Most had no identification papers whatsoever, although it was later discovered that the leader of the group had been given local identification papers to hand over to each member of his group after the group had reached its place of commitment. Almost all the agents were dressed in civilian clothing of poor quality, in contrast to the quality of clothing given by the Germans to their agents before committing them to an area. (Later, the Germans provided their agents with the kind of clothing worn by the residents of the district or area to which the agents were to be sent.)

FEMER also learned that Russian agents were kept incommunicado after being assigned a mission and before being sent off on the mission. For food, Russian agents were usually given some bread and bacon, nothing more. They were expected to live off the land.

d. The leader of any group was usually a Communist who knew all details connected with the mission, had been well trained, and had been given information concerning his line of withdrawal, including passwords necessary to get back through the front lines. As a rule, the leader was the only one who could operate the group's W/T set. The leader was also the only one who carried a map a compass, a watch, and money, the last usually being a small sum, in contrast to the amounts which the Germans gave to their agents. (FENTER states that one group of Asiatics sent out by Unternehmen Zeppelin carried over a million rubles to cover any contingency. The Germans also always took into account black market conditions in any area where their agents were to operate.)

FENNER learned that the Russian agents sent messages not in code but by using pre-arranged phrases. For instance, "bright sunshine" indicated that the group had landed safely and that all was well.

7. Evaluation of UZ Operations Against the Russians

FEMTER states that Unternehmen Zeppelin fell far short of its hoped for goes for the following reasons:

- a. The higher officials of UZ had no real knowledge of Russia and its problems. For instance, many of the officials refused to understand that the people might not revolt against the Soviet Government and failed to take this into account when planning operations.
- b. UZ was never able to maintain good security. For instance, its Asiatic agents were often held up from going on their missions because planes were lacking. These agents were permitted leave while waiting for transportation on a mission. Some became drunk and divulged to Russian agents, it is believed by FEMER, the nature of their mission. Others contracted venereal diseases, forcing the Germans to re-arrange plans and personnel commitments.
- c. The Germans assigned to lead the groups of Asiatics and other Russian nationals were not fit to do so. Some of the chief German agents treated the Asiatics as inferiors and thus Mowered the morale of the group.

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- d. Too much time was spent in discussing and making fantastic plans to de troy all Russian war industries in the Urals.
- e. German planes could not fly the vast distances often required for success of a mission, nor could the planes reach targets in the interior of Russia.
- f. The value of anti-Russian propaganda carried on by having the agents ditribute pamphlets, etc. was in direct ratio to German military success.
- g. The units of UZ and German MIS units failed to cooperate. For instance the military governor at BERDYANSK was very uncooperative. In another case, Hauptkommando Sued was ordered to cease exchange of information with certain Army units.

For the Commanding Officer:

ARNOID M. SILVER DACE Desk V

AMS/SK/ag