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Annex D-2
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~~SECRET~~

TICOM/I-190

EXTRACTS FROM REPORT ON INTERROGATION OF DR. HANS WILHELM THOST

Attached are extracts from the first detailed interrogation of Dr. Hans Wilhelm THOST received from Headquarters Intelligence Center, 6825 HQ and HQ's Company, Military Intelligence Service in Austria, APO 777 U.S. Army, via G.S.I.(s), HQ British Army of the Rhine under reference BAOR/IS/INT/359/12, dated 29th January, 1946.

2. The extracts are under the following main headings

I. The "DOLMETSCHER BEREITSCHAFTSDIENST"
II. INITIATION INTO AMT VI
III. INTERCEPTION OF TRANSATLANTIC WIRELESS TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

TICOM

No. of Pages:8

13th February, 1946

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Declassified by D. Janocek,
Deputy Associate Director for Policy and Records
on 12/10/2010 and by

I. THE "DOLMETSCHER BEREITSCHAFTSDIENST".

When the war broke out Source was an independent writer living in Berlin, Grünewald. He had just finished his book "Als Nationalsozialist in England", which in some way was opposed to the official foreign policy of RIBBENTROP. Financially, Source was independent because of his real estate in Leipzig.

Because he was severely wounded at the end of World War I, he was not fit for front line duty again. He expected the war to be over soon and did not care to change his personal status.

However, one day in the winter 1939 - 1940, he received a letter from the "Dolmetscher Bereitschaftsdienst" Berlin, Halensee, Kurfuerstendamm, with a questionnaire to be filled in, stating that everyone knowing a foreign language must report there by writing. Source believes that they secured his address from the Police, to whom everybody had to fill in questionnaires regarding "special knowledge" in languages, driving autos and trucks, piloting airplanes, etc.. He reported to the "Dolmetscher Bereitschaftsdienst" in writing, stating that he knew English fairly well.

A. Assignment in Translation.

Source did not hear anything more about the questionnaire throughout 1940, but in February 1941 he was visited by an SS officer, Hauptsturmfuehrer ZUCHRISTIAN, who inquired whether Source would be prepared to do some translation work for his office, which he said was some sort of political information institute. Source agreed and ZUCHRISTIAN left him many London newspapers, telling him to read them through and pointing out the articles of interest.

B. Source of Material.

The items of importance that Source was to familiarize himself with were as follows: Political leaders as to the internal situation in Great Britain; all the news thereabout, including the reports from Parliament; all news relating to the output of war factories as far as they could be traced in the commercial press; and all advertisements revealing shortages in England.

At first Source worked in his quarters, making some sort of report from these newspapers, translating parts of them and giving a general "Lagebericht" (report of the situation) as far as he could gather from the London Dailies.

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As ordered, Source brought this report and the papers to ZUCHRISTIAN's office, Berkaerstrasse 32 - 35, and the work was favourably received. This was the time when large parts of British public opinion were opposed to the CHAMBERLAIN Government and to the conduct of the war. In addition, there was a "popular front" movement to end the war and, on the other hand, a movement to activate a British War effort and to bring Soviet Russia to the Allied side.

Source had to work through more bunches of newspapers, followed by periodicals such as "New Statesman and Nation", "Time and Tide", "The Nineteenth Century and After", "The Spectator" etc. He also was given the book, "Guilty Men", and had to make an extract out of it.

II. INITIATION INTO AMT VI.

Towards the end of February 1941, ZUCHRISTIAN told Source that the office would accept him as its permanent translator and interpreter during the war. ZUCHRISTIAN explained that Source would be ordered to do some sort of war work and that it would be better for him to work with his office rather than wait until some military or industrial organization drafted him. Source accepted this offer. ZUCHRISTIAN introduced Source to his superior, the late SS Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. GRAEFE (he died later following a motor accident), and to Brigadefuehrer SCHELLENBERG. Both received him only for a very short interview, admonishing him to keep everything secret, even the type of work done at home. Later, Source had to sign a statement to the effect that he was conscious of the fact that he would be subject to punishment by the SS and Polizeigericht in case of any breach of secrecy or other violation of the rules laid down by the Amt.

His main work still consisted in reading through all of the important newspapers of England (The London Press, Yorkshire Post, Manchester Guardian, Glasgow Herald, etc.), plus the periodicals and occasional political books printed in England. All this literature reached Berlin via Lisbon within one week and arrived fairly regularly.

III. INTERCEPTION OF TRANSATLANTIC WIRELESS TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS.

1. Intercepting Station in Operation.

One day in the winter of 1942-1943 Source was called to the office of Dr. PAEFFGEN and introduced to a Dr. VETTERLEIN, high technical official of the "Forschungsamt der Deutschen Reichspost" (scientific laboratory of the German Post), who stated that he had already spoken with SCHELLENBERG and that he had an offer to make to PAEFFGEN and Source. Also present at the meeting was Dr. SCHUEDDEKOPF. VETTERLEIN showed them some messages which he said he had been able to intercept from the conversations between Washington and London.

A station was situated in Holland near Eindthoven. OHNESORGE, the German Minister for Post, would be greatly interested in this matter and would be prepared to spend millions on that station if it could be of any use to the department. VETTERLEIN added that OHNESORGE was reluctant to offer the results of that station to the Military because he distrusted them, especially the head of the German Communication troops, a General who later participated in the July 20 Putsch. VETTERLEIN asked them to read through these samples of picked-up messages and to decide whether they would want them or not. The matter, he said, would be of great future value, as the Ministry for Post was prepared to spend large sums on its development provided it was thought to be worthwhile. He added that there was even the possibility of listening in on messages between England and the U.S.A. just by putting a U-boat near these cables. Of that prospect they never heard anything more.

Source opined that everything which could help in a major war was worth trying. The samples were obviously conversations between officials in London and Washington, but many words were missing and the whole contents did not make sense at the first glance. SCHUEDDEKOPF was more skeptical about the matter, but PAEFFGEN agreed with Source saying that improvement on the technical side and schooling of the personnel would result in receiving these pickups clearly. PAEFFGEN, as chief of VI D, had the last word in the matter and decided in the affirmative. Consequently VETTERLEIN immediately returned to Eindthoven to start work.

2. Conversation between London and Washington

After some weeks the first results arrived; they were, as a whole, not too discouraging. The telephone number in Washington was Republic 2020.

(a) Between War Office, London, and British Army Staff, Washington

Sometimes the British Ministry of Supply was on the London end of the phone instead of the War Office. General MACREADY, head of the BAS in Washington, did not speak himself; most of the time the speaker was Brigadier Leslie DAWES and in London, Brigadier Owen YOUNG. Frequently the officer in London spoke from the War Office line and a couple of days later from the Ministry of Supply line establishing the fact that the links between the ministries were very close. The contents of the conversations were obviously British orders for the U.S. War Industry, but the speakers used cover names for the items which they spoke about, such as "grapefruits", "pineapples", etc. It was evident that the speakers on that wireless telephone were aware of the possibility that their conversations might be intercepted. Sometimes they warned each other by saying: "Send me a cable about that, don't mention it on the telephone."

b) Between the Ministry of War Transport, London, and British Shipping Mission, Washington.

The talks were about the distribution of the ordinary shipping space. The speakers used cover names for the theatre of war the ships were allocated to. For instance, the Washington representative of the Ministry of War Transport informed his colleague in London that he had to take 54 ships from "Arthur's place" to "John's place", that the situation was "fairly critical", etc. On the German side, they could not read these messages like an open book, but certain general conclusions could be drawn if they got enough of these conversations. There was no possibility of drawing actual conclusions as to ships movements which could be of direct value to U-boat warfare, although a vague general picture of the shipping disposition on the Allied side was obtained.

c) Between Ministry of War Transport, London, and Representative of Same in Washington.

These talks were about tanker allocation. Since the names of the men on the telephone were disclosed by the telephone operators, Source had only to look up the "WHITACKER" reference book to see in which department of the Ministry of War Transport the speaking official was working. This book also helped to find out which ministry was speaking because the Washington and London telephone numbers were announced by the operators. "WHITACKER" mentioned all the telephone numbers of these Ministries, Embassies, etc.

The "tanker calls" were by far the most frequent and interesting ones. The impression of Source and his superior was that the lack of tanker space was the weakest point of the Allies. Frequently tankers, once up to 70 ships, had to be taken from one theatre to another, and there seemed to be a lot of difference of opinion as to the allocation of this type of tonnage.

These talks were of decided military value and therefore did not belong to Amt VI, but to Military Intelligence. PAEFFGEN was reluctant to send the messages directly to the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW). He stated that the possession of these messages was a most secret affair and could not even be disclosed to the OKW. He ordered Source to work out short reports concerning these pick-ups which he would forward to the OKW. These reports were to be written in a form that the reader could not draw the conclusion where or how this information was gained. This, of course, was impossible to do. Source, without having had any military or naval training, could not find out the real names in place of the cover names, but the trained people at OKW, and especially the naval people with all their information might have been able to use these pick-ups to great value. Source told PAEFFGEN of the neglect and begged him to consult SCHELLENBERG again on the matter.

Finally it was decided that these calls should be sent directly to the OKW without Source doing more than reading them through and passing them on. Source usually passed them on to Oberstleutnant ENGELHORN (who was executed because of his participation in the 20 July Putsch) and later to Korvetten Kapitan von REDL (from Vienna) of Amt Mi. B.

(d) Calls Relating to Political and Diplomatic Matters.

Discussions between the British Embassy in Washington and the Foreign Office in London were for the most part cleverly camouflaged, although at times interesting features could be concluded from them. It was learned, for instance, that certain discussions took place between the Allies and that Britain would not as the chief speaker for the American-British side towards the Russians. The subject of these discussions was not definitely known, but from certain hints and newspaper and radio announcements, the conclusion was drawn that the topic was "the oil supplies of Iraq and Iran". More and more it was concluded that these pick-ups were most valuable if combined with all the other sources of information, especially newspapers, radio and other 'open' news.

Other purely political conversations took place between various Allied government representatives. The Dutch Government in London telephoned frequently to its representative in Washington, and once or twice the station overheard conversations between the Russian Ambassador in Washington and Mr. MAISKY's Embassy in London. In this case the Allied operator had to admonish the speakers frequently not to speak Russian but English.

Several times the conversations between CHURCHILL and EDEN, who was in Washington, were picked up. CHURCHILL usually spoke under the name of his secretary or was simply called "Captain", but it was not difficult to disclose his identity. The contents of these conversations were not of high political significance, but certain conclusions could be drawn out of the general atmosphere in which they were conducted.

These frequent conversations could be used by this office as 'fitting in' material to their other information. Sometimes the mere temper of the persons speaking allowed conclusions to be drawn as to the progress of certain negotiations between the Allies. For example: EDEN once spoke to one of his Foreign Office secretaries in London in a terrible rage. He called him a "silly ass" and "idiot", and it was evident that something went wrong on the other side.

(e) Calls Relating to Economic Matters.

As the war was nearing its end, economic matters seemed to gain the upper hand in these Washington and London calls.

The conversations between the State Department, Washington, and the U.S. Embassy in London were mostly conducted by FEA (Foreign Economic Administration) people, who telephoned quite openly about locomotives to be delivered to the French after the invasion and about the help of American engineers and equipment for the British mining industry.

When Governor LEHMAN was in London in 1944, he phoned frequently to Washington on behalf of the UNRRA and it was heard that the Cairo office of that organization got into trouble by buying clothes on the black market instead of waiting for cheaper ones coming from the U.S. Shipping difficulties were frequently mentioned as hampering the war effort of the UNRRA, and there were differences of opinion between the UNRRA authorities and the TITO Government, which wanted to have all the goods distributed under its own name.

All the news gathered from these pick-ups were allocated by source to the various departments of VI; he sent the economic ones to VI Wi and Tech.

H. Description of Pick-Up Station.

1. Dr. THOST's Visit to Eindthoven.

In August 1944 Source was ordered to pay a visit to the listening station (south of Eindthoven, Holland), to hear some new proposals made by Dr. VETTERLEIN. This station was situated in a villa, and the entire technical installation consisting of an outfit (the dimensions of which were surprising) was located in the bomb proof cellar. The equipment filled at least three large rooms from top to bottom. On the outside surrounding the villa there were about six transmission poles.

2. Technical Details of Station.

VETTERLEIN showed Source the entire teenhical equipment. Source gathered that the interception of the radio-telephone conversations (r-t-c) was only possible because Eindthoven was especially suitable from a geographical point of view, being nearly in a straight line with Washington and London. Therefore, Washington was better heard in Eindthoven then London, because the London voice went around the world before being picked up in Eindthoven.

The voices were split by a special ciphering apparatus, the high waves being bent into low waves and vice versa, sot that ordinary listening resulted in nothing but a squeezing noise. The American-British used, as far as Source remembers, five different ciphers changing every twelve seconds and practically the same machines had to be installed in the German station with a clock going exactly at the same speed as Greenwich time. These deciphering machines made the voices audible in a microphone as well as in head receivers.

All the talks were recorded on gramophone records and sent up to a lady typist. After typing, the talks were translated into English and sent by a special taper directly to Berlin into the taper center of the SS and the "SS Hauptamt", from where they were sent by messengers to the Berkaerstrasse in Source's office. These tapers were secret; all the letters were changed so that interception of the line was impossible. Source received the r-t-c in English marked as "Geheime Reichssache" and did the allocation according to the contents.

3. Dr. VETTERLEIN's Proposals.

Source stayed at this station about three days, during the course of which he and VETTERLEIN thoroughly discussed the r-t-c's. VETTERLEIN explained the various technical installations, not yet fully developed, through which other types of radio-telephones could be tapped. He showed Source some samples of radio messages coming from American and British newspaper representatives to their respective editors in London and New York. They did not disclose many secrets but served Amt VI in receiving 'open' news much earlier than hitherto. Secondly, ciphered news was picked up and hidden in so-called five letter ciphers which had to be deciphered. As the Military Intelligence had a big decyphering office, Source thought it worth while to receive these pick-ups as well. VETTERLEIN stated that this extension of duties in his pick-up station meant more personnel and still more expensive machinery, although he, too, thought the matter worthwhile. Both agreed that the best thing to do would be to have a permanent representative of Amt VI in this station, a person who knew the value of the various pick-ups and one who could decide on the spot whether or not an intercepted r-t-c should be sent to Source in Berlin. Source thought of training one of their lady secretaries and then sending her permanently to Eindthoven. Regarding the cost of the technical extensions, VETTERLEIN undertook to ask his Ministry of Post people for the money, and Source tried to persuade SCHELLENBERG to write a letter to OHNESORGE, confirming that these investments would be of value for the conduct of the war.

Upon Source's return to Berlin the progress of the Allied invasion brought the whole scheme to an end. VETTERLEIN succeeded in getting all his equipment out of Holland and subsequently attempted to resettle with his station on the Sieg river, but his r-t-c's slowly faded away. The last ones Source received as late as January 1945, but irregularly and with frequent interruptions. As the whole German communication system slowly became disorganized, the same complications arose with the r-t-c's.

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REPORT
ALSOS 37698

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HEADQUARTERS INTELLIGENCE CENTER
6825 HQ & HQS COMPANY
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN AUSTRIA
APO 777 U.S. ARMY

XL

FIRST DETAILED INTERROGATION REPORT

Source : THOST, Dr. Hans Wilhelm

Position: Author and Propaganda Agent

Case No.: S020

Ref. No.: S020/USDIC/DC6

Date : 3 January 1946

Copy No.: _____

This report contains information on the activities of Dr. Hans Wilhelm THOST in connection with Amt VI during the war.

Alfred T. Chan
1st Lt. Ord. M.S.
for JOSEPH M. KOLISCH
Major, Infantry
Commanding

SECRET

Declassified by D. Janosek,
Deputy Associate Director for Policy and Records
on 12/10/2010 and by dp

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)
Authority NND 740120
By CD/SR NARS, Date 2 MAR 1976

~~S E C R E T~~

G. Interception of Wireless Conversations.

1. Intercepting Station in Operation.

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I. Additional Amt VI D2 Enterprises.

1. Observation of Anti-War Elements in England.

Occasionally, travelling neutral people coming from London brought small and even obscure propaganda material from England to Spain or Lisbon in the form of newspapers which were ordinarily not available outside of Britain. These papers were picked up by