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17 January 1947

TO : SC Washington
FROM : SC Amzon
SUBJECT : Transmittal of Berlin Raw Intelligence Reports

Forwarded herewith for your information and
retention is Berlin Raw Intelligence Report No. 656
(1756).

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S E C R E T

Station: Berlin Registry No: 1756
Reference: AB 57 Report No: 656
Source: Gull Report Date: 14 January 1947
Evaluation: B Information Date: Current
Date Info Received: 16-27 Dec 46
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN BERLIN/PERSONALITIES AND
ACTIVITIES.

1. This is the tenth of a series of reports dealing with the project wherein source will attempt a comprehensive survey of all dissident Slav elements in Berlin. The last report was Report No. 651, Registry No. 1349.

2. The head of all Orthodox Churches in Berlin is ALEXANDER, Bishop of Brussels. He made a trip to Moscow at the invitation of the Soviet Government recently and on his return to Berlin mildly criticized the attitude of the government towards the Russian Orthodox Church. According to source, many of the faithful in Berlin have interpreted his attitude as Pro-Soviet. He immediately left Berlin for Paris and is reported to be in Brussels at the moment. His return to Berlin is expected in the near future.

3. The pastor of the Russian Orthodox Church on Nachodstrasse, Berlin/Wilmersdorf, is Sergius POLOSCHENSKIJ. He accompanied Bishop ALEXANDER to Moscow and on his return to Berlin gave an entirely different picture of his visit than did his superior. Disregarding personal safety, he openly described the hunger and poverty of the inhabitants of Moscow. Source was able to determine that he had received three invitations to appear before different Soviet commandants but had decided not to honor them. In source's opinion he is not completely reliable because he places church prerogatives over his ideals.

4. The pastor of the Russian Orthodox Church on Ferbellinerplatz, Berlin/Wilmersdorf is Michail RADSCHICK. Source holds him as completely reliable (i.e. anti-Soviet) and as a brave and honorable person.

5. At the present time, both of these churches; i.e., the ones on Nachodstrasse and on Ferbellinerplatz are strongly loyal to the Western Powers but do not take any open political stand. The faithful of both churches pray for Patriarch ALEXIS, who is recognized as the head of the Greek Orthodox Church throughout the world. (Note: Patriarch ALEXIS is not universally recognized. Some orthodox churches, particularly in America, regard him as a Soviet stooge. The Orthodox Church is paying the penalty of its close tie-up with Czarism, and its disorganization is still such that it would take an expert on church politics and liturgy to give a rational picture of the situation). It is interesting to note that no prayers are offered for the Red Army of the present Soviet Government. Members of various orthodox churches in America frequently send donations to both churches. Source was able to determine that priests from both of these churches have appealed to the Soviet Military Administration for coal, and periodic shipments are received. Two or three times, the Soviets have sent a truckload of food for distribution among the church members.

6. Source gives an entirely different picture of the conditions existing in the Orthodox Friedhofkirche at Tegel in the French Sector of Berlin. The pastor there is one ADRIAN, a Ukrainian refugee who left the Ukraine in 1941. He gets frequent visits from MWD officers, and is said to be rewarded for his collaboration with ample supplies of schnapps, food, and money.

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His associate, a priest called PLATON, is not in political sympathy with him and has asked to be transferred to the church on Ferbellinerplatz. Source thinks ADRIAN is a venal opportunist. According to source, there is a strong tendency among the orthodox in Berlin to regard this church as under Soviet domination.

7. Source admits that it would be difficult to establish any direct connections between the MVD and the Russian Orthodox Churches in Berlin. The main difficulty, according to him, is the mental attitude of the Russian colony in Berlin, which seems to run into extremes with regard to the Soviets. It generally consists of an abject fear of the Soviets or a toadying servility to them. Source recommends using as advisor on church matters and informant, Boris Michailowitsch LADKOWSKI, a church choir director. He is a former Russian Officer in the Czarist Army and an old emigre in Berlin. Source is certain that he is completely trustworthy and has no contacts with the Soviets. Sufficiently reliable as a low level informant is SCHAZAWOW, the church elder of the Ferbellinerplatz Church. He also is a former Czarist Officer and at one time a secretary to the 'Organisation der Russischen Militaer Verbaende'. An interesting individual who regularly attends the church on Ferbellinerplatz is one GERASSIMOW. A Russian emigre, and formerly the church beggar, he now comes to church elegantly dressed. He carries large sums of money in his pockets, and singles out individual Russians with favors and generosity. His current opulence is credited to his connections with the Soviets. In general, source believes the Soviets keep a watchful eye on all the Orthodox Churches in Berlin.

COMMENT:

To bring the Russian Orthodox Churches in Berlin under some control would obviously be advantageous to the Soviets from the political and propaganda standpoint. There is however no proof that these churches are targets of any Soviet Intelligence agency. Source, possibly due to his Czarist and White Russian background, has an illogical tendency to assume that any Russian emigre who works, traffics, or black markets with any Soviet Russian is per se a Soviet agent. When told he could only make definite statements on subject after he found evidence proving or disproving that a certain person is or is not a Soviet agent, he candidly admitted it would take several weeks in running down all the leads. In order that he should not dissipate his energy over a too wide field (and on short range, probably a profitless venture) he was instructed to limit his activities on the Russian Orthodox Churches to a brief and accurate survey. Source's reports are good enough as a starting point should any projected operation be contemplated by this organization in that direction.

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