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9 March 1951

SUBJECT: Bund Deutsche Jugend

TO: []

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODSEXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

1. With reference to the draft of an intelligence report on subject organization, the following comment and evaluation is submitted:

A. PAGE BY PAGE COMMENTS

Page 1:

The draft starts by identifying BDJ with the "Action Committee against the Fifth Column." This identification is not only unfounded but positively known to be untrue. We know what the Action Committee against the Fifth Column is, and we know that BDJ had nothing whatsoever to do with it. The Frankfurt German Police, acting presumably on a complaint filed by one or more of the persons listed by the Action Committee as fifth columnists, searched the offices of the BDJ and took samples from all of its typewriters-- which upon comparison proved that none of the black lists were produced by BDJ. To conclude from the mere coincidence of BDJ action against businessmen supporting the Communist Party with the appearance of the first black list of the Action Committee that these two are identical is entirely unwarranted.

Page 6:

The demonstration in Coburg and Neustadt contrary to the text of the draft was quite a success. We do not have to take BDJ's word for it, but we have newspaper clippings, including photographs showing mass attendance and indicating that all local youth groups with the exception of the Protestant youth participated. Moreover, one of the speakers was a leading local SPD official, who spoke despite his party's ban against BDJ.

Page 9:

Testimony of Herr Stettner should be evaluated more skeptically. On the one hand, Stettner is known to be a rabid enemy of U. S. policy in Germany, especially of its desire to integrate Germany into European defense. An anti-militaristic leaflet of his Falken group some months ago was confiscated by the Frankfurt Police because it insulted the Bonn Government and/or the U. S. occupation authorities.

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See report on Bund Deutsche Jugend

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2.

The article in the Spiegel (which, incidentally, was written by a former high-ranking official of Herr Rosenberg's Office of Nazi Ideological Indoctrination) should not be accepted as evidence either. Since its appearance, it has been shown at a press conference in Frankfurt by EDJ representatives that it is impossible that Stettner attended the national conference of EDJ as he claims. Not only did EDJ officials search the premises before and after the conference but Stettner's alleged notes contained certain allegations which were not made at the conference at all, while, on the other hand, they did not contain statements which actually were made at the conference and which Stettner would undoubtedly have utilized for his attack if he had only known them. This is moreover proven by the text of Dr. Lüth's speech which is in our files. The obvious explanation is that Stettner got piece-meal information from one of the over 300 delegates attending that convention.

Page 14:

The report states: "There is no evidence of the initiation of projects at local level." This is patently untrue and is contradicted with certain items mentioned in the text of the draft itself but not properly correlated. For instance, the participation of the Stuttgart branch of EDJ in a meeting in favor of the Landsberg war criminals (mentioned later on in the report) was undertaken without any consultation with EDJ headquarters. More important, the activities of EDJ in Berlin and in the Soviet Zone are largely due to local initiatives. The convention of Soviet Zone youth also mentioned later in the report was by no means ordered from the top. In many other instances, EDJ local branches have acted spontaneously and on their own initiative. They have taken effective counter-action against local Communist or neo-Fascist activities without waiting for orders from above. There is, for instance, the case of the letters the Stuttgart branch wrote to all local advertisers in the Communist newspaper. This led to a law suit on the part of the Communists which, however, ended in favor of EDJ and with the effect that the advertising in the Communist paper was drastically reduced. More recently, student groups of the EDJ also have developed considerable local initiative. The group at Frankfurt University, for instance, spoiled a FDJ plan to conduct a "plebiscite against re-militarization" before any higher EDJ headquarters knew about it.

Page 15:

The French intelligence report alleging that three prominent former generals had a section "XXX" of EDJ is devoid of any foundation. First of all, there is no such section. Second, while the possibility cannot be excluded that some EDJ member at one time or another talked to one of the three generals mentioned, they definitely are not in firm connection whatsoever with EDJ.

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3.

Page 18:

The last sentence of this page asserts: "Activities to date have been limited to anti-Communist and anti-neutrality campaign." This is contradicted by some later parts of the report itself which indicates, for instance, EDJ action against the Bruderschaft and other rightist organizations and so forth.

Page 20-b-21:

The description of the meetings is quite biased. This writer participated personally in the Frankfurt meeting. The number of 1,500 participants may not be far from the truth, but if there were 200 Communists, they certainly failed to show their hands. The entire meeting was orderly without interruptions. A few EDJ members distributed anti-BDJ leaflets--but they were prevented from continuing this very quickly by the local police which confiscated the leaflets and removed the distributors in a very effective manner, without interrupting the meeting. I have stated already in connection with Page 6 above that the description of the Coburg meeting has not even remote resemblance to the actual facts. On the same page, the story of the "Action Committee against the Fifth Column" is repeated. (See comments on page 1 above.) The only evidence added is that the black lists of the Action Committee are printed in green, the same color used on several EDJ publications. (Can one take this sort of "evidence" really seriously?)

Page 29:

In reporting on EDJ's alleged finances, several unwarranted generalizations are made. For instance, it says: "Functionaries all . . . drive their own cars." The fact is that EDJ as an organization thus far has only obtained one automobile. One of its leading officials bought another automobile on installments. If there are any more cars, they must be the private property of the individuals concerned--quite a few of whom either come from well-to-do families or have now or had in the past well salaried positions. In the same sentence, it is asserted that EDJ is able to "move considerable numbers of people from place to place." There is no evidence to sustain this broad generalization. This writer knows only of two incidents where mass travel was paid for--one in connection with the meeting campaign of 7 October, when certain local groups were brought to the next larger city for combined meetings. The second case occurred when the delegates were brought in buses to the national convention last December in Frankfurt. It is also not true that EDJ "has offices in the major cities of Western Germany." The fact is EDJ has offices only in Hamburg, Essen, Stuttgart, Hanover, Coburg, Munich, Bremen, Frankfurt, and Berlin (as per 31 January 1951).

Page 32:

Here the story of the Frankfurt meeting on October 7, already discounted on page 21 above, is told once more.

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Biographic Appendix:

Page 3:

In the notes on Dr. Lüth, the old charges of "black marketing" and "narcotics" have been raised again without offering any evidence. The black marketing charge has never been substantiated, and unless somebody quotes chapter and verse, it wouldn't be possible to disprove it (apart from the fact that at least until the currency reform in 1948 virtually every German--and most members of the occupying forces--indulged in some sort of black marketing). The narcotics charge, to the extent to which I have been able to investigate it, is reduced to two facts. This story was related by one Inu Schieck, a self-confessed Soviet agent recently on trial--and therefore not a very reliable source. The Frankfurt German Police (under SPD control!) have tried their worst to get from Schieck statements which would have enabled them to indict Dr. Lüth. However, Schieck was unable to furnish such evidence, and the case was dropped. The second incident--presumably related to the first--was a narcotics trial against some student who once had been a patient of Dr. Lüth and who (presumably in order to protect his real source) mentioned Lüth as the source of his dope supply. Here again the Frankfurt Police was eager to get Dr. Lüth involved--with no success. It is therefore hardly warranted to list these unsubstantiated and refuted charges again.

B. EVALUATION

Whoever drafted subject intelligence report was obviously severely handicapped by two major facts:

a. He had hardly any first-hand evidence at his disposal but mainly second and third-hand intelligence reports, mostly of a low level of which the author himself on page 41 of the draft writes: "It is quite possible in fact that reporting on the activities of the EDJ's anti-Communist and pro-Western campaign is colored by the antipathy of the reporters."

b. The author of the draft does not appear to have an accurate conception of the U. S. defense effort in Germany. Otherwise, he would hardly be able to stress mostly the negative and to belittle the positive aspects in the efforts of an organization which is obviously attempting to carry out some of the most urgent objectives of U. S. policy in Germany--that is, to prepare the German people--or at least an active section of its younger generation--to fight on the side of the U. S. in a war against the Soviet Union.

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Since the author of the draft thus based his report mostly on material of questionable value as proven by us and since he obviously shows little interest in the effort to ready the German people for defense on the side of the West, his report—even he subjectively appears to have attempted to show no bias in writing it—must necessarily give a badly distorted picture of EDJ. The question is: Since the writer of the report acknowledges that EDJ has conducted vigorous anti-Communist activities and pursued other objectives of U. S. policy—why hasn't he consulted with the responsible EDJ leaders themselves? Why has he based his report largely on statements by a few obviously prejudiced local resident officers (such as the one in Frankfurt), and why, in evaluating the press comments, has he played down the voluminous favorable publicity given to EDJ and its actions and magnified beyond proportion any criticism which has been raised against EDJ for reasons which cannot be considered very convincing in the eyes of U. S. interests?

The campaign about the "mysterious source of EDJ funds" to which this draft pays so much attention is only the result of hostility of other political groups but by no means an unusual charge in German politics. If one reads the draft without being well acquainted with the German political scene, one might believe that EDJ is the only organization which doesn't render public accounts of its income. Just the opposite is true. In Germany, practically no political organization renders any public accounts—the millions with which the Communist Party and its front organizations finance their subversive activities in Western Germany are just as unaccounted for as the obviously very ample funds with which the recent campaign against the High Commissioner's decision regarding the Landsberg war criminals was conducted (a campaign which included the setting up of a big office, the printing of a whole series of pamphlets, distribution of posters, telegrams to the whole world and so forth). Nor has the question of last year's federal election campaign expenditures been conclusively elucidated—despite the sensation created by Der Spiegel. In other words, unlike the U. S., where campaign expenditures and other political funds are compelled either by law or by tradition to be made public to a large extent, in Germany, virtually everybody hides the source of his political funds. That this is held against the EDJ to a far higher extent than against anybody else shows only that the activities of the EDJ are so strong and so aggressive that they hurt other people much more than certain other activities for which far higher funds are expended. The total costs of EDJ at this moment amount to not more than DM 50,000 to DM 60,000 per month (as this writer can state after having checked EDJ accounts, receipts and other supporting evidence). This expenditure is not out of proportion with the membership figures of EDJ and is very little compared with the expenditures of other political organizations. These funds are only used much more efficiently than the money of, for instance, the SPD, which apparently needs its very large income mostly to meet intra-party administrative expenses. This is also the reason why the Communist press started the astounding claim that Coca Cola had given EDJ seven million DM!

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The report also bases its criticism of the BDJ largely on statements by the SPD on the one hand and on the "other youth organizations" on the other hand. In utilizing SPD criticism, it confuses occasionally allegations by Herr Stettner (who seems to be far more likely to be a camouflaged Soviet agent than a faithful SPD follower) with the official statements by the SPD party executive in Hanover. It is well known, however, that the SPD does not wish to cooperate with anybody who does not toe their party line. We have observed, for instance, that the SPD has made life very difficult for the BVN (non-Communist League of Victims of Nazi Persecution) although none of the accusations raised against BDJ hold true of BVN. The latter has tried hard to be on good terms with the SPD. Its political attitude is rather left of center and strongly anti-Nazi, and its entire character is by no means as aggressive as that of BDJ. Nevertheless, the SPD party executive refused any sort of cooperation. The SPD's ban against BDJ was lumped together with its ban against the First Legion, the Nauheim Circle and the Bruderschaft. (To put two Communist front organizations into the same category with two definitely anti-Communist groups is another example of the doctrinary intolerance so frequently displayed by Dr. Schumacher.) It is also worth remembering that one of the SPD's main complaints against the BDJ is the latter's petition campaign for Western defense—a campaign started against the well-known Communist "peace offensive" and absolutely in line with the objectives of U. S. policy.

The case of the "other youth organizations" was fairly much taken at its face value in subject draft also changes on close inspection. First of all, the other non-Communist youth organizations have actually been unable to rally the majority of Western German youth. Despite the fact that the SPD is the second strongest political party and has one million members and several million voters, its youth organization, the Falken, has—according to its official reports—only 55,000 members throughout Western Germany. Moreover, the Falkens have been penetrated by the FDJ and the Communists in a number of places (One of the chief penetrators is apparently the ubiquitous Herr Stettner.) as was drastically shown last year at the Whitsuntide FDJ convention in Berlin, which was attended by quite a number of Falken members. The Federal Youth Ring, headed by Herr Rommerskirchen, is notorious for its anti-militaristic attitude, its unwillingness to engage in political activities and its lack of cooperation even with the Federal Government in Bonn. (The latter fact, incidentally, is even mentioned on page 38 of the report.) The hostility of Herr Rommerskirchen should be in American eyes only a compliment for the BDJ's policies and activities.

The report infers repeatedly the strong rightist character of BDJ. Apart from the fact that these allegations are largely exaggerated since they are mostly based on hostility and bias as well as entirely incomplete

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reports and on hearsay, this attitude seems to go back to the old days of "denazification." The U. S., faced with the possibility of fighting an all-out war for survival against the relentless expansionist drive of Soviet imperialism cannot afford to be too choosy in recruiting manpower for its defense. Not the past affiliations but only the present attitude and activities of a man or a group can count. If we were to judge political groups in Germany from their past affiliations, we could not cooperate with anybody. Herr Wehner, top important member of the SPD party executive was less than ten years ago a Comintern agent. Herr Karlo Schmid, SPD vice-chairman of the Bonn Parliament, served during the war in the German occupation administration of France. The Communists themselves draw heavily upon former Nazi manpower. Herr Kaiser, Minister of All-German Affairs, was reportedly one of the members of the German Reichstag, who voted unrestricted powers for Hitler in 1933. Under these conditions, it seems rather hypocritical to take exception to the fact that this or that man was at one time or other a member of the Nazi Party or even a SS officer--as long as his present activities benefit U. S. policies.

In conclusion, I suggest that we look at the DDJ somewhat like the French look at their Foreign Legion: They don't care about the past of their legionnaires as long as they faithfully discharge their sworn duties to the French flag. The only reports on DDJ which should be of concern to us seem to be therefore those reports which might imply that DDJ is not faithful to its pledge toward Western defense, but this is nowhere alleged even in the present report.

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