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Memo: JZX-7998

2 May 1946

TO: SAINT, JJ1
FROM: SAINT, EB8
SUBJECT: Clandestine Jewish Traffic to Palestine
REFER: JZX-6721 and 5865
SOURCE: JK23/2
EVAL: Reliable

1. Attached, series of reports on latest developments in the clandestine traffic of Jews from Italy. The "FEDE" incident, another of the series which has followed the "NETTUNO" case (see JZX-5865), confirms our previous indications that the most effective executive arm of the escape chain organization is composed of scattered Palestinian (Br.) military units, who provide the necessary rations and transport.

2. Note classification; necessary because cousins have asked that this material be passed to them only.

3. Genoa and Milan are asked to follow up developments.

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SUBJECT: Clandestine Jewish Traffic to Palestine

A. Ascoli Piceno Demonstration:

1. On 11 April 1946 about 250 Jews residing at Cagnano di Acquasanta (Ascoli Piceno) staged a demonstration as a protest against the measures taken by the British authorities against those Jews who were arrested at La Spezia while trying to seek refuge in Palestine.

2. The 250 Jews paraded through the streets of Cagnano di Acquasanta flying the Jewish flag, and carrying signs written in Yiddish and Italian, with slogans such as, "We do not want to remain in foreign countries", "We want to share the fate of our brethren who have been arrested." One of the Jews, a physician, gave a speech explaining the purpose of the demonstration and the reasons why the Jews wish to go to Palestine. Shouts of "Down with England" were occasionally heard during the demonstration, which was otherwise quite orderly.

3. At the end of the demonstration, the Jews expressed their gratitude towards the Italian Government for the hospitality accorded to them in Italy.

B. OZNA Penetration, Bari:

4. A reliable source reports that many Jews formerly living in Apulia have settled in northern Italy, especially in Milan. It is believed that the transfer of these Jews was ordered by the Jewish community at Bari, which, it appears, had been penetrated by some OZNA agents.

C. Santa Maria di Leuca Demonstration:

5. On 27 February 1946, a commission composed of British and American representatives, including a former ambassador to Palestine, arrived at Santa Maria di Leuca. They had flown from Galatina airport. The purpose of the visit was to see whether it would be possible to proceed with the gradual emigration to Palestine of Jews at present interned at Santa Maria di Leuca, Tricase, Santa Cesarea Terme and Santa Maria al Bagno.

6. About 1000 Jews staged a demonstration at Santa Maria di Leuca, clamoring for their immediate "repatriation" to Palestine.

7. It is believed that the ZWVIC brothers, Fona, Solose and Chaim, were the instigators of the demonstration.

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D. La Spezia Preparations, the "FEDE":

8. A few days ago (1 April 1946), La Spezia Questura was informed that the motorboat "Fede", moored at the Pirelli wharf, San Bartolomeo, La Spezia, was being fitted as a passenger ship. Thereupon, a Captain of the Guardia di Finanza was ordered to make an inspection of the boat on the pretext of ascertaining whether there were taxable goods on board.

9. It was ascertained that a great number of berths had been prepared and that large quantities of foodstuffs, consisting of coffee, sugar, oil, flour, rice, biscuits, canned meat, etc., were stored. This food, coming from the Allies, was considered sufficient for the needs of 1200 passengers for at least 15 days.

10. Some guards were left on board, and all documents found on the ship, including a permit to sail from La Spezia to Porto Empedocle (empty) and from Porto Empedocle to Ancona (with a cargo of salt), were sequestered.

11. Some time afterwards (3 April 1946), three men asked to be received by La Spezia Questura. They were:

a) Giuseppe MUSSO, fu Bartolomeo and Maria CAPELLANO, born 27 November 1903 at Savona, living at No. 3/6, Piazza Leon Pancaldo, Savona, shipping agent, co-owner of the MUSSO & MARCUCCI shipping agency at Savona, commissioner of the port of Savona, member of Savona CLN;

b) Matteo MARANZANA, di Andrea and Antonietta SEGALA, born 19 March 1894 at Genoa, living at No. 12/5, Via Marco Polo, Genoa, naval engineer, co-owner with Augusto ROLLAND of a shop for the sale and purchase of machinery located at No. 2, Via San Luca, Genoa.

c) Renzo BARGIACCHI, fu Francesco and fu Aurelia TOGNELLI, born 7 December 1892 at Pistoia, living at No. 3, Via Tommaso, La Spezia; industrialist.

12. They were received by the police commissary, Alberto PEREGO (di Giovan Battista and Malvina RICCI, born 2 March 1913 at Genoa). They said that the motorboat "Fede" was being fitted as a passenger ship upon request of the Allies. They also revealed that the boat was to transport some refugees who were due to arrive that night at La Spezia. The refugees would be transported by Allied motor trucks, and escorted by the American Military Police.

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13. At 0145 hours on 4 April 1946 some policemen and Guardia di Finanza stopped a jeep in which were a British sergeant and an officer, wearing the leather coat usually worn by American troops. The latter said that he was a major in the U.S. Army, and that he gave permission for the sailing of the vessel.

14. The captain in charge of the patrol asked for the identification papers of the two travelers, as well as for the refugees' embarkation permits, adding, as a ruse, that the Military Police from Leghorn were expected to arrive quite shortly. Upon hearing this, the two Allied soldiers got in the jeep and drove off at once, in spite of the order to stop and the firing of sub-machine guns.

15. A squad of the La Spezia Questura sent in pursuit of the jeep met a column of 37 Dodge motor trucks of a Palestinian unit at Sarzana, with about 1000 Polish Jews of both sexes on board. The members of the unit (who were being transferred from Udine to Capua) would not reveal where the Jews had been picked up. It is believed, however, that it must have been somewhere in the neighborhood of Brescia. All members of the convoy, as well as the two soldiers traveling in the jeep, were escorted to La Spezia Questura.

16. Following orders issued by the 85th Port Security Section, the motor column left on the same day for Capua, while the refugees were provisionally embarked on board the "Fede" and kept under watch by a strong police force. They were fed with the foodstuffs found on board the ship.

17. MUSSO, MARANZANA and BARGIACCHI were subjected to interrogation by Allied agents and officials at La Spezia police headquarters, and later taken to the La Spezia jail, where they are kept at the disposition of Allied authorities.

18. MUSSO stated that the owner of the motorboat "Fede" is Signora DACCO', living in Piazza Giulio Cesare, Milan, and her agent is Andrea MARCUCCI (of the MUSSO & MARCUCCI shipping agency). The boat was built by the SERRA Bros. of Savona at the Cervo Ligure (Imperia) dockyards. Her load capacity is 800 tons, and speed 7.5 miles (Italian) per hour.

19. According to MUSSO's statement, the ship had been sent to La Spezia for the installation of hydraulic and sanitary equipment, auxiliary machinery, etc., which could not be carried out at Oneglia, where the boat's preliminary fittings had been installed.

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20. MUSSO said that a certain MAYER, perhaps a native of Trieste, one day called at his office and informed him that following arrangements made with Signora DACCO', the "Fede" was to be used for the transportation of Jewish refugees to Palestine. MAYER assured MUSSO that the voyage was authorized by American officials, and that no neo-Fascists were included among the passengers. MAYER added that the Jews were former internees in concentration camps in Germany.

21. Engr. Mario PASINA (or PAVINI) was responsible for fitting the vessel as a passenger ship. The necessary material had been taken to La Spezia by Allied motor trucks. In his capacity as shipping agent, MUSSO secured the permits for the sailing to Porto Empedocle and Ancona. MUSSO also stated that he did not know what kind of arrangements had been made between Signora DACCO' and MAYER.

22. MARANZANA stated that he had been entrusted by MAYER with the installation of machinery on board the "Fede". He later met Signora DACCO' at Milan. Since it was impossible to accomplish the work at Oneglia, MARANZANA, in agreement with BARGIACCHI, arranged for the transfer of the boat to La Spezia (24 March 1946). The fittings for the accommodation of passengers were installed under the supervision of one Engr. Mario (surname unknown). MARANZANA stated that when he heard that the ship was to be used for the transportation of Jews to Palestine, he did not make any objection first - because it had nothing to do with him; second, because he felt sympathetic towards the Jews.

23. BARGIACCHI stated that he had been entrusted by MARANZANA with the installation of machinery, etc., on board the "Fede". He did not know the owner of the boat. The material needed for fitting the boat had been transported by Allied motor trucks. He did not know that the ship was being fitted for the transportation of Jews.

24. It should be noted that MUSSO and MARANZANA are responsible for works similar to those carried out on the "fede" on another ship, the motor ship "Fenice", which at present is moored at Cadimare (La Spezia) and kept under watch by La Spezia police authorities. (Owner of the "Fenice" is Giuseppe ANSALDO, born in 1912 at Genoa, and shipping agent is Giacomo BONINO, fu Carlo, with offices at No. 57 (red), Via Sottoripa, Genoa.)

25. The skipper of the "Fede" is Ugo FARIDONE, born in 1899 at Lerici. With 11 members of the crew, he is on board the boat, with strict orders not to leave the ship.

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26. The following is a list of the crew of the motor vessel "Fede":

- a) Ugo FARIDONE, skipper, born 1899
- b) Attilio LEPPI, 1st officer, born 1891
- c) Guido GALLI, chief engineer, born 1894
- d) Giuseepe PASCHETTI, engineer, born 1897
- e) Lorenzo GIORDANO, boatswain, born 1897
- f) Giovanni VIANELLO, cook, born 1898
- g) Nazzareno GREGORIO, sailor, born 1907
- h) Michele MANNELLA, sailor, born 1909
- i) Gabriele SPIGNO, sailor, born 1912
- j) Romualdo GANDOLFO, sailor, born 1917
- k) Carlo DULBECCO, sailor, born 1921
- l) Renato ROLLA, sailor, born 1906

27. With reference to the attempted expatriation of 1014 Polish Jews at La Spezia by means of the motorboat "Fede", it was ascertained (23 April) that:

a) The material needed for setting up the berths was taken to the pier by Allied motor trucks during the period 25-30 March 1946. The foodstuff (also transported by Allied trucks) was stored in the storeroom of the BARGIACCHI shipping agency, located in the vicinity of the "Pirelli" wharf, and the man in charge of the storeroom gave receipts for the cases left in his care to one BERGMANN. With the exception of the food found on board the "Fede", all the good stored in the BARGIACCHI premises (including foodstuffs, gasoline, etc.) were sequestered and taken to Genoa on 8 April 1946 by British motor trucks.

b) MUSSO stated to the captain in command of the PTI group of La Spezia Regia Guardia di Finanza that at first he refused to have anything to do with the work carried out on board the "Fede", in spite of MAYER's reiterated requests. He acceded to MAYER's demand only when MAYER showed him a letter from a well-known Italian personage (whose name MUSSO did not want to disclose), asking that the fitting up of the "Fede" be carried out at all costs. MUSSO admitted having received from MAYER one million lire in checks of the Credito Italiano Bank. The sum had been almost entirely used.

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c) BARGIACCHI stated that he had spent about 800,000 lire in works on board the "Fede", and that he had received from MUSSO, through MARANZANA, 500,000 lire. The "Fede" was bought for 50 million lire only.

d) The skipper, Ugo FARIDONE (fu Angelo and fu Caterina COLOTTO, born 31 March 1899 at Lerici, living at No. 2 Via Matteotti, Lerici), was engaged as commander of the boat by the shipping agent, MARCUCCI, in February 1946. He took charge of the boat at Oneglia on 21 March 1946.

e) The shipping agent, Silvestro BELLEDONNE (fu Francesco and fu Clotilde GIRANDENGO, born 3 September 1890 at La Spezia, living at No. 1, Via Massimo d'Azeglio, La Spezia) was entrusted by MARCUCCI with the task of clearing through La Spezia port authorities.

f) On 8 April 1946, the La Spezia Questura arrested the Polish Jew, Joseph GRUNBAUM (di Sigraum, born 30 July 1920 at Lodz), who had arrived at Genoa in an automobile owned by one Enrico LEVI, a native of Padua. The automobile had the number plate marked PD 18884. GRUNBAUM stated that he had accompanied two girl passengers to La Spezia (whose names he did not know), since his employer (LEVI) had ordered him to take the automobile to Genoa for some repairs. GRUNBAUM took lodgings at the "San Giorgio" Hotel. It is believed that he is connected with the attempted departure of the Jews, in spite of his denials.

28. On 9 April 1946 GRUNBAUM, MUSSO, MARANZANA, Renzo BARGIACCHI and his son, Giorgio (born 2 January 1923 at La Spezia), were taken by Allied officers to Genoa. They had been previously released.

29. The Jews kept in captivity on board the "Fede" had taken some vital parts from the engines. They say that they will give them back only if the boat will be allowed to sail for Palestine. They have been told that they might be transferred to Chiavari. As a precautionary measure, several parts of the engines on board the "Fede" have been taken off by port officials, lest the passengers attempt to sail by themselves.

30. The morale on board is very low, but they seem to be determined to overcome all difficulties and at any costs, provided they can go to Palestine. For about three days they went on a hunger strike. A doctor sent by the La Spezia Questura reported that there are several Jews seriously ill on board the ship, and that the hunger strike might make their condition much worse. They have declared that they do not want any member of the police on board ship. They will only allow British officials to visit the ship.

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31. On 10 April 1946 Mr. Harold LASKI, leader of the British Labor Party, went on board the "Fede" and after hearing the Jews' plea, promised that he would inform the British Government of their case.

E. Enrico LEVI:

32. Enrico LEVI (see para 27, sub-para e, above), fu Giuseppe, left Padua for Rome on 30 October 1945. He has not returned to Padua as yet. His wife, Gicla FREMDER, is staying at the house of one of her relatives, Emma RIETTI.

33. A letter written by one M. SOBIN, living in New York City and addressed to Enrico LEVI, No. 5, Via San Martino e Solferino, Padua, has been intercepted. It appears that SOBIN is an uncle of LEVI. After expressing his pleasure at receiving a letter from LEVI, SOBIN informs his nephew that he has sent several packages with food. He asks LEVI whether there is any Jewish library at Padua, and wishes to be informed on the living conditions of Jews interned in concentration camps. In his letter, SOBIN speaks of the economic conditions of the Jews throughout the world, and of the persecutions suffered by them. SOBIN writes LEVI that he is sending him a copy of an article entitled "The Jews in Lithuania Publish Jewish Newspapers in Italy". (See Attachment). Arrangements have been made for censoring all mail addressed to LEVI's wife, while the search for LEVI is carried on.

ATTACHMENT

F. Laip GARFINKEL

34. The following article, signed by S. SAK, was published in the Bedeirach (The Road), a newspaper in Yiddish printed at Milan:

"Several thousand Jewish refugees from Poland, Latvia and Lithuania, who for many years were interned in the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald, are at present in Italy awaiting permission to go to Palestine.

"These Jews have formed a Committee, known as the 'Committee For Jewish Refugees', which has its headquarters at Rome. The leader of the Jewish refugees in Italy is Laip GARFINKEL who, for some time, was the head of a Jewish organization in Lithuania known as Polizion (Star of David).

"Laip GARFINKEL was the founder of the newspaper Jdisch Stimunch (The Voice of the Jews). He too was interned in a concentration camp in Germany. He is now chief editor of Bedeirach."