

CONFIDENTIAL

VOLLER, LEOPOLD DR.

Brussels, 9 Aug. 1958

BRIEF REPORT ON THE AUSTRIAN TRIP

VOLLER, Leopold (Dr)

The 30th of July at 11:30 a.m. my wife and I took off from Melabrook on the direct flight to Vienna where we found ourselves in the company of 10 Bulgarian orphans who were on their way from a 12 day stay in Belgium at the invitation of the Belgian Committee of the FIR.

At the airfield in Vienna, HENDRIKSEN, the treasurer of the FIR, was waiting with a bus to take the orphans on a tour of the city. HENDRIKSEN and I have never met. Our debarkment did not seem to arouse his interest or attention. For our part we took the Sabena bus to Vienna where Dr. Friedrich van KAMMANN and Dr. VOLLER were waiting for us.

This was the first meeting. Dr. KAMMANN had, through his superior, alerted the Belgian Embassy about my arrival, even requesting the Ambassador to put an interpreter at my disposal because of the large number of contacts he had foreseen. Neither Dr. VOLLER nor myself found this a particularly enchanting idea.

As soon as I arrived at my hotel I contacted the Belgian Embassy with a view to arranging an appointment with the Ambassador which was granted at once. The Ambassador in Vienna is M. DELCOIGNE who had recently left Belgrade where he represented Belgium for twelve years. He was accompanied by his First Counsellor, Mr. DOURA with whom my contact brightened immediately because I had known his father (an ex-General, Chief of Staff of the National Royalist Movement (NMR), in Belgium during the occupation) very well.

I had in my possession, from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, a recommendation which I had solicited before my departure in case I would have to have recourse to his representative in Vienna.

The interview was most cordial. The Ambassador told me that in the present circumstances he and his services were at my entire disposition. However, he did not have any Belgian interpreters and advised me to use an Austrian woman whose address and telephone number he gave me. I explained to the Ambassador that I felt I would not get too far out of my depth with the German speakers and, in any case, my wife could eventually come to my aid. We separated then with the decision to meet Saturday, 2 August for a brief exchange of views relative to the results of my meetings.

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VOLLER in the meantime was pacing up and down in front of the Embassy. We joined him and went to the office of Dr. KAMMANN. He had a rendez-vous the next morning with the ex-Minister LUDWIG who was resting at SMERING in a magnificent hotel (the Südbahn-Hotel) which is situated some 110 Km. from Vienna in the mountains of Lower-Austria. Dr. KAMMANN was also in contact with M. LEINKAUF who is a deputy and president of the Fraternity of Political Persecutees of the Populist Party (OVP); it appears that he was very reticent.

We had absolutely no response from the Socialist side. According to Dr. KAMMANN and VOLLER this could signify that the Socialists also were refusing their collaboration.

VOLLER explained that the two parties in power do not have the slightest desire to engage actively in any section on behalf of the resistance and deportees whose number (60,000) has an electoral value considerably less than that of the 500,000 Austrians who had been inscribed in the party of the Führer....

It was necessary for us to decide our plan of battle. We would limit ourselves henceforth to a principle objective: Constitute in Austria a national section of the Union of Resistants for a United Europe (URPE) including personalities as representative as possible. The Minister LAEWIG appears to be the person most qualified for its Presidency.

After the meeting at KAMMANN's, VOLLER, who had not left us by so much as a footstep until 1 August and who was quite willing to be our host, made a few confidences to me:

1. The FIR and the Communists who direct it have but one obsession. What is HALIN going to do? The newspaper has put them in a most difficult position. They want to present me as the devil of the split in the European Resistance and they keep shouting that, as for their part, they want no contact at all with me.

There will be held, at Liege, the 14 to the 17 September, an international conference on the History of the European Resistance in which the FIR would like to participate. Actually, since I am on the organizing committee they will without doubt give up this idea. (NDIR: However, Poles, Yugoslavs and Russians will participate. I'll keep you informed on this.)

2. Since the publication of my newspaper, the Austrian Government, strongly impressed, intends to ignore the initiatives of the FIR including its next congress in November.

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3. Chancellor ADENAUER and the Minister VON BRENTANO, basing themselves also in principle on the action of my Journal, requested the Austrian Government to forbid the activities of the FIR in Austria.

4. VOLLER has the best contacts with LEROY and SZUREK of FIR who take him for a champion of unity "at any cost and by all means," while insinuating at the same time that VOLLER is not in possession of all his faculties.

5. Whatever the case may be, VOLLER is an officer of the State Security in Austria who has for his sole mission the control and infiltration of camouflaged activities of the Communists; the FIR for example. In this respect VOLLER had to leave me on 1 August to serve as a guide to a number of "tourists" from East Germany who are visiting Salzburg.

Before leaving him, we arranged to have breakfast (VOLLER, my wife and I) the next morning together, at our invitation.

The Day of the 31st of July

At 8:40 we took the train at the South Station for SEMMERING. We arrived at the Südbahn-hotel toward 11:30 where Minister LUDWIG was waiting for us. He was Minister of Information, then delegate of the Austrian Government to the Council of Europe at Strasburg. He is also Professor at the University of Vienna. On the civic plane he was interned for years in the DACHAU Concentration Camp. Unfortunately he is quite old (close to 70) and is in poor health.

The Minister seemed very happy to meet us and quite interested in the constitution of the Austrian Section of the URPE. He asked us, however, in regard to this, to visit his friend, President SEIFERT, who was staying in a neighboring hotel (extremely luxurious) at PANHANS but with the understanding that we would meet again around 4 o'clock.

President SEIFERT is an ex-colonel and, like LUDWIG, was also deported to DACHAU (This seems to have been the fate of most of the Austrian victims of Nazism.). He appears to be a businessman. He accepted the proposal to meet LUDWIG around 4 o'clock.

We thus found ourselves in one of the salons of the Sudbahn-hotel. Mr. LUDWIG who was ill (He had just had a cardiac crisis.) was replaced by his secretary, Miss PRUSCHA, who is his niece.

I, before a very attentive audience, exposed the aims of the URPE, its present composition in the 6 countries, the action necessary in Austria against the FIR, etc. Miss PRUSCHA seemed convinced that it was necessary to obtain the agreement of Mr. LUDWIG, not to impose new tasks on him but to be sure that the founder of the Austrian URPE would be one of the most remarkable personalities of the Austrian Resistance.

VOLLER, however, did not cease to intrigue them. Cornered into divulging his profession he finally admitted that he was an officer charged with a special mission by the Austrian Security.

I was asked to mail copies of my Journal - this has been done - and if possible, a history of the URPE, a task that remains to be done.

We left our hosts favorably impressed and went back to Vienna where fatigue did not prevent us from enjoying a deserved respite in a Hungarian restaurant which is as well known as the Moulin Rouge.

Dr. KAMMANN arranged rendez-vous for us for the next day starting at 9 o'clock in the morning.

The Day of 1 August

VOLLER was at our hotel very early with his deputy, an adjutant who was presented to me as the native, after himself, who knew best the activities of the FIR.

The first visit was at the Socialist Party where I was received by Mrs. JOCHMANN, deputy, President of the Socialist Veterans of the Concentration Camps.

I presented to her, by way of introduction, a note of recommendation which had been given me by the German Socialist Deputy FRENZEL, as well as a letter from Mr. KUKIL, a member of the directing committee of the Socialist Party at Bonn.

Mrs. JOCHMANN told me that FRENZEL and KUKIL intervened at my request directly with the Party leadership in order to obtain the participation of the Austrian Socialists in my activity.

She then explained the official position of her Party. It accepts collaboration in the government with the Populist Party for reasons which are

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political and realistic. But it refuses any idea of collaboration on any other terrain. This, she said, is a situation which is unique and limited to Austria alone. It derives from the events of 1934 when many Socialists were arrested and imprisoned by order of Chancellor SCOUSCHNIGG many of whose followers are in the Populist Party. Hitler sent them also into the concentration camps where they found the Socialists. In the eyes of the Socialists this is nevertheless no reason to modify their attitude.

Mrs. JOCHMANN dissolved into a confusion of excuses for FRENZEL, KUKIL and the retired National President of the Young Socialist Guards. She asked, nevertheless, since the Committee of URPE comprised only individual memberships, if she might address a report on this matter to the Party leadership.

We left Mrs. JOCHMANN to visit Mr. ^{WPM5} LEINKAUF, the President of the Deportees of the Austrian Populist Party who also explained that it was impossible for his association to enter publicly into a collaboration with the Group of Socialist Persecutees. After a long speech on my part he did agree with me on the formula of individual membership in the URPE, indicating that he would join the Austrian Committee along with other personalities of his acquaintance. He also promised me that he would draw the special attention of his friend FIGL, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the danger of the FIR which it is necessary to comprehend, not merely within the limits of Austria, but on the European scale.

The discussion with Mr. LEINKAUF had caused LEINKAUF to change his mind because he had indicated to KAMMANN that it would not be possible for him to join us.

After dinner I made a courtesy visit (KAMMANN requested that I do this) to Dr. MAURER, President of the Jewish Cultural Association in Austria, to discuss notably, the International Conference of the Resistance in Israel. This seemed to arouse keen interest in MAURER although I made it clear that I wasn't responsible for naming the Austrian representative. Dr. MAURER had also interned in DACHAU as was Mr. LEINKAUF. Miss JOCHMANN is an ex-internee of Ravensbruck.

In the early evening I again met Dr. KAMMANN with whom I discussed the situation. (VOLLER had left me during the afternoon in order to get back to Salzburg.) Dr. KAMMANN informed me of his great satisfaction in the quality of the contacts I had made and for the results which the discussions seemed to promise. VOLLER made me the same compliment before he left. My mission was a great success.

There really remained nothing for KAMMANN and him to do but exploit this.

It is without a doubt important to note here that the Deputy LEINKAUF officially confirmed the statement of VOLLER that the two large parties in Austria were not, as such, interested in supporting to any degree, the ex-victims of Nazism, whose number (60,000) cannot compare from an electoral point of view with the mass of 500,000 ex-members of the Nazi party....

Besides this, VOLLER gave me the figures of the diverse organizations of ex-persecutees. The KZ-Verband (group of Dr. Steiner and FIR) has 6,000 members.

The Socialist Organization and that of the OVP each have 3,000. There remains, therefore, 45,000 unorganized deportees. The new Union of Austrian Resistants and Patriots which VOLLER recently created with his friends, is going to attempt to gain as adherents the largest number possible of those who do not belong to any organization.

But let us return to the meeting with Dr. KAMMANN who asked me to meet Dr. ZROUNEK and the engineer MEISEL, both of whom are ex-deportees of DACHAU.

The Day of 2 August

My first concern was to make my promised visit to the Belgian Ambassador. He was in conference with the French Ambassador who was about to leave Vienna. I had an interview instead with Monsieur le Conseiller BOUHA who mentioned the decision of the Embassy to aid me in the future in my activities against the FIR and to maintain contact with me.

Later I met Mr. MEISEL at the hotel who, in company with his wife, showed me the town. This was in the afternoon. (Since my arrival I really had not had a single free hour.)

He took me to GRINZING where I could admire the villa of Dr. DURMAYER who is, with STEINER, one of the founders of the KZ-VERBAND. Dr. DURMAYER had been appointed Chief of Police by the Russians and enjoys, even today, the powerful protection of the Soviet authorities, which prevents the Austrian authorities from taking sanctions although, as MEISEL said, he is responsible for the arrest, deportation and even the deaths of innumerable Austrians during the Russian occupation. It was this same DURMAYER who arranged the adhesion to the FIAPP (first form of the FIR) of the KZ-VERBAND.

The engineer MEISEL then conducted us out of Vienna for dinner to which he and his wife accepted our invitation. The evening ended in a "Heurige" not far from BADEN where we made a brief appearance before returning to Vienna in the early hours.

As for Dr. ZROUBEK (or ZROUNEN) who was not in Vienna it was not possible to get in touch with him. He is one of the collaborators of the Chancellor and has, VOLLER told me, assured his support to me.

Dr. MEISEL, for his part, promised to see FIGL who is a friend and to gain his support. He will also see the President of Parliament, he said, with whom his wife and himself enjoy the most cordial relations. (His wife is, without any doubt, one of the most beautiful Hamburgers in existence.)

The Day of 3 August

The next day, the day of our departure, Mr. and Mrs. MEISEL and their children came to say goodbye.

In the meantime I had finalized, during the course of a last telephone conversation with Dr. KAMMANN the message I shall send to the personalities I met. VOLLER also sent me a special delivery note in which he recommended the same thing.

These letters have been sent. I have sent you a copy.

It is now up to KAMMANN and VOLLER to put the Austrian Committee of URPE on its feet. All the personalities I have met are now in any case well aware of the character of the FIR and its activities.

They seem to all be decided to fight publicly or otherwise in order to definitely compromise its position in Austria.

For me this result is the most important.

I committed myself to go to Austria (Salzburg and Vienna) in December on the occasion of the meeting of the URPE which will at that time be held in MUNICH.

I hope that this time I find myself faced with less absorbing obligations. I returned indeed very tired not only because of the obvious lack of enough sleep but even more because I was always under tension handling a language during the course of all the meetings I had--and they were numerous--that I am a long way from speaking correctly.

I will keep you in touch with what follows.