1 October, 1944.

TO: Chief of Division.
FROM: Chief, Intelligence Section.

SUBJECT: OCCUPATION OF THE RHINELAND

PART I. GENERAL FACT.

1. OCCUPATION AREAS.

The week's reports show variation from area to area with confusion among the population in each case. The following four examples gave the major highlights of reaction to Allied occupation:

1. KÖLN AREA.

(a) Report of official orders by the Nazis to evacuate were disregarded by about half of the German population in the area, despite warnings American troops would burn houses and kill people.

(b) No evidence of scorching; few pistols found in houses searched; most houses flew white flags in token of complete surrender. Many people, including deserters, wore white arm bands. People seemed to be hesitant, not sullen, but watching for signs of recognition.

(First Civil Affairs Report).

2. STRASBOURG.

Allied officer, after 10 days in the area, reported that life there was "rugged". He cited such reactions to occupation as sniping by night and hot water poured on his head from a peasant's house. Main impression is of "extreme surliness and fear of us".

(FA/OSS Daily Intelligence Summary).

3. AACHEN AREA.

German-speaking officer, stationed near Aachen, during first four days of occupation, reports civilian attitudes to us:

(a) "The German people are neither hostile nor enthusiastic. They are afraid, quiet, obedient".

(b) "They soon lose their fears and begin to go about their business".

(c) "A large percentage is grateful that for them the war is over... the older men and most women care only for peace... they are anxious to please and to do as they are told".

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Refugees from the Rhineland in this area concur that majority of population there will regard us as "bearers of two gifts - peace and liberation".

Civilian hostility and sniping occur only in isolated cases. Number of bitter Nazis is small and they are lying low. Less trouble with 16 year olds than anticipated; this group beginning to show "youthful interest in newcomers".

(Eaily 5th Army C-2 Report).

4. BRIEFING NOTE

A large detachment from SS "Leni Reich" Division moved in on 12 September to co-ordinate the resistance. Upon SS orders to fight and die, if necessary, for the Fatherland, civilians went to the woods in large numbers. They remained hidden until ordered to return by the United States occupying forces, which moved in on 14 September.

(The FJ, 12 AG.)

B. BRIEFING NOTE

Survey of the week's German propaganda output shows:

1. Continued and increasing pre-occupation with two main variants of "strength through fear":

(a) refutation of belief, apparently growing, that allied occupation would be preferable to Russian - e.g. political review (15 September) attacks people who say that "United States occupation would be easier to endure - may, would even be worth striving for, compared with the Bolshevik occupation

(b) Allied victory means annihilation of Germany - expounded in such allusive terms as "the enemy's plans for the destruction of Germany" and "the brutal plan of annihilation" devised by "the Jew, Morgenthau".

(German Propaganda and the German).

2. A remarkable editorial statement in the Hamburger Begeadenblatt (15 September) introduces a note of INVITABLE TRIUMPH OR THE GERMEN GLE. which may also, in part, serve as a filler for peace terms. The military defeat of the Reich, the destruction of the party and the extermination of the leading men would not be victory over the National Socialist idea. The enemy realises that, for Versailles drove the masses into the arms of the movement. A super-Versailles would merely produce a super-Geldernhalle ... which, if they defeat us without killing us, will breed a new generation of German fanatics, millions of boys of the Horst Wessel type.

(German Propaganda and the German).

3. Much attention is devoted to returning soldiers and the "defeatist" stories they spread:
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(a) Sharp attacks against "Itoppenhengste" (Rear-echelon rumour-mongers) - used now to denote all spreaders of defeatism and demoralisation (German Propaganda and the German). In many instances, newspaper threats of drastic military action against rumour-mongers have been noted (F.I/Off Leily Intelligence Summary).

(b) Cautions to the population against "Faulhelden" (self-styled heroes), as liars who exaggerate Allied power to justify their own retreat. Some editorials suggest that they be marched directly to the nearest post or precinct so that their true stories can be ascertained.

4. 281 captured letters from German civilians (turned over to F.W.O by French Authorities) show confirmation of the following main psychological factors:

(a) Trust in the Fuehrer and relief at his escape from the Generals' Putsch;

(b) Trust in God or luck to end the war soon.

(c) Effectiveness of Allied air raids (e.g. "we are shaken by every alert").

(d) Frictions induced by total mobilisation order (e.g. "better to have a child than be forced into farm work"). Such public scepticism of the value of trench digging continues as before.

5. 15 interrogations by P & P, 12 A.G., reveal striking concurrence among Frenchmen returned from Berlin on the following appraisals of morale:

(a) The prevailing tone in Berlin is "a mechanical somnambulistic existence".

(b) The dominant apathy is perceived only by alerts: "all they care about are the radio reports on the air situation - whether or not the bombers are approaching Berlin".

(c) Perhaps 20% of all Berliners, without caring a great deal, are anti-Nazi.

6. The same sources indicate that there is no possibility of organised revolt by foreign workers. Widespread fear of the Gestapo, and universal suspicion of organisers as agents provocateurs, are the two chief repressive elements.

7. As to scorched earth, a P/W (Wehrmacht Leutnant) stated: "These people will never burn their property, and if the S.S. tries to force them, then the S.S. will have to look out for trouble".
PART II - BATTLE FRONT

1. The main interest during the past week has centered on the LINDHOFEN-NIJMEGEN Salient. The bridgehead established by 1 British Airborne Division NORTH of the NIEUWE KIJN was evacuated after the Division had suffered heavy casualty tolls. The airborne operation as a whole was, however, successful inasmuch as by tying down 2½ Pz. Divs. at AMSELIM the 1 Airborne Division prevented these Iatter from interfering with the consolidation of the position at NIJMEGEN, and enabled the main object of the operation, to secure the crossing of the river WAAL, to be achieved.

2. The general line on the WESTERN Front remained fairly stable with a number of German counter-attacks, some of which achieved temporary local success. The enemy appears to be trying to keep the front away from the Siegfried Line and the river Rhine, on the fortification of which he is working. His method is a series of violent attacks, which must suit the book of the Allied Commanders since they can much better afford loss, especially in material.

3. Resistance has ceased in Boulogne and on Cap Griz Nez while the citadel of Calais has also surrendered. Final figures of P/W are not yet available but will be substantial.

4. There are indications that, following the crossing of the River RUBICON by Allied troops, events in Italy will take the head- lines, and that actions of far-reaching importance will be fought in this theatre during the coming weeks. In the Balkans there is further evidence of German weakness and, following news of landings in ALBANIA and on the Dalmatian islands, it is reported that Greece is now almost free of German troops with the exception of ANKHES, the PHILAEUS and CONFYT.

5. On the RUSSIAN front the whole mainland of ESTONIA has now been freed and advances have been made in former RUMANIAN TRANSYLVANIA. From the BALTIc to the CARPATHIANS the line appears to stabilize along the line of the frontier of the U.S.S.R. as in the summer of 1941.
PART III - WEHRMACHT MORALE

1. GENERAL ATTITUDES

The enemy, although still confused, is displaying more determined resistance in his fighting because he now has more cohesion on the front than at any time since the Normandy breakthrough and, probably, because he is defending the Fatherland. All sources agree, however, that the majority of German Ps/W after being captured by overwhelming Allied attacks are glad to be out of the war. The reluctance to capitulate without a show of firm resistance is strongly highlighted in the attitudes displayed by the troops under General Elster, who surrendered his entire command of 19,000 men. Among this batch of Ps/W there were many who still had a strong faith in Hitler and who regretted that they had not been allowed to fight their way back to Germany. In fact, interrogators observed that their morale was higher than that of most German troops recently encountered.

Extreme desertion among the majority of senior officers is clearly evident. The main source of continued resistance, as in the past, comes from the hard core of junior officers and senior N.C.O.s, who, because of faith in Hitler, professional soldierly qualities, and the absence of higher orders to surrender, fight on without any logical reasons. A young officer candidate at the Jatz military school, who received his commission hurriedly before being thrown into the line, expressed, in typical fashion, this groundless hope of victory:

"Logically I cannot explain my hope of victory, but could all that have been in vain? It would be the greatest crime in the history of the world if the war should be continued without having something definite in reserve (Ohne dass man noch etwas in der Hand hat)."

2. FIGHTING ON THE BORDER

Geographical considerations since Stalingrad have not figured as an important factor in the German soldier’s attitude. In fact, the shortening of the lines of communication has frequently been cited by Ps/W as improving the Wehrmacht’s position. As the campaign swept across France, most Ps/W did not believe that the mere crossing of the German border by the Allied armies would be a major catastrophe. Military decisions would be caused by the destruction of armed forces, not by the mere conquest of territory. For the moment, however, the fact that the fighting is taking place on the German border has produced a strong determination to resist.

3. RESIGNATION

Reports indicate that deserters are deterred from leaving the thought that a shorter route home than through Allied prisoner of war camps can be found by simply falling back with the armies to German soil. In fact, cases have been reported of completely defeatist soldiers trying to reach Germany by walking, rather than giving themselves up into captivity.

Other instances of desertion have also been encountered. Small groups of German soldiers are convinced by Poles, serving in the Wehrmacht, to desert or to offer only token resistance. Isolated reports tell of the great lengths to which Poles have gone in order to effect successful desertion or surrender.
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4. ALLIED PROPAGANDA

Most recent surveys of coverage of Wehrmacht soldiers by Allied leaflets have been limited to small groups of P.O.W.s under one hundred, and the results reflect only localised conditions from which no generalisations can be drawn. In no cases, however, did the percentage of those who had seen our leaflets fall below one-third of the prisoners interrogated. The number of those who have heard the Allied radio is usually slightly lower.

A most amazing statement on the value of Allied leaflets was given by a 30-year-old Catholic lieutenant who is a strong opponent of Nazism:

"How is the moment to flood the troops with leaflets. You have no idea of the effect sober and objective leaflets have on retreating troops. They all find themselves in a last moment of tension; it is the last outcry before death. You should use catch-phrases; I know they sound a bit naive under usual circumstances, but just now they have the greatest possible effect. They strongly affect the simple soldier as well as the intelligent person."

5. Waffen-SS vs. LEISTUNG S.S.

As in previous weeks, there is no concrete evidence to indicate that hatred of the Leibstandarte by Wehrmacht soldiers interferes with fighting performance.

Field interrogations speak of anti-Waffen-SS feeling shown by Wehrmacht soldiers. In a few isolated cases P.O.W.s tell of clashes between Leibstandarte and Wehrmacht troops. Stories of preferential treatment for Waffen-SS units during periods of withdrawal persist. Anti-Nazi prisoners express hatred towards the Waffen SS because of their role in attempting to encourage civilian resistance to the approaching Allied armies.

6. STRENGTH THROUGH FEAR.

A new facet on the Russian phobia is reported by a P.O.W. who maintains that one of the chief reasons for fear of Russia is to be found in the fact that the Germans are constantly asking themselves what the Russians have done to the millions of German P.O.W.s whom they have captured. Now, if any, Germans, he reports, have ever written home from captivity in Russia.
I. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Government Actions

The official measures of nationalisation, applicable in particular to the coal mining industry of the north, appear to have been accepted as inevitable by such elements in the Paris press as do not positively welcome them, and L'Aube goes so far as to declare that "This is the first time since the nation came into existence that a French Government has dared to make a deliberate and unequivocal frontal attack upon the terrible power of money". On the other hand, the Government appears to turn a deaf ear to all appeals for the repatriation of the Communist leader Thorez and is incurring unpopularity by an attempt to prevent the F.F.I. from exercising the right of court-martial. Some observers describe the Government as "a trifle soft" (un peu mou), but perhaps a fairer view is that of those bourgeois elements in the more conservative provinces which regard it as a positive triumph that there has been no proletarian rising in Paris.

Treatment of Collaborationists

It is widely felt that proceedings against collaborationists are so dilatory that criminals stand a good chance of establishing an alibi: there are even said to be members of the police who have got their cases cleared; and though moderate citizens may think that procrastination is a lesser evil than summary arrests, they recognise that the patriotic deportees, when they return home, will certainly demand stronger action. An episode at Henneux, which may have parallels elsewhere, shows the F.F.I. as being supported by public opinion when they took it upon themselves to arrest nine police officials and refused to release them until the regional Commandant promised to purge the organisation within 48 hours. In Paris, the situation is difficult as regards collaborationist clergy, sheltering under the powerful aegis of the Archbishop, when the de Gaullois have not yet touched.

F.F.I. and F.T.I.

On the whole, the F.F.I. appears to be drawing together and strengthening its position as a force in French political life, though it is dangerous to generalise on this subject. Thus reports show that in many combat areas the F.F.I. is the effective basis of civil authority, and in most districts the state of discipline and relations with the civil population depend mainly upon the quality of the local commanding officer. But where attempts are made to superimpose the authority of a regular army officer who has played no part in Resistance, the result is greatly to the detriment of military order and good feeling. Middle class civilians, in particular, do not always realise that the impression of amateurishness or worse, which the shortage of arms and uniforms tends to convey, may not be warranted by the facts: so the future of the F.F.I. is lightly dismissed by them as "a Youth problem". A more realistic approach is that found among members of the organisation, who are said to distinguish carefully between "the old resistance" and recent recruits.
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The F.T.P., though officially merged in the F.P.I., has not wholly lost its separate identity. Worthy Conservatives relate with horror that, when General de Gaulle visited Toulouse and Bordeaux, members of the former organization preceded his car with red ties and clenched fists. It is, indeed, clear that the resistance movement in the south has a more radical complexion. But in Paris, too, it has been said that the F.P.I. is still really separate from the F.P.I.; it is manufacturing arms, and, though not on the increase, is potentially a formidable fighting force under youthful colonels with "anarchist views". The movement to incorporate F.P.I. officers in the regular army tends to take away the moderate leaders, very often ex-reguliers, from their men, which may well enhance the influence of F.T.P. commanders who remain.

Future Prospects

There is still a consensus of opinion that the political evolution of France will be towards the left. The elements which doubt this seem to consist mainly of business entrepreneurs who hope for a reaction towards a Conservatism that will make no effective concession to labour. Otherwise, the only factor which, according to current calculations, may swing the nation towards the right is the women's vote. The clergy exclaiming the belief that "Les femmes sont plus sages" - or hoping to make them so. The peasants, who vote but do not talk, are commonly expected to block the path to actual Communism, but even in the less industrial provinces it seems to be mainly accepted that France will adopt a social policy of a revolutionary character, though the word revolutionary here connotes not violent change, but a breach with French tradition, and developments on the lines of English social policy. In the sphere of party politics, the Communists are still the most prominent and are considered to be making skilful use of the Resistance movements for their own purposes. No means exists of estimating their real strength, which some Frenchmen may be disposed to exaggerate in order to keep Allied forces in their country as a bulwark of order: but there is a marked disposition to treat French Communism as a force which cannot be suppressed and to suppose that it may take a robustly national form, may prove to be an instrument of strong government, and may even be reconcilable with a spiritual form of religion.

II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The excellence of the treatment which the American forces are said to mete out to German prisoners is again the subject of unfriendly comment, this time in the region of Finistere, where the complaint is made that prisoners receive luxuries to which good French citizens have no access, and the good French citizens profess a complete lack of interest in the Geneva Convention. In addition, it is claimed there that at least one detachment of German soldiers made a conditional surrender shortly after D-Day, promising that they would undertake no further hostile acts against the local French population if they were left alone until they could be taken prisoners by the Americans; broke their word and committed numerous savage atrocities; and were eventually taken over by the American forces who firmly restrained the F.P.I. Captain from killing the German Commander. Other considerations apart, Frenchmen of this type are completely blind to the importance of encouraging surrenders: their comment on Allied policy in this respect is, "They have not suffered".

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III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POSITION

Food, etc.

In Paris all reports agree that, though conditions of life remain stringent, morale is excellent, the public considering that transport is the only serious difficulty. The provision of milk for children, though steadily improving, continues to be deficient, and with the approach of winter the high price of clothes becomes a very serious matter. Most parts of the provinces are better off for food than the capital; in some instances the peasants are believed to be hoarding foodstuffs with a view to their transportation at a later date to more distant and more profitable markets than are available at present. But parts of the provinces possibly suffer even more acutely than Paris (where a paper-burning heater is now on sale) from the shortage of coal, electric power and gas. There is an interesting report from the local authorities threatening that there will be a popular demonstration against the Government of de Gaulle as they sabotaged that of the Front Populaire.

Employment

Many Paris factories are unable to operate for lack of coal and power, though the displaced workers are said to be finding employment on the repair of railways, roads, etc. But the employment position in Paris is likely to deteriorate if factories are unable to reopen by the winter. A further employment problem, which first suggested itself at Cherbourg, now reappears at a provincial centre further west, where we are told that there is a floating population which has lost the habit of work because the Germans paid so much and exacted so little.

Distribution:

General McClure
Col. Kehm
Ir. Jackson (A.I.S.)
Ir. Crossman
Ir. Coshner
Capt. de Herre
Intelligence (3)
Leaflets
Radio
P.M.O. (Forward)

P & FW, 6 A.G. (6)
P & FW, 12 A.G. (6)
P & FW, 21 A.G. (6)
Ir. Samuel Reber, S.H.A.E.F.,
American Political Officer
Ir. Charles Peake, S.H.A.E.F.,
British Political Officer
S.H.A.E.F. (Forward), G-2,
" G-3
" G-5
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