

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Report 4919 and Master File.

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Arosa, 1946-01-24

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Arosa, January 24th, 1946

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Even before the war, the Germans, when discussing Switzerland, used to say: "That one we'll take with a vacuum cleaner!"

Today the Swiss are both shocked and gratified by the account of their government which reveals for the first time the extent of Nazi and fifth column activities in Switzerland. On 143 printed pages "Report Number 4919" pictures the machinations that threatened the freedom and the very existence of the small alpine republic. Especially in 1940 Hitler's New Europe attracted an ever increasing number of natives. Two hundred of them - a prominent and influential group - went as far as to demand in a signed application to the government what amounted to the abolition of the country's free press and the "coordination" of Swiss justice to the legal standards of the Third Reich. Whilst this honorable group acted allegedly in the interest of Swiss neutrality and independence, others admitted that all they wanted was the "return" of their nation into the arms of the fatherland. In Ernst Leonhardt Switzerland found her quisling number one, the equivalent of Austria's Seyss-Inquart and Hollands Mussert. Though the local "Fuehrer" moved to Germany early in the war, he continued to direct his "movement" from his Nazi headquarters. If Leonhardt has been apprehended, he has not thus far been identified by any of the occupying powers. His deputy, however, the traitor Franz Burri, has recently been arrested in Austria. He is held for questioning by the Americans; wanted by the Austrian State Police; and claimed by his own government.

The German head on Swiss soil of the Nazi conspiracy against the country was Herr Doctor Koecher, Hitler's last Minister to Berne.

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Captured in the American Zone, the shady "diplomat" hanged himself following an interrogation by C.I.C. (Counter Intelligence Corps). His suicide was non-political. While the Americans were ~~about~~ to release their prisoner, the German police were ready to re-~~arrest~~ arrest him for the alleged embezzlement of 220 000 Mark\$.

Many of the facts revealed in "Report Number 4919" have their repercussions even now, when the purge of undesirable elements has surpassed its peak. For example: Though mail is permitted to circulate freely between here and Austria, picture postcards remain "verboten". This quaint restriction has to do with the ingenious way in which Nazi agents on Swiss territory kept in touch with their masters in Germany. Their communications were addressed to a catholic publishing house on Stuttgart whose affiliations in Switzerland were generally known. Letters exchanged between the firm and its Swiss contacts were rarely, if ever, opened by the Swiss censors. Nor was the arrangement of stamps on many of these envelopes thought significant. All Nazi envelopes bore five three-centimes stamps, one of which - the center piece - was applied upside down. While on the Swiss side these letters passed unnoticed, they were segregated in Germany and properly re-addressed by initiated postal officials. Since picture postcard might lend themselves to similar schemes (pictures of certain flowers mailed in a certain sequence, might serve to hide a certain meaning, etc.), this most innocuous type of correspondence has been barred.

Appreciative, though they are of their government's report, the Swiss papers note that names are scarce in this frank account. The sign application of the prominent 200 has finally been published; but for the rest neither the real strength, nor the exact composition of the Swiss Nazi movement have been made known. Even the conservative "Neue Zuercher Zeitung", organ of industry and finance, regrets that "the authors of this important document have been so thrifty in their ^{employment} ~~use~~ of names. Would it not be of use to our public life", asks the paper, "if the complete list of foreign

Fifth columnists ~~had been published on this occasion~~ as well as of....
our own 'Fuehrer' circles had been published on this occasion?"

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~~end, to open to the public the files found in the German legation
and to acquaint our nation with the movement which grew so rapidly in
1940, because, in the mild words of the government report, it was strongly
re-enforced by people who, on account of the war situation, advocated
that Switzerland adapt ^{new} herself to the ~~new~~ Europe...."~~

In its criticism of report number 4919 the "N. Z.Z." is less outspoken than "Die Nation" which liberal leftist weekly insists that not only the Swiss Nazi movement, but also its financial backers should have been exposed. "It would", states "Die Nation", "be exceedingly interesting to learn very much and in very great detail about the financial background..., particularly where the Swiss "right", rather than foreigners are concerned."

The question of names is not a Swiss question only. The discovery at Munich-Freimann of the Nazi Master File confronts the Americans in particular and the Allies in general with a similar problem. The 40 tons record lists the names and case histories of all Nazi party members and would-be members on earth. Covered in triplicate, the eight and a half million members, as well as the millions of dead, ~~he~~ expelled and rejected Nazis are identified in this greatest documentary find of the war. Though the Master File fell into American hands last June, it was not before the middle of September that its significance was grasped. For months the voluminous treasure remained unguarded in the lonely paper mill where it had been found. Finally an Oregon police detective, Captain, "big Bill" Browne, recognized the value of these vast mounds of paper. Upon his initiative the records were moved to a Military Government building and Usfet was notified of their existence. Despite the interest displayed

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by the highest authorities (both General Eisenhower and General Clay characterized the files as of the highest importance and directed that they be put into usable order ~~as~~ at the earliest possible moment), little if any progress has been made since. According to a detailed plan, worked out and presented to Usfet by the Upper Bavarian Military Government Detachment at Munich, the task of cataloguing the Master File could have been solved within half a year. The plan which provided for the use of machine records and the employment of German personnel under American supervision, was approved in principle, but went never into effect. Some time ago the File, its condition as chaotic as ever, was moved to Berlin. Now, persons unfamiliar with its complexities will have to start anew where the Munich detachment started last September. Moreover, the latter's carefully prepared scheme seems to have been abandoned. A United Press report from Berlin quotes Colonel Helm of the Document Center as saying that unless "some machine records" could be made available the sorting job would take five years. The Munich plan listed the exact number of machine records needed to finish the job within six months and asserted that the ~~machines~~ ^{TOOLS} could be made available.

If the Swiss hope presently to receive from the Allies what their own government failed to give them: the complete list of all Swiss party members and applicants, they are in for a disappointment. Indications are that the Master File - once it has been put into order - may be utilized by any interested government. This does not mean that all or any names will be ~~given~~ ^{HANDED} to the public. Even so the Swiss remain confident. One publisher here has ^{ADVANCED} advanced the suggestion that the File be published in book form. Security ~~regulations~~ ^{FEELS I HARDLY}, he ~~maintains~~ ^{TO BE PROTECTED}, ~~unless~~ ^{COMES INTO THE PICTURE, UNLESS} ~~present~~ ^{COUNTLESS} are invalid, where nothing but the Nazis' own security is at stake. By subjecting to public contempt ~~millions~~ of Hitlerites who might otherwise go unpunished, the world embracing lexicon would serve the cause of

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Democracy. "Besides", adds the Swiss, "the book would be a bestseller.
In fact, I should like to publish it myself."

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