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Threat to Queen's life [reference in History of ASIO Volume 1]

MISC PAPERS

[2704]

THREAT TO
QUEEN'S LIFE

[REFERENCE IN
HISTORY OF ASIO
VOLUME 1]

[2704]

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ANONYMOUS LETTER CONTAINING THREAT OF
ASSASSINATION TO HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH II.

- REPORT OF INVESTIGATION 6TH - 13TH FEBRUARY, 1953. -

1. THE LETTER:

- (i) The letter was written on an Australia air-letter form.
- (ii) It was post-marked : Melbourne, 29 JAN 54.
- (iii) It was addressed to:

The
Truth Paper
Adelaide,
S.A..
- (iv) It was received by the South Australian Police from "Truth and Sportsman Ltd." ADELAIDE on Monday, 1st February, 1954.
- (v) The letter purports to have been written by a South Australian Railways Special Project German worker, on the completion of his contract and departure from the service.
- (vi) The letter abuses the South Australian Railways Department.
- (vii) The letter contains an oblique reference threatening the life of Her Majesty, The Queen.
- (viii) The letter was composed by some person having intimate knowledge of South Australian Railways working practice, such as would be best known to a South Australian Railways Fireman or Cleaner.
- (ix) The letter may have been written by a German.
- (x) The writer may have disguised his hand.

2. INVESTIGATION:

- (i) The South Australian Police Department has concentrated its enquiries on a check of the handwriting in the letter against available specimens of the handwriting of South Australian Railways Special Project Workers. This check is continuing with the assistance of South Australian Railways.

(Instigated and conducted by South Australian Police.)
- (ii) All cases are being followed up where information has been received from the public denouncing Germans who have made disloyal utterances.

(Joint Police and A.S.I.O..)
- (iii) A check has been made overseas and a list produced showing all Germans brought out by South Australian railways who have a minor Nazi Party record.

(Furnished by A.S.I.O. to Police.)
- (iv) The South Australian Police Department is now investigating all cases of Germans who have come to notice in the course of suspected Neo-Nazi activities, notoriously anti-British

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Germans, and South Australian Railways German Project workers who have demonstrated grievances and complaints to the South Australian Railways.

(Instigated by A.S.I.O., conducted by Police.)

- (v) A comprehensive survey is being prepared by South Australian Railways, furnishing personal and employment details and the last known whereabouts of all German Project workers.
(Instigated by Police.)
- (vi) Surveys have also been prepared by South Australian Railways showing:
- a. all employees who would have been on leave on 29th January, 1954.
 - b. all German Project workers who have been released from contract.
 - c. all German Project workers who have left their service since 1st November, 1953.
(Instigated by A.S.I.O..)
- (vii) Efforts are continuing to be made to ascertain all former South Australian Railways German Project workers who have moved to Victoria. All cases known to Department of Immigration, Taxation Department and the South Australian Railways have been ascertained, in addition to those held in Police and A.S.I.O. records.
(Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O..)
- (viii) Similar lists have been prepared, from the reference to the same quarters, of South Australian Railways German Project workers who have gone overseas and enquiries are continuing with shipping lines and consular representatives in Victoria and South Australia.
(Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O.)
- (ix) South Australian Police are also checking on permits issued to Germans to hold fire-arms.
(Instigated by A.S.I.O., conducted by Police.)
- (x) Miscellaneous suspects are being interrogated.
(Joint A.S.I.O. and Police.)
- (xi) Special efforts are being made to encourage the elicitation of information from:
- a. S.A.R. German Project Workers.
 - b. S.A.R. Locomotive and Firemen Staff.
 - c. German organisations and community.
(b.) Instigated by Police,
(c.) Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O.
Otherwise joint Police and A.S.I.O..)
- (xii) Special investigations are being made in Communist Party of Australia circles likely to have inspired or to have contributed specialist skills and knowledge, if the letter should have been engineered by the communists for disruption purposes relative to the Royal Tour.
(Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O..)

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- (xiii) Lists have been prepared of South Australian Railways German Project workers with criminal and mental records.
(Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O.)
- (xiv) All South Australian Railways German Project workers who have proved troublesome to South Australian Railways and are known to have moved to Victoria, have been listed.
(Instigated and conducted by A.S.I.O.)

3. PROBABILITIES UNDERGOING CURRENT INVESTIGATION:

The letter may have originated from:

- (i) A former South Australian Railways German Project worker now resident in Victoria.
- (ii) A former South Australian Railways German Project worker now overseas.
- (iii) A former South Australian Railways German Project worker now resident in South Australia.
- (iv) An organisation or number of Germans acting in collusion.
- (v) A person or group of persons conspiring to create disruption in connection with the Royal Tour and/or to discredit the German community in Australia, and/or to promote journalistic sensationalism, from political, racial or other subversive motives.

4. PROGRESS MADE TO PROVE OR ELIMINATE THE ABOVE PROBABILITIES:

- (i) to (iv): It has been established that:
 - a. A total of 1,589 Germans have been brought out to Australia under the South Australian Railways Special Project Workers Scheme.
 - b. Sixty-two (62) South Australian Railways German Project workers have so far been found to have moved to Victoria.
 - c. Twenty (20) former South Australian Railways German Project workers have so far been found to have gone overseas.
 - d. Twenty-four (24) South Australian Railways German Project workers have been found to have minor N.S.D.A.P. records, and some evidence has been gathered of Neo-Nazi activities.
 - e. Two hundred and three (203) South Australian Railways employees could have been on leave in Melbourne on 29th January, 1954.
 - f. Two hundred and sixty (260) South Australian Railways German Project workers have been released from contract.
 - g. Eighty-four (84) South Australian Railways German Project workers are known to have left South Australian Railways since 1st November, 1953.
 - h. Four hundred and fourteen (414) South Australian Railways German Project workers have been in Australia for two years and their personal and employment details have been obtained.
 - i. Three hundred and ninety-three (393) South Australian Railways employees (nearly all of whom were German Project workers) had been checked for handwriting by mid-day on 12th February, 1954.

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- (v) a. On 13th January, 1954, the communist press predicted that "MENZIES Security Police" would try to attribute some 'incident' to the Communist Party in connection with the Royal Tour, as a pre-electoral campaign move.
- b. The Assistant Editor of "Truth" Melbourne, who is also the "Truth" journalist accredited to the Royal Tour has been a communist party member of long standing. He was also an executive member of the communist frontal organisation formed in 1951 to protest against German migration to Australia.

The Melbourne office of "Truth and Sportsman Ltd." over-ruled the recommendation of its Adelaide office in publishing the letter.

(NOTE: On 12th September, 1953, "Truth" published an article concerning "Nazi Undercover Active in Australia. Allegations contained in the article were investigated by South Australia Police Department but no foundation for them was discovered.)

- c. A youth cleaner employed by South Australian Railways was formerly Secretary of the Adelaide University Branch of the Communist Party of Australia. Although he had been a medical student he is known to have studied a foreign language (Russian). It is not known whether he has also studied German.

He is known to have shown considerable signs of strain on 29th January, 1954, and is also thought to have been in touch, about the same time, with an Adelaide Communist lawyer, who is amongst the prominent "illegal apparatus" suspects in South Australia.

(NOTE: The letter was post-marked: 29 JAN 54.)

He resigned from South Australian Railways on 6th February, 1954. The day after the letter was published in Adelaide.

It is hoped to have this suspect interrogated by South Australian Police.

- d. A list of twenty-three (23) known communists who have been employed during recent years has been submitted to South Australian Railways and also for handwriting check, for further examination.

N.B. (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia has issued a directive which states that under no circumstances should Party members do or say anything which would give the security men an opportunity to place them in a difficult position.)

5. PROPOSAL:

- a. I consider that all relevant avenues of enquiry in South Australia are now proceeding. The Regional Director has desk and field staff currently engaged on this investigation. South Australia Police Department was allocating additional personnel and making more intensive use of its Security Branch as from Friday, 12th February, 1954.
- b. I propose to survey the material relating to Victorian enquiries and to institute further investigation in Victoria.

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5.

- c. I recommend that on completion of my examination of Victorian aspects, a review be made as to whether I can better direct further enquiries from Melbourne or Adelaide.

W.S. Roper
(W.S. ROPER.)

15 February, 1954.