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Make separate report for each main file.)

Date 13 March

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BRIEF—(Here enter careful summary of report, containing substance succinctly stated; include important facts, names, places, dates, etc.)

On the basis of information received that crew members of the Swiss S.S. ST GOTTLAND were believed to be attempting to smuggle platinum from Colombia, strict controls on movements of crew members, a thorough search of the vessel and an interrogation of crew members was undertaken when the vessel arrived in Havana. Constant surveillance maintained while in Havana and Cardenas. Results were negative. Unusual request of master to load offshore cited with attendant possibilities.

(A-1) Reference (a) advised that three members of the crew of the Swiss S.S. ST GOTTLAND, Michel KOLMOGOROFF, Purser, Karl TRIKES, Chief Stoker, and Walter SANDMEIER, Third Engineer, were suspected of purchasing platinum while the vessel was in the port of Barranquilla, Colombia. The Master also was stated as having personally contacted persons involved in the platinum traffic there.

In addition to reference (a) a complete report on the activities of crew members of the ST. GOTTLAND while in the port of Barranquilla was received by the Office of the Legal Attache. One copy of this report is attached herewith for the background information it contains.

The S.S. ST GOTTLAND arrived in Habana, Cuba, on 9 February 1944 at 1030 noon and departed at 1900 noon on 10 February 1944 for Cardenas, Cuba. During the stay in Habana, agents of the Cuban National Police, the Cuban Customs, Immigration, and Maritime Police, were assigned to the vigilance of the ship. Only authorized persons were permitted aboard. Records were maintained of the individuals who visited the ship, and they were searched upon going aboard and upon leaving the ship. All crew members were interviewed briefly; a record was made of their departure from and return to the ship, and the majority of the crew members who went ashore at Habana were accompanied by Special Agents of the Cuban National Police. A launch was maintained on the seaward side of the ship by Cuban Police in order to prevent an approach to the ST GOTTLAND by water.

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A spot check was made of both the outgoing and incoming cargo with negative results. All stevedores who assisted in the loading and unloading of the ship were searched by agents of the Cuban National Police on going aboard and when leaving the ship.

Through the Cuban National Police and the Cuban Customs an exhaustive search of the entire ship for contraband was undertaken with negative results.

ALEXANDER SALTNIKOFF -- (A-2) This individual, the Master of the ST GOTTHARD, stated that he is Russian-born but without nationality. He was accompanied while ashore at all times. The accompanying agent advised that SALTNIKOFF made only the usual contacts with the ship's agents, the Consulates of Switzerland and Great Britain, and the American Embassy. The accompanying agent also stated that SALTNIKOFF spoke scornfully and criticized the democratic regimes "making reference always to the French system, which in his opinion is the best he knows"; and at no time did he express any opinion concerning the totalitarian governments.

(F-0) The Captain stated that during last December, while the ship was docked at Marseilles, France, the submarine base was bombed by American planes with such accuracy that all the shops were destroyed, but that neither the port nor the civilian population suffered any damage. He indicated that four German planes were shot down in this action. He indicated that in the Italian port of Genoa, the anti-aerial defenses were very deficient and were no obstacle for attacking planes. He advised that at first at Marseilles, France, the German authorities only permitted him to disembark. However, the German authorities were advised that various officials of the S.S. ST GOTTHARD had families in Marseilles, France. An investigation was made, and a short time thereafter the White Russian crew members were permitted ashore without any difficulties. In Portugal, on the contrary, all crew members except the White Russians were permitted ashore.

The Captain expressed no interest in or knowledge of the cargo, the ship's capacity, supplies or documents, and indicated that he was a technician whose sole duty was to navigate the ship. He knew nothing about the relation between the tonnage put on board and the water which the ship would draw. He was not concerned with the ship's supplies and he was noted to sign any and all documents in whatever language they were written without reading them or having them translated.

WALTER SANDMEIER -- (A-2) SANDMEIER, the Third Engineer, also known as Walter SANDMEIER DES FRIEDRIEG, was accompanied at all times during the period when the ST GOTTHARD was in port at Havana. He made no contacts of any interest and in his conversations with the accompanying agent indicated that he hoped for an early Allied victory. He was born in Seengen, Aargau, German Switzerland, on 10 January, 1902, and gave his nationality as Swiss. However, he carried no Swiss passport nor did he have seaman's papers.

(F-0) This officer stated that Switzerland had maintained a true and loyal neutrality, and was a democratic country, but that it had a good military system and was organized and prepared to defend itself. Notwithstanding all that, he indicated that Hitler had tried to infiltrate totalitarian ideas throughout Switzerland stressing the German origin of the Swiss people, but he had failed in that attempt. He stated that the French people were submitting to German brute strength, but that they were organizing themselves for the Allied invasion. He indicated that conditions in Marseilles were terrible, and that when they arrived at that port the German

soldiers in charge of the port came on board begging for coffee, cigarettes and food. We expressed the hope that soon all of the officials of this ship would be Swiss, but that they have had to utilize the knowledge of these Russian officials who were formerly officials of the Imperial Russian marine under the czar.

KARL MILES -- (A-2) Subject went ashore with Ernest STOCKLI, the radio operator, both were accompanied by a Cuban police agent and made no contacts of interest. He was born in Switzerland, 14 April, 1902, is a Swiss citizen, and carries Passport No. 78692/411. MILES stated that he had spent 13 years in the employ of a Canadian hotel and that he had lived in Toronto and Halifax.

MICHEL KOLMOGOROFF - (A-2) This individual was born 26 June, 1901, in Blagovestchek, Russia. He stated that he had been sailing for 27 years, usually on British ships. He manifested great hatred for Jews and with regard to Russians said there was no difference between the Red and White Russians. Papers found in the search of his cabin showed that he had been a Russian refugee for many years. He professed Allied sympathy and a hope that the Allies would win in the near future. He went ashore in company with Georges ALEXANDROFF and Pierre VORONKOFF, and the three were accompanied by a Cuban police agent. He made no contacts of interest, but offered the police agent money to permit him to stay out all night with a girl friend. ALEXANDROFF made a similar proposition to the police agent.

None of the other crew members or officers made contacts of interest, nor did searches of their persons uncover any subversive or contraband material.

(F-0) KOLMOGOROFF advised that in Marseilles, France, he was not permitted ashore by the authorities, but from the ship he witnessed bombardment by the RAF and in his opinion the planes were not able to destroy their objective. From the conversation with KOLMOGOROFF, the agent assumed that ALEXANDROFF was not well regarded by the Russians due to his relations with the French. Both expressed surprise that being Russians and sympathizers of the Allies, they were accompanied by police agents, and while some of the Swiss crew members of German origin were permitted to go ashore unaccompanied. He stated that life in France was very difficult, and there was a scarcity of everything, but that he hoped the Allies would win in a short time. He stated that many French were working in Germany, but they were carried to Germany at the point of a rifle. According to KOLMOGOROFF in Switzerland there is much sympathy for Germany, but Switzerland had maintained a strictly neutral position in this war. He said that Switzerland sold products to Germany, but when questioned further regarding this he said that since he was a sailor and was always outside the country, he did not know much about the situation.

GEORGES ALEXANDROFF, Servant, (F-0) This individual indicated that he had formerly worked on the French ship "EL CAMAR" which was used as a French transport to North Africa, but that the ship had been sunk, although later it had been raised and put back into service by the Germans. This ship formerly traveled from France to Algiers. He described a bombing of Marseilles by the RAF in December and according to him the submarine base was not damaged, owing to the anti-aerial defense of the Germans.



The following items of possible interest were secured by Cuban police agents in conversations with three crew members of the ST GOTTFRIED:

DIMITRY EVSEYEV, First Engineer (F-O) This man indicated that in the parts of Europe in which he had traveled there was great sympathy for the Allied countries.

KARL MILES, Fireman (F-O) This man said that all the Russians were anti-democratic and indicated that in Marseilles, no crew members were permitted to disembark except the Russians who were well received by the German authorities.

EUSEBIO FORTUÑO, Seaman (F-O) This man said that in December 1943, he was in Marseilles, France, when the Allies bombed this city, and he indicated that two German planes went up to intercept the Allied planes, but they were shot down immediately. He stated that the Allies bombed military objectives and did not do like the Germans, who bombed the civilian population.

(A-1) While the vessel was in Havana, the shipping agents requested of the Gulf Sea Frontier Branch Shipping Control Office, in behalf of the Master, permission for the ST GOTTFRIED to load two miles outside the harbor entrance at Cardenas, Cuba. The vessel was proceeding to Cardenas to take on, as it was understood then, only 700 tons of sugar, and was light at the time. Inasmuch as the depth in the harbor would have been sufficient, the request was viewed with suspicion and refused. This unusual request, together with the possibility of platinum being aboard the vessel, and the reported presence of an enemy submarine in north Cuban waters, made it appear that an effort might be made to transfer the platinum. These facts were reported in reference (c) and at the same time surveillance to seaward was advised.

The ST GOTTFRIED then moved out of Havana on the 10th of February and arrived at Cardenas at 1145 hours on 11 February 1944. It tied up to the pier, and loaded 85,000 bags of sugar. When nearing completion of the loading, permission was again requested to move out into the outer harbor, this time a distance of 17 miles, in order to load 6,000 additional bags of sugar. This request could not be refused, and the vessel moved out on 12 February. While anchored in the outer Bay, it was subject to surveillance by three submarine chasers of the Cuban Navy.

While a personal surveillance of all crew members going ashore could not be undertaken in Cardenas because of shortage of personnel, three special agents of the Cuban police were sent to Cardenas to organize the control, and all crew members were searched upon departing and returning to the ship. Strict control and supervision was maintained concerning the few authorized visitors to the vessel. The Master was always accompanied except when he returned to Habana to get a clearance from the British. Supplies taken aboard were carefully checked and items appearing to be in excess were eliminated.

COMMENT: The control of the ship, its crew members, cargo and supplies while in Habana represents the most complete coverage accorded to a neutral vessel, exceeding even in scope the attentions given to Spanish vessels.

While the results of the searches and surveillances produced no additional indications of subversive activities, the severity of the control undoubtedly forestalled any contemplated unauthorized activities during the sojourn of the ST. GOTTFRIED in Cuban ports.