

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO: Ernest Cuneo

DATE: October 24, 1942

FROM: David Bruce

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SUBJECT:

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

A Mr. Harold Weisburg had left, last autumn or winter, certain papers with Captain James Roosevelt that apparently were loaned by him to Captain Roosevelt and certain of them had been returned to him prior to Captain Roosevelt's departure for the Pacific.

On October 12, 1942, Mr. Weisburg asked for the return of the rest of his papers. They were located in the office of Mr. Wallace B. Phillips, formerly an employee of the OSS in the Apex Building--Mr. Phillips at the time being in London--and were returned to Mr. Weisburg.

As far as I can ascertain, no one now in this Branch has ever met Mr. Weisburg, had any dealings with him, had access to his papers or knows what they contain.

David Bruce

Declassified by 606627  
date 8 October 1975

This David Bruce to Ernest Cuneo memo of October 24, 1942, while seemingly innocent, says something about what has always been wrong with our intelligence systems.

There was no earthly or unearthly reason to classify that memo. And what those men knew nothing about was a major speech by their President.

As the most casual examination of those papers should have indicated. And as the receipt for it they had prepared ~~themselves~~.

The receipt itself was classified Secret, then a much high degree of classification than it was later <sup>after</sup> ~~with~~ other and higher degrees of classification added. There is what was regarded as requiring that classification, that they were (re)turning "all of the material pertaining to Nazi propaganda in Chile and details substantiating that expose as it appeared in Click magazine." Or, what was already public in any event!

Even a separate memo on the return to me of those records is classified Secret!

A related and also classified memo refers to Sam Chavkin as the reporter Click had in Chile and that having returned he had said he would give the OSS what he had learned about "Axis agents' activities in Latin America...." ~~later~~.

The first of these memos reported that I had "loaned... Captain Roosevelt" those papers and "certain of them had been returned to" me. It does not say why Jimmy Roosevelt got them or what he did with them. Which is to say why I took them to him when he was in a forerunner of the OSS.

They were for his father, FDR, and FDR, as I'd hoped, used them. In one of his more important "fireside chats," his radio addresses to the nation were called, just before Pearl Harbor or just after it.

Perhaps what was ~~not~~ used in that speech is accurately described as "Axis propaganda" but what was used is hardly that. And these OSS officials knew nothing at all about that.

What FDR used is the plans for a Nazi putsch in Santiago, Chile's capital city.

Chavkin was afraid that anything he put in the mails would be intercepted by those involved in that planned putsch because the Spanish Hitlerites of the Falange were in control of Chile's post office. He got that word to Click and Click then asked me to see if I could arrange to get what he had out safely. On thinking about it I spoke first to Larry Duggan, undersecretary of state for Latin American, who I knew socially, and to George McNulty, assistant attorney general in charge of the criminal division of the Department of Justice. I knew McNulty because he'd worked for the same Senate committee. I told him that while it was information the magazine intended to use in a story I believed that the FBI should have it first. I had arranged with Duggan for our embassy, pouch <sup>to</sup> bring what Chavkin had, for State to have the use of it first, and then for it to go to Justice before I got it for the magazine. It was not only wartime but the nazis of all kinds were a danger or a potential danger, especially if they took a Latin American country over.

The only recollection I believe is now clear of the data I thus made available to



both out intelligence services and our President, who did use it in that speech, is of plans for taking communications over. There was a map of <sup>the</sup> transportation system that was to be taken over in that major city.

This is to say that these intelligence officials less than a year after their President's major speech on it were entirely unaware of the fact that it was the information he'd used in that speech is what they were talking about. That would seem to indicate that at the time of that speech those in the intelligence agency were not aware that they had the information on which he drew or had so indicated on what remained of it in their possession.

What did concern them, and I've copied only parts from what I later got from the CIA, is the kind of person it was who had dug all this up.

They had information on Chavkin, do not reflect it in these memos, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ the indications are that with the USSR our allies in that great war they may have suspected him of being too liberal for them, if not pro-USSR.

There is no indication in these records that they ever got or had any interest in what Chavkin had that had not been sent to me by the diplomatic pouch and I gave the government, *and the President,*

The latest of these memos is dated only two month before I was a soldier. I have no recollection of what I did with what was returned to me.

How little I was concerned about the need for any "security" is reflected by another of those memos. I then lived at 313 H St., NW. I'd been told that a messenger would come with that material. They refer to him as their "courier." I had to be away. So I gave my landlord the key to my apartment and asked him to allow the messenger in to leave what he had for me. Which is what happened. And with all that concern for "security," their courier did not even get Charlie Weinstein the sign the receipt when he let them into the apartment to leave the package for me.

HW 7/2/94

But these records do reflect the fact that in 1941, before Pearl Harbor, I did give the President what he did use in a fireside chat.

What I forgot in writing this memo in haste is that I got no record of any kind that in any way reflects any of this from either the State Department or the Department of Justice or the FBI. *which I did ask for it.*

It does seem that they should have some records of it.

The State records should begin with if nothing else Duggan's arranging for what Chavkin took the embassy to be accepted for and sent by the diplomatic pouch.

Plus turning it over to me or to DJ.

At the DJ/FBI there should be a record of receiving it and of returning it to me. *at least.*

If either made and kept copies, either should be recorded, as should where any copies were deposited so they could be recovered.

Separately, if any use was made of the information, what use. I do not mean public use - internal use as in intelligence or other reports.

With such records it does not seem likely that the President's use of that information would not be included.

Perhaps, and this is only a guess, the reason for such records not to exist in some of these places where they should exist is explained by the time of those memos and really of the period just before it. That period was known as the "shibboleth" period then. This is to say the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact when all who were pro-Soviet were not anti-Hitler. As I so clearly was at all times. There could hardly be a more persuasive way of making this clear, although that was not my intention, than of giving such important anti-~~Nazi~~ Nazi information to the President in the hope that he would *get* it to the greatest number of people, as he did.