

NOTA

Aan: Hoofd B en C

Van: KARA

No. E. 448

ONDERWERP: Duitse Politie in de Russ. zone van Duitsland.

OP KAART
ACD/yb
DAT: 13/4/50
PAR: jn.

2.3
07.1 - 09.231

21 FEB 1950
ACD/80238

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Van Sardine ontvingen wij bijgaand rapport om te behouden.

14.2.1950

W.B.
vr.
Only 20.2.50

GERMANY: Para-Military Forces in the Soviet Zone.

1. Communist propaganda makes a central theme of the Soviet Union's championship of the cause of world peace in the face of Anglo-American warmongering. In Germany in particular the Western Zones are allegedly being remilitarised at the behest of the Western Powers whilst the Soviet Zone devotes itself exclusively to peaceful reconstruction. It is pertinent, therefore, to examine the extent to which the German police forces in the Soviet Zone are being organised, trained and equipped along palpably military lines. Out of a total estimated strength of 200,000 a substantial proportion of these forces, which have been accorded the generic title of People's Police, are without doubt genuinely engaged on routine police duties. Certain units, however, the so-called "Bereitschaften," or alert battalions, are constituted in a manner which has little to do with the mere preservation of law and order.

2. The first of these units were formed in September 1948 by the German Administration of the Interior in the Soviet Zone, under plans drawn up by the Soviet Military Administration in the previous July. From the start they were quartered on an organised basis in barracks situated in the larger towns and at various strategic points in the Zone. At present there are about 35 of them with an immediate target of 50. The planned strength of each unit, originally 250, is now 1,200, organised on a pattern closely resembling that of an army battalion with four companies, which in their turn are divided into platoons and sections, and with attendant communications, transport and workshop detachments. In each platoon two sections are armed with rifles, one with machine-pistols and one with machine-guns. Other weapons include mortars and infantry guns. Most equipment is of standard German army pattern, taken from wartime stocks. The types of transport which have been confirmed comprise lorries, cars and motor-cycles.

3. Training is devoted largely to the use of firearms and to tactical drill by the individual, the section, the platoon and the "Bereitschaft." Officer cadets receive additional instruction in a technical subject (wireless, line construction, & etc.), and in such things as tactics, fieldcraft, the siting of weapons, the general rules of partisan warfare

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and map-reading. They are also taught Russian. Particular attention is paid to political indoctrination, again especially amongst the cadets. In each section one officer, usually the second-in-command and invariably a trusted member of the Socialist Unity Party (S.E.D.), has the special task of supervising political education and ensuring the political reliability of his men.

4. The rank-and-file consisted at the outset mainly of prisoners of war from Russia specially released for police service. Many had been subjected to political indoctrination before repatriation. Recent recruiting drives in the Soviet Zone have brought in a number of genuine volunteers from amongst the more fervent younger S.E.D. members, and those attracted by advantageous pay and the chances of self-advancement. A great many more have been pressed into service by being offered the choice between "volunteering" for the police or for the uranium mines; a proportion of the daily influx of refugees into Western Germany is made up of young men flying to avoid enrolment in this manner. Others have been transferred more or less compulsorily from the normal police forces or from the nationalised factories. There has also been widespread registration of former members of the German armed forces, particularly those with specialist qualifications. Officers and officer-cadets are selected for their political reliability and drawn principally from amongst very young S.E.D. members and from the Free German Youth (the Communist youth movement).

5. A number of senior appointments are filled by former high-ranking German officers who have proved their trustworthiness during their captivity in Russia. They include General von Weech, once a communications expert in the German Air Force and now the organiser of an independent communications network for the "Bereitschaften", General Hans Wulz, and Generals Lattmann, Freitag, Ulex and Heinemann. Ironically enough the last four returned to Germany at the very time when the Russians and their satellites were preparing for the World Peace Day celebrations on 1st September, 1949.

6. Unlike the ordinary police in the Soviet Zone, which is still responsible to some extent to the various Land governments, control of the "Bereitschaften" is rigidly centralised under the Training Division of the Department for the People's Police in the Ministry of the Interior of the

East German "Government." The head of the Department for the People's
+ Police, Kurt Fischer (previously head of the German Administration of the
Interior, now absorbed in the Ministry), is answerable nominally to the
Minister of the Interior, Steinhoff (S.E.D.), but in practice directly
to Walter Ulbricht (S.E.D.), a Deputy Prime Minister and undoubtedly the
strong man of the Soviet Zone. The Training Division is probably still
closely supervised by the Russians and is staffed not only by a number
of ex-generals but also by several German Communists who fought in the
+ Spanish Civil War. Prominent among the latter is Wilhelm Zaisser, who as
+ General Gomez commanded the Ernst Thaelmann Brigade, the German element
of the International Brigade.

7. At present the "Bereitschaften" seem to spend their entire time on
training, and it is significant that they are not allotted any regular
police functions. Their very existence, however, exposes the falsity of
Russia's peaceful protestations and the deceitfulness of her allegations
about the remilitarisation of Western Germany.

8. It is useful at the same time to compare the total strength of the
police in the Soviet Zone, which has a population of 18 million, with
that in the three Western Zones, where there are only 100,000 policemen,
armed with truncheons and a few revolvers, for 50 million inhabitants.