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Some new research about Vlaicu network during the Second World War

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Abstract. George Beza (1907-1997) joined the Iron Guard. He acquired the title “Commander” of the legion but soon left the organization. He worked for a while with Mihai Stelescu (excluded from the Iron Guard on September 25, 1934) to publish the magazine "Crusade of Romanism", in which they criticized the legion. In April 1936, he and Stelescu were placed on the watch list of those who were to be punished for their treachery. Beza joined PNȚ and played and played an important role in World War II a monument was erected in Jerusalem in honor of Beza. He played an important role in the plans of SOE to organize anti-Antonescu propaganda in Romania. He was the author of the Vlaicu anti-axis resistance in Romania. This paper presents some aspects of SOE's organizational activities related to the Vlaicu program

Keywords. Vlaicu, propaganda, SOE, Intelligence, Jerusalem

SOE established the objectives of Vlaicu movement

In autumn of 1942, an intense correspondence between the British officers responsible for the Vlaicu scheme took place. On the date of October 15th, Chastelain wrote that he agreed with the views expressed in Istanbul's letter, and consider that his proposals contained in the a/m letters were not sound. He asked Boxshall, therefore, a lot of symbols to the list of PICARD's collaborators.

He suggested they might start a new series, especially for the VLAICU Movement.

He also thought that it would be a good thing, at that stage, to allot a symbol to PICARD himself. He might be given No. 1. of whatever series Boxshall allot to the Vlaicu Movement.

When signaling the allotted symbols, Boxshall had to give them in a particular order. A separate signal should be sent, calling with PICARD if Boxshall agreed that he too should have a symbol.

If Boxshall agreed to the above suggestions, it will be necessary for him to take further action on advising SOE representatives in BERNE and STOCKHOLM the symbols allotted to the two collaborators mentioned in these letters. No use should be made of the pseudonyms previously used by SOE in the a/m letters.

Chas was very pleased to receive Boxshall signal no. 212 of the 27th October 1942, repeated London 93, in which he advised SOE Cairo of A/H.88's proposed visit to Istanbul in mid-November. SOE must make the most of this visit, and, apart from the talks with A/H 88, which Chastelain hoped Boxshall will be successful in arranging it that SOE may be able to contact some of the smaller friends to enlist one or two of them in their ranks of collaborators.

On looking through A/H. 88's file Chastelain ran across London's signal 4162, repeated Istanbul 9820, of the 27th June. For easy reference, the quotes below paras. A. to E which gave Boxshall an idea of how London thought best use could be made of these valuable collaborators. Chastelain thought that the proposals hold good that day as they did four months ago:

SOE believed if contact with A/H.88 made in Istanbul good results can be expected.

SOE Romanian friends in Istanbul had an excellent opinion of him.

SOE recommended Boxshall discuss with A/H.88 the possibility and prospects of his returning for purposes of organizing base inside the country.

If Boxshall agreed on para C. and A/H.88 was willing and sufficiently enthusiastic occasion may present itself send suitcase set into Romania. A/H.88 appears to be useful for the VLAICU project.

Chastelain said he must leave this matter entirely in Boxshall's hands. SOE's aim at that time was to try to organize some eight or ten centers of resistance (Vlaicu), spread as far as possible throughout the country. With this aim in view, SOE tried to contact several PICARD's collaborators. So far SOE believed that they have contacted, with the help of A/H.150, AIBAC in BRASOV. Two letters, written by PICARD, have been sent by SOE to London for forwarding to two of his friends, located in ROME and HELSINKI respectively. SOE may expect these two to join the Movement and work from outside the country through representative inside. Alternatively, they may choose to go back into the country.

SOE tried to establish the present whereabouts of three other collaborators of PICARD's with the help of Portugal. Further, vis-a-vis the Tissier line from LISBON, SOE tried to establish the whereabouts of four others. Finally, A/H.135 was going to Istanbul to try and convince one or two other candidates to come there for discussions with PICARD. That was the position as far as it has developed at that time.

As far as propaganda was concerned: regular daily broadcasts have been put over; SOE hoped that Vlaicu leaflets will be dropped very soon; a small amount of propaganda material has been introduced into the country via LISBON; the B.B.C. and the Cairo official broadcasting station have referred to Vlaicu; a notice has appeared in the Times about Vlaicu; odd messages have appeared in the neutral press about resistance to the German occupation. Before leaving the subject of propaganda Chas said he must add that D/H.205 was giving SOE maximum support, and Chastelain felt, therefore, that in this respect there will be much collaboration in the future and smoother working. This was the position to date.

Effective work in Romania will only start when:

- number of centers of resistance were organized,
- SOE establish communication with these centers,
- SOE can supply these centers with funds (later with stores). [1]

SOE collaborators and the centers of resistance

On October 27th Chastelain said that he must leave it entirely operation to Boxshall to decide whether A/H.88 can be taken into SOE confidence in respect of the Vlaicu Movement and whether he would eventually undertake to be one of the Movement's organizers inside the country. From the Chastelain little knowledge of him, he doubts if he would be a „luptator” of the kind Vlaicu needs.[2]

Finally, Chastelain let the decision in the hand of Boxshall. He wrote: You know him better, and it is you, therefore, who must decide. If you do not consider him the right man for the job you may prefer to use him for the economic sabotage of the German war effort.

If, for instance, he can reduce the Romanian oil production, he will have done SOE a most important service. Another service he might be able to do for SOE would be to send them two

or three young Romanians out of the country, with journalistic experience, who might be useful for SOE propaganda work. If you decide to use him for Vlaicu work, that is, if he seems to be willing to fight the Germans, he might be able to send SOE a few young, healthy and strong Rumanians whom they might train as organizers for subsequent infiltration into the country. Chastelain supposed that one should not approach any members of the Romanian Trade Delegation without A/H.88's knowledge. Chastelain let the decision in Boxshall hand. In this connection, Chastelain could expedite A/H.135's departure to Istanbul, so that he may be there when the Delegation arrives. Chastelain realized that once the Delegation is in Istanbul one will have to work fast, as their stay will probably be a short one. Boxshall thought that it would be a good thing to have PICARD there. The visit was of such importance that SOE should leave no stone unturned to ensure that you obtain any assistance which you may consider would be helpful.

The question of the resumption of the Lares Air Line in the spring should perhaps also be touched upon. It might offer the best possibility of infiltrating a W/T set. The question of such a set will of course form one of the chief matters which Boxshall will discuss A/H.88.[3]

A couple of days later Chastelain noticed that the list of A/H. 88's friends, shown in Boxshall 1126/13/14 of the 1st July, does not appear to contain names of people who might be useful to the Vlaicu Movement. Chastelain mentioned this, simply as an observation that he made whilst running through the file before concluding this letter.

Finally, he requested reference must be made to the Russian question. A/H.88 must understand the need for Romania to start active work against the Axis if she wants to have any consideration from the Allied Powers at the end of this war. [4]

In a message in October 1942, A/H 185, referred to A/H 168 to whom it was intended that A/H 185 should deliver the messages written by PICARD. His reference to the danger from the East calls for no comment.

Of course, the most cheering part of his message is his reference to the dropping area and in this connection, a message will be sent to him, as well as a copy of Instructions "B" from which reference to Transylvania and Hungary will be deleted. I will also ask him to indicate in a sketch map the exact location of the property and operator for this purpose. Chastelain also sent him some secret ink and instructions for its use. In that way, he was able to send SOE the sketch above referred to in a harmless letter.

SOE sent the A.C.R.R Road Guide under separate cover. [5] In November 1942, SOE sent two sets of micro-photographs of a letter in Romanian which they would like to be taken into Romania through the tissue Line. One of these sets was for:

- General Gabriel Negrei, Strada Vasile Lupu 30.

The other was for:

- Major Gheorghe Beleuta, Strada Smardan 29 (2and floor)

Herewith also two sets of proclamations that were destined for the above-mentioned persons.

The envelopes contained the proclamations & micro-photographs are on no account to be posted but should be dropped into the letterboxes of the people in question.

In case of necessity, the telephone of General Gabriel Negrei was: - 5-81-86. [6]

A/H 185, left Istanbul for Bucharest with his wife on the evening of March 6th:

1.Finance:A/H 185 paid A/H 178 45,000 lei, his salary for the months of January, February and March. Chastelain gave A/H 185 a total of \$600, which may be accounted for as follows: -

For \$350. He has paid SOE the sum of T.L. 700 \$100 was the equivalent of 45,000 lei leaving SOE with a credit balance of \$150 with which to make future payments in Romania.

This is arrived at using the following rates of exchange: -

\$1 equals T.L. 2 T.L. 1 "260 lei

The Turkish Lira/lei rate was very unfavorable, but it was the rate at which A/H 185 had himself sold Turkish Lire in Bucharest and Boxshall could hardly argue with him about it.

2. Timpul: In addition to their copies of Timpul which A/H 185 will send on March 20th, March 25th, and April 3rd, he has also agreed to send SOE one dated March 15th.

3. Romania's Communications: To get the maximum advantage from the fact that Mrs. A/H 185 came to Istanbul, SOE have agreed that all messages in Romania should come from her. SOE has established that she made the acquaintance of a Turkish girl named ELEN CE, who was good enough, through SOE offices, to write the following letter to Mrs. A/H 185 on the evening of her departure. Here is the letter: -

" Chare Madam A/H 185, Apt Luxembourg 9, Istikal Cassesi 108

"Je vous envoie une petite boîte de bonbons turques pour vous accompagner sur votre voyage jusqu'à Bucarest. "J'espère que le voyage ne sera pas trop fatigant et que vous trouvez votre enfant en bonne santé. Je suis très heureuse d'avoir eu le plaisir de vos connaissances dans l'espoir de vous revoir bientôt ici, tous mes compliments N. A/H 185 et toutes mes amitiés à vous.

ELEN CE

"E vous avez un moment libre après votre arrivée, je serais très sinuée d'avoir de vos nouvelles." Mrs. A/H 185 was carrying with her the name and address of her correspondent and will have every verification for writing a letter immediately upon her arrival, in Bucharest. Letters have been in French, and the convention was that established by D/H 311. A further advantage which arose from this arrangement was that Mrs. A/H 185 had much better knowledge of French than her husband. Chastelain had explained to A/H 185 that the best way in which VANIA could help SOE would be by avocation and pressing for a policy of conservation in the oil industry.

Reception Area again explained at length to A/H 185 the requirements of a Reception Area and those of a Reception Committee and got the impression he will give this matter every attention on his return. He claimed to give him an approximate idea of the date when an operation might be envisaged. Chas told him within four months from now, although possibly earlier. The Reception Area mentioned of SOE memorandum 1807/13/14 was west of PIATRA Olt.

A/H 185 will give SOE details of the location employing the Impel, using as a reference to the A.C.R.R. Road Book.

A/H 168: A/H 185 will deliver the letter to A/H 168 immediately his return, not personally, but with the assistance of mutual friends who, incidentally, were in ALECU's immediate entourage.

Chastelain suggested that SOE consult PICARD, to make further use of A/H 168 who, according to A/H 185, is a very good man, but may wish to know more of the background of SOE work and more of its precise objects before he takes any active steps.

General (10): Mancha and, A/H 185 attest he noticed no new arrivals of German troops.

On the contrary, he said that the majority of troops to be seen in Bucharest are elderly men. He noticed a much larger apparent number of troops and then in Bucharest.

As remarked on the very strong anti-aircraft defenses of PLOESTI, stating that there are well over 100 balloons in the balloon barrage. These are arranged in grouped around each refinery or, where convenient, each group of refineries. He estimates that there were at least 20 balloons per refinery.

General (11): Along with the latest arrests in January, A/H 185 reported the case of MIHAI RALEA. of December 6th regarding A/H 88.

RALEA was arrested on a charge of sympathizing with the Communists.

Along with the men whom A/H 185 stated he would together be a certain LEONIDA SOSTIDE, now employed in the DACIA Refinery

General (IV): In the event of requiring a large sum of money was, which could be paid for by a transfer abroad, A/H 185 said that the account was opened in Switzerland in his name and in that of DEMETRIUS. To assist in the opening of this account has given e his signature and that of his colleague, and they are being sent to D/H 311 wander separate cover.

General (V): A/H 185 stated that he will not be able to return in April as he had hoped, but way return about July, when he thought the textile factory now being installed in Turkey will be completed. He, however, was the meantime be able to send his brother-in-lard, he stated, SOE may have the same confidence as in him.

General (VI): Because of the information we received from Bulgarian waters regarding an Anglo-Rumanian meeting on February 26th SOE decided it would be imprudent to trust A/H 185 with any of the concealed mediates which are now awaiting delivery in Romania and he carried nothing with him of an incriminating nature.

A/H 185: She made suggestions as to how SOE and her friends might assist in SOE work. She was very receptive and interested. Boxshall should key one or two examples of Romanian letters in French and SOE thought she will have no difficulty in sending messages. [7].

On March 11, 1943, Thompson informed Chastelain that SOE attempts through Stockholm to contact A/H170 would award to be hopeful.

In connection with the above SOE was passing the following most encouraging preliminary replay just received from SOE representative in Stockholm: -

" After making discreet inquiries about the subject of this latter, I have suddenly discovered that he was a friend of a great friend of Thomson who has many contacts in that country, but who was not in Stockholm when Chas letter arrived"

" The man in question has gone for a short visit in his native land. It was expected that he will pass through Stockholm in about a fortnight or three latter was Thomson's friend who will, in any case, be certain to see the man.

" My friend was perfectly reliable, especially as far as getting the orientation of his country and he confirmed that the man was trustworthy.

SOE followed this matter up and shall revert as soon as their agents have anything tangible to report.

Apart from the latter, SOE had also sent out the questionnaire received from Chastelain. [8]

SOE and Vlaicu's broadcasts

Picard appeared to place the most importance on the radio Bucharest announcement on the 5th October to the effect that those having in their possession, books, publications, pictures, photographer, based on which it would be possible to take action subversive to the state, are obliged to deposit them with many days with the authorities. With an eye to those in whose possession such propaganda nattering bad remained from the days before Romania aligned herself with the Axis. Chastelain saw to recall, either in the preamble or the subsequent explanation of the decree, it was stated that there must still be a considerable quantity of such material in-store. Chastelain do not think Picard's contention will find very much support in this decree. Furthermore, I find it difficult to go all the way with him in his argument that a collection of newspaper cuttings could be undertaken. It would be a logical conclusion to this argument that any person having in his possession a member of an old newspaper has actually in his - hands subversive material. [2]

On 15th October 1942 SOE instituted a new broadcasting station in Jerusalem which emits every evening at 21,30 in Romanian and calls itself the Postul Luptei de Liberare (The fight for

Freedom Stations). It purports to be broadcasting from within Romania and to be the official station of the new Anti-German movement, [6]

SOE wanted to avoid at all cost that Romanians to identify the location of the Vlaicu's broadcasts. They must also avoid the same difficulty in making any reference to the VLAICU broadcasts.

They were making arrangements to have an additional copy of their scripts made and will forward them to SOE periodically when a suitable occasion arises, id est. In respect of some form of reference, SOE shall make a reference VLAICU broadcasts. The reference would, however, be so framed as clearly to indicate that it has just come to their knowledge and has no connection with SOE.

Chastelain wanted very much like to see a collection of VLAICU broadcasts and he assumes that the more recent talks will be available to Mr. Murray whilst he is in the Middle East. For the reasons He had outlined, these scripts will not be available to those who are doing the detailed work of SOE R.U [9]

On 27th October 1942 Mr. Murary has passed on to the Department of Political Intelligence note of the 25th October, suggesting that SOE scripts for R.U. 26 meters should be, made available in Cairo and that SOE, R. U. should mention the VLAICU broadcasts. The chief of that Department felt that in replying to these requests SOE Cairo might be well to put down certain considerations even those they are no doubt already appreciated in the Middle East.

SOE had always endeavored to leave listeners with the impression that Broadcasts were inside the country, and whilst there is no doubt some technically minded persons who could disprove the theory, SOE always aims at misleading the normal listener in this way.

VLAICU must be in the same position in this respect. Taking this as a basis, the following points arise:

1. SOE should do utmost to preserve the impression that broadcasts were inside the country
2. To avoid evidence of collusion, the material, treatment, and even the policy, except on the main issues, should support the impression that the two stations are entirely separate and independent of each other

Whilst the exchange of scripts would no doubt be useful on a high level, there would appear to be several objections to their being exchanged at the level of actual production. For example, the regular reading of another station's collusion a factual error in one script might be adopted by Counted. [10]

On 13th October 1942, SOE informed Chastelain that they passed his memo to P.W.E with a request to let them have their scripts for the R.U.26 meters. At the same time, SOE passed on Chas request that they should mention having heard the VLAICU broadcasts on the 43-meter band, to give it some publicity.

PWE has agreed to send SOE copies of their scripts periodically, and SOE, send these out to Chastelain.

Although they make all sorts of reserves regarding the necessity of avoiding to give any appearance of collusion between the 26 meter and 43-meter bands, they are nevertheless prepared in the event of evidence of resistance in Romania becoming apparent, to refer to the VLAICU broadcasts. [11].

On March 12, 1943, colonel Thompson wrote to Chastelain that he did, occur also that transmissions containing messages for SOE collaborators in Romania could be sent over the VLAICU broadcast, but they seemed to us that although the ordinary VLAICU transmission in the night not be jammed habitually in Romania, certainly be done at once if cipher groups were.

It was precisely to avoid such jamming that she made arrangements with the B.B.C. to send cipher messages intended for Romania over a German emission.

SOE knew precisely that there was a jammer in Bucharest, the accipient radius of which, however, only extends as far as the Capital itself. London broadcasts, even in Romania, were heard perfectly in the provinces. It is hoped in there the Germans would not think it worthwhile to jam a German emission from Romania.

SOE was afraid that they found in practice that the ripper groups over VLAICU or the " GLASUL CONSTIINTEI will not be practicable in the long run.

There was a certain amount of risk of the groups being wrongly committed between Cairo and London. This cannot, however, be commixed whales SOE Cairo send as the code with full instructions the second here. Perhaps you would give this water your instruction. [12]

Finally, an agreement has been reached between N.O.A. and P.W.E. to continue the VLAICU aero broadcasting station, on condition that M.O.4. can supply them with sufficient item of up to date information which will enable them to so word some of their broadcasts to give the impression that the station is in fact in the country.

SOE had succeeded in instituting a new W\T skid between ISTANBUL and CAIRO. Only SOE Cairo could supply news, and this daily sked allowed them to transmit it quickly to Romania. [13]

The arrangement was as follows; the skid was available only to B.3 and should not be used by anybody else, due to the position in the cipher department to encode any messages transmitted on this sked by SOE Cairo .L.M.T. followed be used and SIGNALS have already signaled regarding the secret number, codebook, etc. The same art management had to be apply adjourned, and all messages must be encoded and decoded by the Cairo section. In fact, in CAIRO, if this work was not done by B.3. it will not be done at all. In the end, things might be different if the cipher staff is not having too busy a time.

They follow to use the sked for transmitting itemized from interceptions, items from the press\if they thought these will be useful for P.W.E.\or items off news brought out by Vlaicu occasional visitors. [14]

Conclusions

Beza played an important role in World War II in the plans of SOE to organize anti-Antonescu propaganda in Romania. He was the author of the Vlaicu anti-axis resistance in Romania.

The main objective of the SOE scheme of Vlaicu in Romania was:

- 1-A number of centers of resistance to be organized,
- 2-SOE establish communication with these centers,
- 3-SOE can supply these centers with funds (later with stores).
- 4-SOE should do utmost to preserve the impression that broadcasts were inside the country
- 5-To avoid evidence of collusion, the material, treatment, and even the policy, except on the main issues, should support the impression that the two stations are entirely separate and independent of each other.

From the 4 and 5 objectives of SOE operation was a success. But from the points of view of the objectives 1-3, the SOE operations were a failure because few people were involved in operations of resistance against the regime Antonescu.

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