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RUMORS IN WEST GERMANY FOLLOWING
THE KOREAN OUTBREAK

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by authority of Leo P. Crespi
PUB/RAS.

Special Report

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HICOG APO 807
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R E S T R I C T E D

INTRODUCTION ...

On July 21, 1950, as part of a rapid survey of German reactions to Korean developments, a representative sample of 300 cases in the US Zone and 100 each in Berlin and Bremen were questioned as to current rumors. To encourage the respondents as strongly as possible to come up with their experiences the inquiry was framed as "which rumors have you heard lately" rather than the less compelling query - "have you heard any rumors lately".

Only types of rumors and relative prevalence are approached in the current study. Degree of credibility and other considerations must be left to future inquiry.

SOME GENERALIZATIONS ...

1. The strained international situation has been accompanied by a spate of rumors in the urban communities of the US Zone as well as in West Berlin. Though all of the current rumors reported here have their origin in the East-West situation and the possibility of the extension of the Korean conflict, considered specifically they deal with many facets of the larger situation.
2. The largest single topic of rumor has to do with food - food shortages and hoarding, and the re-introduction of food rationing.
3. It is important to note, however, that rumors concerning food shortages and hoarding constitute only a small fraction of the total current rumors. Rumors dealing with political and military matters make up the great bulk of all current rumors.
4. The finding that food worries in the current situation, as measured by rumor trends, are subordinate in importance to more direct political and military perturbations, may superficially appear to be controverted by the extent of reported hoarding incidences on the part of US Zone Germans. It must be appreciated in this connection, however, that food anxieties are practically the only kind that the common citizen can do something concrete to assuage. So other anxieties may preponderate, as the present rumor study suggests, but cannot be so readily evidenced in behavior.
5. The implication of the present study is that any information campaign to allay current German anxieties should not overly preoccupy itself with narrow food considerations but should rather be directed toward the entire political and military situation.

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R E S T R I C T E D

RUMORS IN THE U.S. ZONE OF GERMANY

00505

(Topics Listed in Order of Frequency of Mention)

I. Hoarding and Increase in Prices of Food and Rumors about Imminent Rationing Because of the International Situation.

They say food prices are going up again.
 Food ration cards will be issued again within the next six weeks, people want to hoard food if a war is coming.
 Partial rationing is to be introduced again.
 They intend to ration food again because of the hysterical purchases.
 Supposedly the Americans have really stopped importing food into Germany.
 One should buy up a lot because there will be a new war.
 One must reckon with a new rationing in West Germany because of the international situation.
 People should hoard because food is getting scarce.
 There will be a famine.
 It is generally asserted that the ration card system is to be introduced in West Germany again.
 There are rumors that a new world war would break out and that food will get scarce again.
 The wife of a common laborer is reported to have hoarded two-hundred-weights of sugar.
 They say there is going to be another Korea here so people are hoarding food.
 That Irlmeier has prophesied a war and that people should buy food.*

II. An Imminent War Between East and West.

Both the Russians and the Americans are arming tremendously.
 Korea is only supposed to be a prelude for the coming war.
 The war will shift to Europe.
 The Russians could take Germany without any resistance.
 Russia intends to attack Germany, Korea is only a diversion maneuver.
 That a war between America and Russia will break out in August or September.
 Russia will attack West Germany in the near future.
 That a war will break out and that West Germany will be involved, therefore it would be better to cross over the Rhine.
 We shall have a war, perhaps in 6 months from now and that many people in America believe in an imminent war.
 Everybody says that there will be a war.

III. American Families and Civilians Leave West Germany.

Evacuation measures for American families are in preparation.
 The Americans have ordered their families to return to America, in some cases because of the war danger.
 They say that a family came to Bayreuth and stayed only two days and then returned to America.
 The American civilians in the town of Hof have already moved out of their apartments, women and children are on the way to America.
 American civilians are reported to be leaving West Germany already.
 The American civilians have been ordered to leave Europe.
 That the Americans will send home their wives and children after September 1st.

* Irlmeier is a pseudo-prophet in Bavaria, a follower of Nostradamus, and has acquired wealth from his "prophetic" writings.

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The Russian takes action, the Americans must give in, thus American families are already packing.
 In Echterdingen aeroplanes are ready so that in an emergency the Americans may fly off immediately.
 The Americans are going to leave West Germany because they are afraid of the Russians.

IV. Russian Troop Concentrations in the East Zone and Other Preparatory Measures for a War.

Large numbers of Russian and Czechoslovakian tanks are standing at the border, so it seems things will soon start here.
 The Russians send agents to West Germany in order to have guerilla fighters carry out sabotage.
 The Russians concentrate their troops at the zonal borders.
 The Russians are waiting near Hof preparatory for the march into the West.
 A war between America and Russia in the near future, troop concentrations in the East zone directed to the West.
 Troop reinforcements in the East zone.
 Mongolian workers and massed troops are reported to have arrived in the East zone.
 In the East zone there are many volunteers for Korea.
 The Germans in Poland are being drafted.

V. Formation of a German Army and Re-armament in West Germany.

There will be a German defense army set up within two months.
 They say West Germany is going to set up an army.
 Some German factories are producing arms again.
 Germany is being re-armed and the Americans will withdraw.
 They intend to establish 25 German divisions.

VI. Germans are Already Being Drafted or Have Enlisted in the American Forces.

Germans are already being drafted, and volunteers accepted.
 Former members of the German Air Force have been summoned to the Rhine-Main Air Base for mustering.
 In Regensburg volunteers for the American Air Force are going to be enrolled, five have already enlisted.
 The Americans intend to draft young German men under 25 years of age.

VII. Concentration of American Troops at the Eastern Borders.

American troops are rolling toward the Bavarian-Czechoslovakian border every night.
 America will attack Russia, this can be deduced from the concentration of strong tank units at the border of the East zone.
 The Americans are carrying on maneuvers but it won't be limited to maneuvers.

VIII. War Preparations in the Balkans.

The Russians are making preparations in Yugo-Slavia.
 They say there will be a war in the Balkans, there are troop concentrations at the border of Yugo-Slavia.

IX. Pressure on Employees of American Authorities or Families in West Germany.

German maids working for the Americans are to be courtmartialed after the Russian invasion.

All German employees of American offices who do not resign before August 1, 1950, will be subject to prosecution by a Russian court martial later on. There will be one year of Siberia for every day of work for the Americans after August 1, 1950.

The German employees of the Americans have been ordered by radio Leipzig to resign as soon as possible, or they will have a bad time after the Russians come in.

X. American Troops are Withdrawn from Germany and Germany Left Without Any Adequate Defense.

The American troops are being withdrawn from Germany and we are to be abandoned to the Russians without any protection.

It is possible that Germany can't be adequately protected any longer because America needs strong troops in Korea.

Unmarried and childless Americans have been transferred from Germany to America to be used in Korea later on, therefore the American troops have once more decreased in numbers.

XI. American Defeat in Korea.

The Americans are said to have suffered a terrific defeat in Korea without that fact being published.

The Americans have been terribly beaten in Korea so far.

The Americans are being driven out of Korea.

XII. Allies Plan Blasting Operations at the Rhine.

They say England won't participate as a defense of Germany.

The blasting operations at the Rhine are very alarming facts.

The Loreley-Rock affair.

XIII. Pro-Eastern Attitudes are being Assumed.

Many people in Germany hang their flag toward the Eastern wind now. They say that many people in West Germany would not dislike having the Communists come into West Germany.

People are now adopting a reserved attitude, they are trying to get into contact with Communists.

XVI. America's Propaganda Prepared and Provoked War in Korea.

The Americans initiated the war in Korea quite systematically by propaganda and war preparations.

They say the Americans prepared and provoked the war in Korea by propaganda.

I have heard that 20,000 German soldiers are being sent to Spain in case of a war.

There is much hoarding of goods on the part of many wholesale traders because they reckon there will be war soon; one reason for hoarding is to give these hoarded goods to the Russians.

The students intend to side directly with the Russians in case of a war because so they can become American prisoners of war.

Meats and fats are going up in price because Americans themselves must economize for their troops.

Irlmeier has predicted three days of "all-out-gloom" in connection with people's belief in a war as things were started in Korea.

That Irlmeier prophesied a war in the harvest season in which case Ingolstadt will be saved from greater distress.

The American army is considering the possibility of supplying troops with rubber boots in order to facilitate their retreat.

After their experience in Korea the Americans now realize that their occupation policy is entirely wrong.

That before setting up a West German Federal police Mr. Clay must give a good speech and reverse his old policies.

The German employees of the CIC are quoted as already having their air tickets to America in their pockets.

White-metal and other metals for canning industry have been confiscated by Americans.

It is said that the Russians don't intend at all to invade West Germany, but that West Germany will fall an easy prey to the Communists without any aggression by the Russians.

00508

(Topics Listed in Order of Frequency of Mention)

I. Rationing and Higher Prices of Food.

We shall have a rationing system again.

A cut in social support payments and rising prices of fats.

Everybody should provide themselves with food, there will be war soon.

Foods are said to get scarce, but I don't believe it, they only want to make more money.

Things will be started in Berlin, too, as it happened in Korea, people hoard food, potatoes and coals.

They rumor it would be started soon, also with us, it would be the right thing to hoard food.

II. Rearmament and War Preparation of the East Zone.

The Russians are building bases for an attack against the West along the zonal borders.

The Russians bring troop reinforcements to Eastern Germany.

The people's police makes warlike preparations in the East zone.

Intensified rearmament in the East zone.

There are again large concentrations of Russian troops in the environs of Berlin.

III. Russian Aggression Against West Germany and West Berlin.

Aggressive action will be taken against West Berlin and West Germany as it was in Korea.

West Berlin shall be defeated after Korea.

After the SED party congress they intend to conquer West Berlin and West Germany.

The people's police will make a sudden attack on West Berlin.

In autumn things will be started with us, then the people's police will take action.

The Russians will soon invade West Germany.

VI. A World War Seems to be Imminent in the Balkans and East Asia.

The East Asia affairs and the Balkans controversies will lead to a world war.

A Russian attack on Berlin, West Germany and Yugo-Slavia in autumn 1950.

Russia prepares aggressive measures at other Asiatic places (Iran) and stages diversion measures at the Yugo-Slav border.

People expect that Russia will attack Yugo-Slavia.

V. General War Rumors.

That a war is imminent.

There will be a war in the near future.

The Korean conflict is the starting shot of a new war.

There will be a war in Germany as soon as Korea is done with.

There will be a war.

The Russians are the driving force in the Korean conflict.

America will eventually drop an atomic bomb on Korea.
The Americans will apply the atomic bomb in Korea.
America will and must apply the atomic bomb in Korea that the world
conflagration will be nipped in the bud and suffocated at the outset.

VII. Miscellaneous.

The Western powers will give up Berlin immediately in the case of a war.
After the harvest Russia will attack America.
Whether the Russians will leave Berlin voluntarily or only in a war that is
the question.

The DM will be de-valued.

That many Germans will be recruited by the Americans for Korea.

The Russians will use the atomic bomb if they are going to lose in Korea.

Equalization of the East-West currency; hoarding of food in West Germany.

A new blockade for Berlin.

The Americans are withdrawing their troops from West Germany because they
are needed in Korea.

That the Russians will yield if they lose in Korea and will withdraw from
Germany then.

Germany is to be rearmed.

SOME FURTHER DETAILS ON POST-KOREAN RUMORS

INTRODUCTION

A prior special report has presented the types and frequencies of various post-Korean rumors in the US Zone and Berlin.* In the present supplementary report more detailed exposition of various rumors are presented as investigated by the German field operatives of the Reactions Analysis Staff, Office of Public Affairs.

* Rumors in West Germany following the Korean outbreak, Special Report, 31 July 1950, Reactions Analysis Staff, Office of Public Affairs.

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Special Report

3 August 1950

REACTIONS ANALYSIS STAFF
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R E S T R I C T E D

I. RUMORS CONCERNING AMERICANS AND EMPLOYEES OF AMERICANS.

A. Intimidation of German Employees of Occupation Authorities.

Radio Leipzig announced that employees of the American occupation authorities who have not resigned by August 1, 1950, will be called to account.

All Germans who have worked for Americans will be sent to Siberia; each day of work with the occupation forces will mean a year in a concentration camp; names have already been registered.

Communist troops in Korea have punished or killed all the former employees of Americans or people who cooperated with them.

B. Reinforcement and Transfer of American Units.

American tanks are lined up along the Czech border and American troop movements toward the border are made at night; noises have repeatedly been heard at night.

10,000 Negroes have been alerted in Regensburg.

American pilots have recently been moved to the Manching airport, near Ingolstadt; at the Neubiberg airport work goes on day and night because these units will either be transferred to Korea or will be considerably reinforced.

C. Americans Leave West Germany.

American civilians stationed in border areas and their families have been called upon to keep themselves ready for evacuation at any time; detailed plans have been worked out and will be given to the American families.

The requisitioned houses in the city of Hof have already been released by American civilians as they are about to return to America.

American soldiers will fly out of Germany as soon as the Russians come.

In case of war all American women with children will be transported to Southern France; Germany east of the Rhine will be given up and all the Rhine bridges will be blasted.

All Americans have left Switzerland.

D. Other Rumors About Americans.

The Americans have cut the gasoline ration for Germans just so they can sell theirs at a higher price.

The Americans encourage war rumors so they can more readily get rid of their canned donkey-meat.

PX goods, especially tea and sugar, are more strictly rationed now.

In America, sugar is very scarce and will be rationed.

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II. GENERAL WAR RUMORS AND PROPHECIES.

A. Irlmeier* Prophecies:

In the town of Oberdolling, near Ingolstadt, Irlmeier announced that a war will start at harvest time, but that the Ingolstadt neighborhood will be spared.

Furniture and goods are being transferred from big cities to the rural district of Altcotting by businessmen, because Irlmeier said this region will be saved.

Irlmeier is quoted as saying that a Russian invasion will take place and prevent the Catholics' Day celebration in Passau on September 2, 1950.

B. Other War Rumors.

America is deceiving Russia militarily by not using its newest weapons in order to take Russia by surprise in a later action.

Heuss and Adenauer are spending their vacations in Switzerland only because of the danger of war.

The war scare has been created on purpose to prepare Germans for the establishment of a German army.

Blasting operations on the Rhine bridges and highways have been accelerated since the outbreak of the Korean conflict. Plans have been made to withdraw American troops to the other side of the Rhine and create a no-man's land twenty kilometers wide in the vicinity of the blasting operations.

Only Negroes are to be used in combat, and they are deserting because they want nothing to do with war.

Czech travellers have told Germans that the next war will be an insect war. Czech planes, they say, have already dropped insects on German fields, which have been found by farmers.

The Siemens and other similar factories have received rearmament orders and employ a large number of people to fill them.

* Irlmeier is a pseudo-prophet in Bavaria, a follower of Nostradamus, and has acquired a considerable following.

III. GERMAN VOLUNTEERS FOR KOREA.
LUCRATIVE OFFERS TO FORMER GERMAN OFFICERS.

The American army is accepting volunteers for the Korean war, who will receive a monthly salary of DM 1,500.

German officers and men who have volunteered for Korea and concentrated at a secret locality in Southern France, equipped there and sent to Japan by ship. They will receive salaries of DM 500 per month.

Young men are waiting eagerly to be drafted into the American army.

The East Zone has offered former German generals and staff officers who live in the Western zones positions in the People's Police; 1000 Westmarks will be paid the family members remaining at home, and generals will receive 2000 East Marks. Some high army officers have accepted the offers, because they can't live on the 150 Marks paid them in West Germany.

IV. FOOD RATIONING AND OTHER FOOD RUMORS.

Orders have been issued to prepare for food rationing; the harvest isn't good this year because of the bad weather, and foreign countries don't export so much to Germany any longer because of the political insecurity, so food must be rationed.

The German government has been asked secretly by the Americans to hoard food and clothing, so that there will be an available internal supply in case of a Russian invasion, since in that event the import of food and clothing would have to be stopped immediately.

Food prices will rise and the money will be devalued. Dealers are hoarding their merchandise for the purpose of speculation.

There will be no war, so food is being hoarded needlessly.

There's no point in hoarding food, since the Russians would confiscate it anyway if they come.

V. MISCELLANEOUS RUMORS.

The wave length of Radio Munich was changed only so that the population couldn't keep well informed about the Korean conflict.

Over fifty percent of the businessmen of Augsburg have informed the Deutsche Post authorities that they are not using their radios because reception from Radio Munich is almost impossible.

Refugees maintain that they have been told they will be back in their homelands within two years.

Farmers say the scarcity of rainfall is a result of the American atomic experiments.

Adenauer has a garden which cost the government DM 120,000 to make and maintenance expenses will amount to DM 60,000 a year.

All those who refuse to sign the petition sponsored by the Communists against the use of atom bombs will be sent to Siberia.