

MEMORANDUM RE S.S. COLUMBUS CREW  
AT ANGEL ISLAND

ADDRESS REPLY TO  
"THE ATTORNEY GENERAL"  
AND REFER TO  
INITIALS AND NUMBER

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 8, 1940

MEMORANDUM

Following a telephone call received by us in Los Angeles from the Solicitor General in Washington, we proceeded to San Francisco on Friday, June 28, 1940. The Solicitor General stated on the telephone that a report had been received from the Federal Bureau of Investigation Office in San Francisco concerning the crew of the S.S. Columbus, presently situated on Angel Island under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

We arrived in San Francisco Saturday morning, June 29, and called upon Mr. P. L. P. P., Special Agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Office. He handed us two memoranda, each dated June 28, 1940, and labelled "Memorandum for the File". The originals are attached and numbered I and II.

Memorandum I contains information relative to the crew of the S.S. Columbus, which was received at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Office in San Francisco from sources recited in the memorandum but whose reliability is not known.

Shirley McMillan (no local address) wrote a letter to the San Francisco Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation saying that members of the "Columbus crew" visited the saloons along the water front and fraternized with the labor element. Undoubtedly this is true. The taverns referred to in the report are located near the pier used by the boats going to and coming from Angel Island. The International Longshoremen's Association Hall is about two blocks away and longshoremen and other laborers frequent the same bars.

Certain other reports were not fully investigated because time did not permit.

PSF: Justice  
J. Edgar Hoover

We did not consider it worthwhile to interview R. McClellan, Brigadier Territorial Prison Chaplain of the Salvation Army, San Francisco, for the reason that the question of shore leave about which he wrote the State Attorney General is a matter which has received the consideration of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the State Department and the German Consul.

Edward H. Harris, of 1711 Washington Street, was not located. He reported a conversation with one "Heinrich" in Ward 4, Bed 14 of the Marine Hospital, where Heinrich talked of the "revolution" that this country would have shortly. It is not at all unlikely that the statement was made by Heinrich, but we did not take it of sufficient importance to warrant an independent investigation because our time was limited.

The report from a Miss Fisk that a dance was held at California Hall for the benefit of the Columbus crew is probably true. Numerous dances of a similar kind are held at that hall, which is located in a section adjoining the water front.

E. C. Holber, 1719 Scott Street, San Francisco, was not located. Here again, partly because of lack of time and partly because of its indefiniteness, the report that Holber met a German named Ehni, who it is reported was told by a seaman (name not given) that he disliked the Island and that he had some forged seaman's papers and was using them to sail away to San Francisco, was not investigated. It was established, however, that all members of the crew were accounted for July 3, 1940.

Emory E. Smith, 651 Howard Street, was not located, but the report that he made to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Office is probably true. We made some discreet inquiries generally among bartenders and found that there has been some loose talk coming from members of the crew.

At the Stag Tavern, 3 Kearney Street, in particular some of the crew members "popped off" so the bartender expressed it. Possibly Emory Smith's report that he overheard an argument among members of the crew of the S. S. Columbus in a saloon at Third and Market Streets, in which it was contended that "the United States was not justified in its stand against Hitler" relates to the Stag Tavern, as it is a saloon "near Third and Market Streets".

The information given is partial to this particular crew, so much so that many visitors to San Francisco, who come directly with the Captain on crew matters.

Miss Norma Wood, 157 Ellis Street, was interviewed. It is true that she is acquainted with some of the members of the crew and bought them a radio. She stated that she met some of the officers and men of the Columbus at Karl Siegel's place on Stevenson Street. She stated that the Germans made quite clear that they were proud of the fact they were Germans. Miss Wood was a little reluctant to talk because she had promised Special Agent Louis J. Wine that she would report to no one but him. Of course, Agent Wine did not anticipate that another representative of the Department would be making an inquiry. We talked to Agent Wine on the day we left San Francisco and he offered every assistance. However, we did not again interview Miss Wood.

We found no basis for the report that thirty members of the crew were absent without leave from Angel Island at any time. We did determine that thirty members of the crew are ashore every day on leave—ten from the Immigration Station where one hundred fifty men are quartered and twenty from the Quarantine Station where three hundred men are quartered. Inasmuch as our understanding was that the leave arrangement was the subject of correspondence between the German Embassy and the State Department, we did not consider it within our province to make any suggestions concerning it.

We were advised that officers of the Columbus crew were escorted through Mare Island Navy Yard, but we did not get particular information about it, because if it were a fact, then the authorities at the Navy Yard were aware of it, and we did not want to be put in the position of questioning their discretion. If it was not a fact, then the matter was of no importance whatever.

We were advised that Karl Ruppert, the first officer, is granted leave, but we received no information that he abused the privilege. It is our recollection that he admitted going to Los Angeles.

It is a fact that Mr. Strand, Immigration Inspector in Charge, fraternizes to some extent with the members of the crew. In the nature of things as they are, he could hardly refrain from it. He admitted that he took a trip to Palo Alto and Big Trees sometime ago with Captain Daehne of the Columbus and a crew member. As to the wisdom of this, Mr. Haff, District Director, had the following to say:

"Inspector in Charge Strand is partial to this particular trip, on which he has taken many visitors to San Francisco. He works directly with the Captain on crew matters.

"I have a faint recollection that Mr. Strand did mention that he was considering making such a trip with Captain Daehne as a courtesy act to cement cordial relations in handling crew problems. I did not recall that the trip was actually made and upon questioning Strand today, he said that he did not inform me of it. The trip was made long after he first spoke with me and I do not recall that I then offered any objection. However, considerable time elapsed and conditions had so changed when the trip was made that I feel I would have advised against such a step even though the purpose was a worthy one.

"I have had no reason to doubt Mr. Strand's loyalty. His judgment is not always the best, but I have found it to be honest."

It may be that there has been some transferring of shore passes as that referred to between Becker and Ahl. We were unable to confirm it, however.

The name Ulrich Holtz does not appear on the official list of members of the crew, so we did not inquire particularly as to the report concerning that individual. The memorandum recites that two members of the crew after hearing the President's Charlottesville speech remarked, "The President will pay dearly for his utterances". This was not inquired into for the reason that the name of one of the alleged crew members (Holtz) does not appear on the official list and it was assumed that the other crew member (Ahl) would deny it, if questioned. The source of the information was not given.

We were unable to confirm the report that members of the crew remarked that in the event of a strict internment of the crew, that the crew men would make a serious break for freedom.

We were unable to check on the accuracy of the report by a "confidential informant" that the crew men had any advance information as to the stopping of the U.S.S. Washington by a German submarine because we did not talk to the informant. The reports that the crew is in radio communication with Germany are without foundation.

The report that crew members loaf around the water front and are able to learn sailing time of vessels is probably true. There is nothing to prevent it, but we do not believe it very important, however, because the same information is, no doubt, available from other sources.



Memorandum II contains information relative to the crew of the S.S. Columbus reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation office in San Francisco and coming from sources which that office believes to be reliable.

Obviously, we were handicapped in our inquiry in not having available to us sources of information. Even if they had been, we would not have had sufficient time to check the absolute accuracy of all the reports. However, such information as we were able to obtain is set out below in numbered paragraphs--each number corresponding with the paragraph number in Memorandum II.

1. The crew of the S.S. Columbus remaining at Angel Island, counting one in jail, comprises exactly 451 men. We were advised that a general search has been made of their effects.

2. In a sense, members of the crew are permitted to go and come from Angel Island without any strict record or check made by immigration officials on the Island. At first the crew members were checked in and out by their own officers, working in conjunction with immigration authorities. After awhile immigration authorities discontinued checking and relied on daily reports made to them by the ship's officers. When we called this practice to Mr. Haff's attention, he stated he did not know his men had discontinued checking the crew members at the pier and indicated he would reinstate the practice. However, in our surprise check of the crew members, we made an airtight count and all members were present or properly accounted for. Comment as to the wisdom of the immigration authorities primarily relying on a check by the officers of the crew will appear later on in this memorandum.

3. We are advised that on occasion members of the crew returned to the Island intoxicated. The night we checked those on shore leave when they boarded the launch "Jubilee", which leaves the mainland at 11:00 p.m., several had been drinking, but we do not believe any one of them was drunk.

4. The crew members formerly had access to Fort McDowell, which is on Angel Island and adjoins the Immigration Station. We found no instance of any members of the crew going there in disobedience of orders. When the German crew first arrived at Angel Island, the Commanding Officer at Fort McDowell gave them the freedom of the Island. At the present time they are restricted

and may only attend the movies twice a week. We are told that the ship's officers have stationed their own guards to see that the orders are obeyed. It is observed that the military authorities at Fort McDowell do not think it important enough to establish a guard line.

5. It is true that the seamen are not searched upon their return to the Island from shore leave. The immigration authorities advance a variety of reasons why they do not do it. The night we checked the seamen on shore leave as they boarded the "Jubilee" we examined the packages they brought with them. They contained nothing but tobacco, candy and notions.

6. It is true, so we were advised, that the fatigue colors of the seamen are khaki.

7. We were unable to confirm the story that a crew member shouted "Heil Hitler" at the canteen at Fort McDowell and that a fight ensued between a non-commissioned officer of the United States Army and the crew member. The immigration authorities were without information on the subject, and Major Arnold, Adjutant of the post, has never heard of any trouble between the crew members and the soldiers.

8. The statements that a barbecue pit has been built are probably true. We did not think it of sufficient importance to ascertain the fact. The flag flying at the "Recreation Center" is an ordinary white flag with the picture of a fish on it. No one attaches any significance to it.

9. It is true that crew members are permitted to leave the Island on a pass issued by their own officer and some are permitted to stay over night. The record of their return is made by their own officer and a daily report furnished Mr. Strand, who is the Immigration Inspector in Charge.

10. We did not check the reports set out in this paragraph. The sources of the information were not known and we thought it was unlikely that either Newport or Harrison would admit any laxness on their part.

11. The recitals in paragraph 11 are substantially correct to the effect that the German crew do their own policing and that the officers of the crew were to be notified of any matters requiring disciplinary attention. As far as we could learn, the ship's officers cooperated in every way.

12. It is true that some of the members of the crew are visited by feminine persons but we do not find it to be common knowledge among the guards that the crew members and their visitors engaged in immoral practices in the foliage adjoining the building. Among others, Chief Guard Harrison stated that it is possible that there has been some occurrences of this kind, but he knows nothing about them.

13. It is not at all unlikely that many persons in San Francisco are dissatisfied with the way the crew members are allowed to circulate. In fact we gained that general impression during the course of our investigation. It is reasonable to believe that if in the course of their travels they make any worthwhile "findings" that, as is indicated, they would report them to the German Consul.

14. The report made in this paragraph concerning the radio is misleading. There is a short-wave radio in the quarters, but no sending apparatus. About this Mr. Haff, the District Director, said:

"Columbus crew members, through Inspector in Charge Strand, requested permission to install a short wave radio set, stating the regular radio was operated to suit the desires of Chinese and other nationalities and they were interested in getting some European news which could be made into a news sheet such as is posted on steamers. The request was discussed with Mr. Strand. It was our observation that the broadcasts could be overheard by the guards, and, furthermore, any one of the crewmen on shore leave could listen in on such broadcasts and on return bring the news in written form.

"Our Chief Engineer, living on the Island, has such a set and check could be made of such broadcasts, and also by the radio operator at Fort McDowell, Angel Island.



"Permission was granted.

"The matter of ordering its removal was discussed with Major Arnold of Fort McDowell, who, for the present at least, could see no reason for such action. He was furnished with the range measure of the set for possible checking purposes. No evidence of irregularity has been discovered."

15. It is true that no written check is made at night of the quarters where the radio is maintained.

16. The report is correct that none of the guards at the Immigration Station contact the members of the crew at the Quarantine Station. The reasons for not doing this are set out in another place.

17. The report about "selling Nazi propaganda" is greatly exaggerated, but there is probably some basis for it.

18. The report that German aliens are permitted to accompany the immigration service boat to the mainland and return with alien prisoners is probably exaggerated. Our inquiry disclosed that one crew member accompanied the operator of the boat on certain occasions. About this the District Director said:

"This report evidently relates to several trips made by a young crewman with Engineer Mooney, who met Seattle deportation parties at Oakland pier. This young man, whose ambition is to get back to America to live, has been used as a secret informant on conditions obtaining in crew quarters. His name is Walter Moore. He was not allowed to operate the boat, nor was he taught about navigation. He was favored for a purpose thought to be of value to our own Service."

19. The report relating to the use of the Immigration Service Switchboard has been developed by an independent investigation on the part of the District Director, a copy of the proceedings of which were sent to the Department. In commenting upon it, the District Director said:

"Upon learning of this alleged complaint through F. B. I. sources on June 19th, an immediate investigation was directed and report made to Commissioner Houghteling as of June 26, 1940. The results did not disclose any such practice obtained or ever had been permitted."

20. The "Jubilee" is a launch chartered by the German Consul for the use of the seamen on shore leave to take them back to Angel Island at 11:00 p.m. It is probably true that crew members have boarded it under the influence of liquor. We did not go into the question of whether the owner had a license to sell liquor.

21. We could not verify the accuracy of the report that members of the crew frequently exchanged passes.

22. We inquired particularly but were unable to confirm the report that ten cases of beer were brought on the Island and taken to the seamen's quarters.

23. We did not try to confirm the report made in this paragraph that one of the crew members mentioned to the guard, referring to his fatigue clothes, that all he would need was a swastika and a cap, etc. It was not thought important enough to devote any time to investigating it because of the limited time at our disposal.

24. It is true that the crew is permitted to receive visitors on passes issued by the German Consul at San Francisco.

Insofar as the reports contained in paragraphs 25, 26 and 27 relating to the traffic in beer, we were unable to get definite information or confirmation.

The incident concerning the difficulty between Karl Ruppert, Chief Officer of the S.S. Columbus, and one of the immigration guards over the disposition of a bottle of what appeared to be intoxicants was probably the result of a conflict in instructions, or at least a misunderstanding. Perhaps the Chief Officer's actions were a bit extraordinary, but he was following the instructions of the Captain, who was under the impression (which was correct) that the immigration authorities had entrusted to him the duty of preventing the landing of intoxicants. In our opinion the incident could have been avoided, if written instructions instead of verbal ones had been issued to the ship officers and immigration guards alike.

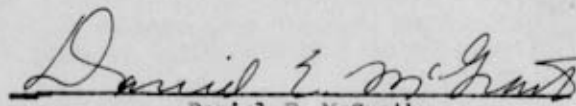
*Karl Ruppert*

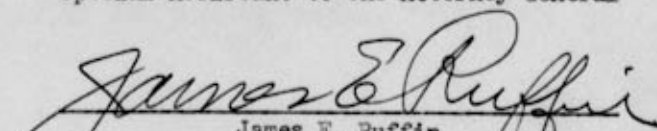
We were told in a telephonic conversation with the Solicitor General or Mr. Schofield, or both, that it was reported that five members of the crew had deserted from Angel Island. Upon our arrival at the Immigration Station we checked the crew members and all were present or properly accounted for. Attached is a certificate by the District Director made the day after our count.

The information contained in the reports received by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and furnished us in Memoranda I and II must have presented a perplexing problem to the Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Standing alone, they indicated the existence of a very unusual situation at Angel Island insofar as the administration of the affairs of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization is concerned. Particular inquiry and actual contact, however, develop that in reality the situation is not what we ourselves first believed.

The seamen are not prisoners of war and they are not alien enemies. Their upkeep, including food, clothing and spending money, is paid by the German Consul General in San Francisco. Some of them have departed on foreign ships since the contingent arrived in California. We found no evidence that any of them had deserted or tried to desert. The cooperation of the ship's officers and the German Consul General is essential if the problem is to be handled smoothly. It is a difficult and delicate one and, generally speaking, we are of the opinion that it has been handled as well as could reasonably be expected by those in authority at Angel Island. Granting it to be a fact that the status of these seamen is that of excluded aliens, it is possible that if habeas corpus proceedings were instituted, they might be enlarged and give rise to an even greater problem.

It was established beyond any doubt that some of the crew members have made statements in barrooms which would not find favor with persons who are not sympathetic toward Germany. Particular inquiry was not pressed in this direction because we believe the best way to reach it is for the Attorney General or someone in authority in the Department to advise Mr. Haff, the District Director, as to our findings in that particular, and for Mr. Haff to take it up with Captain Daehne of the Columbus. We were both impressed with the Captain's sincerity and friendly attitude, and willingness to cooperate in every way possible.

  
Daniel E. McGrath  
Special Assistant to the Attorney General

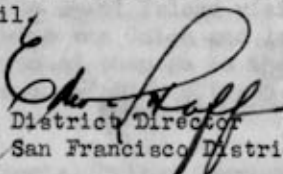
  
James E. Ruffin  
Special Assistant to the Attorney General

12016/8888

July 3, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANTS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DANIEL McGRATH AND JAMES RUFFIN:

I hereby certify that on this date Inspector in Charge Strand and Chief Engineer Mooney made a check of the crewmen of the S.S. "Columbus" at Quarantine Station and that Guard in Charge Alex Harrison and Guard Peter Gallagher made a check of the crewmen at the Angel Island Immigration Station. This check was by means of the photograph identification and by name, and the four hundred and fifty-one (451) crewmen were fully accounted for. This includes the crewmen in hospital and the one (1) in jail.

  
District Director  
San Francisco District

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
San Francisco, California  
June 28, 1940

No. I

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

The following information relative to the crew of the ex-S.S. COLUMBUS has been received at this office from the following sources whose reliability is not known:

SHIRLEY McMILLAN, (no local address) San Francisco, wrote a letter to the San Francisco Office on June 16, 1940, reading in part as follows: "Re your investigation of 'Fifth Column' activities. \*\*\* A number of aliens interned on Angel Island visit these saloons daily and drink and fraternize with the Union and labor element on the waterfront. \* \* \* Quite a few of them go to the Funchal Tavern at 209 on the Embarcadero and some to LOUIS SILVA'S place in the same block."

R. McCLELLAND, Brigadier, Territorial Prison Chaplain, the Salvation Army, San Francisco, wrote a letter to the State Attorney General of California, reading in part as follows: "I have felt for several days that I should write to you on the matter of 'shore leave' being given those German sailors. \* \* \* When so much havoc has been wrought in European countries through 'Fifth Column' tactics, and in our own land here, we have evidences of its subtle working, might it not be well to have the shore leave of these men stopped."

(1) EDWARD H. HARRIS, 1711 Washington Street, San Francisco, called at the San Francisco Office and reported that he became acquainted with a sailor off the S.S. COLUMBUS, who was also confined with him at the Marine Hospital, San Francisco, and this sailor was pro-Nazi. He had a "storm trooper's" uniform and often during the conversation talked of the "revolution" that this country will have shortly. He is known as HEINRICH, which is his first name, and he was in Ward 4, Bed 14.

On June 14, 1940, a Miss RUTH KEATING FISK, (no address) telephonically advised this office that the sailors from the S.S. COLUMBUS were being accorded a benefit dance at California Hall on this day.

(2) E. C. HOLBER, 719 Scott Street, San Francisco, reported he became acquainted with WALTER EHNI, a German, that a seaman from Angel Island is reported to have told EHNI that he disliked the Island,



that he had some forged seaman's papers, that he was using the papers to sail away from San Francisco.

(3) EMORY E. SMITH, 651 Howard Street, San Francisco, called at the San Francisco Office and reported that he observed an argument between members of the crew of the S.S. COLUMBUS in a saloon near Third and Market Streets. They contended that "the United States was not justified in its stand against HITLER". The statements made by the crew were loud enough to be heard easily. SMITH further reported that a friend of his, whose name he would not furnish, had stopped at the "Seven Mile House" and some of the crewmen made threats against the United States. Mr. SMITH was in charge of the iron and steel plants on the west coast for the army and navy during the world war and appears to be a reasonable and sound business man.

A confidential informant reported to an agent of this office that one of the crewmen had called on a Jewish professor at Stanford University and talked "long and loud" in support of the Nazi government and sought to borrow some literature from him. Informant stated that it is his observation that all of the Nazis have the same approach, and have been undoubtedly instructed by their government. Informant is a Professor at Stanford University and an outstanding authority on the international situation.

(4) Miss NORMA WOOD, 157 Ellis Street, San Francisco, called at the San Francisco Office and reported that she had been friendly with MALTE MILDHORN, one of these crewmen, had visited him on the Island, and brought him a radio. She talked with a number of the crewmen and one of them told her that there will be a revolution in this country, and afterward the Nazi Government would step in and take control. One of them told her that one of the crewmen intended to go to Washington, D. C., and work for the German Ambassador. She said she had visited the German Consulate and had seen one of the officers of the S.S. COLUMBUS, HENRY LAMPE, working there. The clerk in charge denied that he was there when she made inquiry for him. She said she had seen some of these officers and crewmen in the place of KARL SIEGEL, German photographer on Stevenson Street, San Francisco.

(5) DAVID ZAMORE, 704 Market Street, called at this office and stated that he was in the Stag Tavern, 3 Kearney Street, when he heard five crewmen from the German ship COLUMBUS make the remark in substance "if the United States sent an army to Europe, they would need only a one-way ticket", and other similar remarks.

An individual whose identity is known to this office and who asked that his name be held confidential stated that thirty members of this crew were absent without leave and no action was taken by the authorities at Angel Island Immigration Station where they had been quartered and that the officers of the S.S. COLUMBUS were reported to have been escorted through the United States Navy Yard at Mare Island.

Another informant stated that KURT RUPPERT, First Officer of the S.S. COLUMBUS, stays away days at a time and is reported to have gone on one occasion to Los Angeles.

X A Complaint had been received at this office that J. X. STRAND, Immigration Inspector in Charge, is reported to have fraternized with some of the officers of the ex-S.S. COLUMBUS, and is said to have taken a social trip with one or more of these men to the vicinity of Santa Cruz, California, over the weekend.

The San Francisco Office had received numerous complaints from varied sources of the activities of these men while ashore, of their drinking to excess, and of their arguments with civilians.

X From another confidential source, it was ascertained that FELIX BECKER, Deck Steward, one of the crew members, is said to have transferred his shore pass to GUNTHER AHL, another crew member, on occasions.

ULRICH HOLTZ, another crew member, is said to have bought two shore passes from a soldier at Fort McDowell for 50 cents. HOLTZ is said to have ridden on the army boat from the Island which is forbidden to German crewmen, posing as a waiter from the aliens' dining room at the Immigration Station, and when challenged by an army officer he gave the name of "OTTO MUELLER".

Upon hearing the President's Charlottesville, Virginia, radio address mentioning Italy, ULRICH HOLTZ and GUNTHER AHL, two German crew members are reported to have remarked that "the President would pay dearly for his utterances".

These crew members are reported to have remarked that in the event of strict internment of the German crew, that the crewmen would make a serious break for freedom.

It is known, according to a confidential informant, that the German crewmen were aware that a German submarine had halted the U.S.S. Washington off the coast of Portugal loaded with American passengers fleeing from the war zone, before this news appeared in the newspapers or was heard on the radio. There have been numerous reports that this crew is in radio communication with Germany.



Instructions to  
treatment  
Reports - must be made  
Monthly

Harrison -

Gaugher -

Anderson -

Clark.

Paul

Jackson

Monter

White

Information of value to the German Government.  
of Allied vessels, gas stations, etc. etc. etc. and  
some of the crew who are able to form dates of  
and dates on the German vessels, on the date of  
These German crew members have been laboring for  
many years.

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Department of Justice  
San Francisco, California  
June 28, 1940

No. II

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

The following information relative to the Crew of the S.S. COLUMBUS at Angel Island was reported to this office from sources which are believed to be reliable:

- (1) The crew of the ex-S.S. COLUMBUS comprise approximately 499 men. Since their arrival at the Island it is reported that their effects have not been searched for arms or contraband.
- (2) They are permitted to come and go to and from the Island, freely without any strict record or check made by immigration officials of the Island.
- (3) On occasions, they return to the island in a grossly intoxicated condition finding it necessary to have some of their fellow members assist them to their quarters.
- (4) They formerly had free access to the Government reservation adjoining Angel Island known as Fort McDowell, and now are said to go there from time to time in direct disobedience of orders.
- (5) That they are reported not searched upon their return to the Island, and their packages are not now examined for contraband.
- (6) That they have been furnished fatigue clothes, consisting of khaki slacks and khaki shirt, which somewhat resemble the fatigue clothes worn by the United States Army.
- (7) That on one occasion one of the German crew was at the canteen at Fort McDowell, raised his hand in the Nazi salute and shouted "Heil Hitler", resulting in a "trouncing" by one of the United States Army non-commissioned officers.
- (8) That they have built a barbecue pit, and "recreation center", on the beach and have erected a flag pole about 25 feet high on the U. S. Army reservation, but have not displayed any flag on this pole as yet.

minis  
SDW

True

Fake

Fish  
up



(9) That they are permitted to leave the Island on a pass said to be issued by their own officers, that they are permitted to stay away and no record is made of their return by the immigration authorities. *untrue*

(10) That a shortage was reported on a count in the barracks, that this shortage was reported to Mr. NEWPORT, and that NEWPORT, in command, said that he would show the number supposed to be present as Mr. HARRISON, The Chief Guard, would put down the full count in any event.

(11) That Guards received verbal instructions not to attempt to seize any contraband and that the German crew were to do their own policing, and that the officers of this crew were to be notified of any matters requiring disciplinary attention against any of these crew members; and that the ship's officers do not cooperate.

X (12) That it is general knowledge on Angel Island that some of the members of this alien German crew are visited by feminine persons, and it is common knowledge among the Guards that these men and their feminine visitors engage in immoral practices in the foliage adjoining the buildings. *True? 23<sup>00</sup> pm*

(13) That there is considerable dissatisfaction among the people of San Francisco in having these aliens circulate freely among the population, as well as among the armed forces of the United States Government, as they doubtless report their findings to the German Consul General.

(14) That they have in their quarters a short wave radio and are known to have German crew operators on duty there 24 hours a day. *True*

X (15) That no check whatever is made at night of the quarters of the crew or the room where the radio is maintained. *True*

(16) That none of the Guards at Angel Island make any investigation whatever, or have any contact with the quarantine Station where approximately 325 members of this crew are quartered. *True*

(17) That these crew members are reported never to overlook an opportunity to sell their Nazi philosophy to anyone who will listen, including the Immigration Guards.

X (18) That these German aliens are permitted to accompany the Immigration Service motor boat to the mainland, and return to the Island with alien prisoners without any Immigration Guard other than the boat operator being on board. *True*

(19) That some of these crew members are instructed in the use of the Immigration Service switchboard, and have actually operated this board, and thus have had access to incoming and outgoing official Government calls. *untrue*

(20) That the crew members are reported to have chartered the Motor Ship JUBILEE, arrive at Angel Island late at night on this boat at times in an intoxicated condition, that liquor is reported sold on this boat although it is not known whether there is any liquor license issued for the sale of such intoxicants.

X (21) That the passes issued by these S.S. COLUMBUS officers to the crew members are not carefully examined and men frequently exchange passes.

(22) That on one occasion the crew brought on the Island openly ten cases of beer which were taken to their quarters.

(23) That one of the crew members mentioned to a Guard, referring to the fatigue clothes, that all he would need would be a Swastika and cap, that it would be an easy matter to get arms from Fort McDowell, that they, the German crew, may be wiped out if they started anything, but "it would be for the Fatherland" as one of them is alleged to have remarked ostensibly in humorous vein to one of the Government employees on the Island.

(24) That the crew is permitted to receive frequent visitors who arrive on passes issued by the German Consul in San Francisco. *true*

X (25) That on one occasion an Immigration Guard observed the crew members bringing intoxicants on the Island, that he called upon several other Immigration Guards for assistance, that they declined to assist the Guard turning their backs on him, and one of the Immigration Guards made the remark "Nothing doing", and as a result of their actions four members of the crew got away and one case and one paper package of beer disappeared on the Island.

X (26) That on April 15, 1940, a boat landed at the Island, four cases of beer was put on the dock and placed on a truck for the Quarantine Station in the presence of the Immigration Guard on the gangplank and in the presence of the Second Officer of the Columbus Crew.

X (27) That on June 13, 1940, some of the crew were returning to the Island about midnight, one of the Guards started to remove from one of the German crew a quart bottle of what appeared to be intoxicants, that KURT RUPPERT, Chief Officer of the S.S. COLUMBUS forcibly took the bottle out of the Guard's hands, that the Guard tried to get possession of the bottle, and RUPPERT threw the bottle overboard, that RUPPERT was reported for interfering with an Immigration Officer in the performance of his duty, and no action was said to have been made, and the attention of the officer reported was not called to this incident, nor any action whatever taken on this complaint made by the Immigration Guard.

PSF: Justice Hoover  
for

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 15, 1940.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. J. EDGAR HOOVER

Please take this up  
personally with Francis Biddle.  
I hope the whole situation can  
be immediately tightened up,  
and I hope further that we can  
get rid of these people via  
Japan and Russia as fast as  
possible.

F. D. R.

Affidavit of James H. Newport,  
Foreman of the Guard, U. S. Immigration  
and Naturalization Service, relative  
to Crew, German SS. COLUMBUS, interned  
at Angel Island, San Francisco, Cal.



Office of the Solicitor General  
Washington, D. C.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
JUL 31 3 58 PM '40  
RECEIVED

July 31, 1940

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT  
FROM THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Re: COLUMBUS

On June 28, 1940, you sent me a memorandum calling attention to certain conditions alleged to exist among the 451 seamen and officers of the German Steamship "Columbus", scuttled on December 19, 1939, and detained at Angel Island, California, since March 1, 1940, and requesting immediate action. These conditions were described in two memoranda of the F.B.I., dated June 28th (attached), which suggested that 50 of the crew had disappeared without any action of the immigration authorities to locate them; that free access to the mainland was accorded them with no record of their movements or of the persons visiting them; that intoxicants were brought freely to the Island; that guards on the Island had been instructed not to search the seamen; that they were "probably" engaged in espionage, and had a short-wave radio maintaining a news service with Germany, and might be sending messages from Angel Island; reports of immoral conduct; and, finally, that a situation had developed "of great potential

danger to the United States".

I immediately telephoned to Daniel E. McGrath and James E. Ruffin, Special Assistants to the Attorney General, who were at Los Angeles concluding an inspection of the Border Patrol under my direction, and told them to make a thorough investigation of the situation. They arrived in San Francisco the next day, and kept in touch with L. B. Schofield, Special Assistant in charge of the Service, by telephone. Their report, dated July 9, 1940, is attached. This report finds no basis to support the serious allegations contained in the memoranda referred to. It may be summarized as follows:

They found all 451 persons present and no support in fact for the statement that 5 had disappeared; they found that members of the crew were permitted to go and come from Angel Island under the supervision of their own officers who made daily reports with respect thereto; they found that on one occasion members of the crew had returned to the island in an intoxicated condition; they found that the crew was not accorded free access to Fort McDowell, though that had first been the case by the express permission of the commanding officer. They were later permitted only to attend the moving pictures twice a week. They found that the crew members returning from San Francisco were not searched. This represented a relaxation of previous procedure after complaint by the officers of the crew who undertook to assume responsibility. Messrs. McGrath and Ruffin did conduct a search on one occasion and found nothing being brought on the island but tobacco, candy, and notions. They found that the report concerning the radio was misleading. There is a short-wave radio



in the quarters but no sending apparatus. Before permission was granted for the installation of a receiving set, the Army authorities at Fort McDowell were consulted and saw no objection. They found no evidence of immoral conduct with visitors, though women were permitted on occasion to visit the detention quarters.

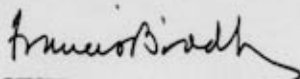
After we received this report you sent me, through Mr. Hoover, a copy of an affidavit from James H. Newport, an immigration inspector stationed at Angel Island, and suggested that we "get rid of these people via Japan and Russia as fast as possible". This affidavit contained allegations similar to those found in the memoranda. Mr. Schofield accordingly assigned N. D. Colleaser, Inspector in Charge at El Paso, Texas, one of the best men in the service, to proceed at once to San Francisco, take complete charge, make a thorough investigation, and take such disciplinary measures as he found necessary, with a view to strict control of the movements and conduct of the men in question. Inspector Colleaser has reported that he found the situation well in hand; and that the charges which had any basis in fact were either greatly exaggerated or referred to conditions which had long since been corrected. Colleaser is keeping Mr. Schofield in constant touch with the situation.

Arrangements have been made, satisfactory to the German consulate, with the President Lines, to transport these men on the "S.S. Coolidge", San Francisco, to Yokohama, August 9;

-4-

on the "S.S. Taft", August 16; and on the "Cleveland", August 30. But the British Government has made vigorous objections, saying that the boat would be attacked, that they would not permit the seamen to get back into German service, and indicating that the question would be raised in Parliament.

Accordingly, arrangements have been suspended until this angle can be further explored.



FRANCIS BIDDLE,  
Solicitor General

San Francisco, California

July 9, 1940

AFFIDAVIT OF JAMES H. NEWPORT,  
FOREMAN OF THE GUARD, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE,  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
ANGEL ISLAND, CALIFORNIA

I, JAMES H. NEWPORT, being first duly sworn, depose and say that:

I am employed as a foreman of the guard, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Angel Island, California, and have been employed in this service at Angel Island for the past five years. For the past four years, I have been in charge of the night watch on this Island, working from 4:00 P.M. to Midnight and from Midnight to 8:00 A.M., alternately changing every 30 days. My duties are to make inspection tours and to supervise the guards and to post guards where they may be needed and to see that everything at this Immigration Station is operated in an orderly manner, and detect any fires or disturbances which may occur during my tour of duty. I have under my direct supervision three guards and a matron, whose names are: RAY H. JAMES, JAMES E. BERRIGAN and EMMONS, and the matron, MISS IDA SMITH.

It is my practice to return to my home, 777 Haight Street, San Francisco, Telephone Market 8090, upon the completion of my tour of duty.

Since the arrival of the German alien crew of the ex-German steamship COLUMBUS at this Island on about January 18, 1940, I have had occasion to frequently observe these men and officers. I work under the direct supervision of J. X. STRAND, who is Inspector in Charge of Deportation and Detention.

I have called today at the San Francisco Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation upon my own volition and for the purpose of informing the Government of the true facts in connection with the activities on Angel Island involving the crew of this German vessel. It is my purpose to furnish this information to the Government in order that the Government may have a true picture of this situation.

It is my understanding that the Department of Justice has recently conducted an investigation of conditions at Angel Island and that in connection with this investigation I was not interviewed by any official of the Department of Justice, and so far as I know no attempt was made to interview me or talk with me.

I have come to the Department of Justice and am reporting this to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the sole purpose of having this government agency informed of the serious situation on this Island. This crew, which comprises about 450 German aliens, are at the present time very antagonistic to the guards on this Island and are maintaining a rather belligerent attitude toward the guards. Since taking over my duties in connection with this German crew, I have not received any written instructions as to my duties and any instructions given me by J. X. STRAND, the Inspector in Charge, have been entirely verbal and have been conflicting. MR. STRAND informed me that the immigration guards on this Island were not to interfere in any way with the operations of these crew members; that they were to follow the instructions of their superior officers, who were the German officers in command, and that they were to come and go from the Island on passes issued by these officers. The immigration guards have had no supervision of these passes. They were frequently misused by the crew and are still being misused up to the present time. One of the crew members, a German named Vogel, is one of the petty officers, and I have seen members of this crew leaving Angel Island on the Government boat and after their passes have been inspected by a guard, they would hand their passes to Petty Officer Vogel, a member of the German crew, who would run back and hand it to another German, who would leave the Island on the same pass.

About a week ago, I learned that certain government officers from the Department of Justice, whose names were unknown to me, had been making an investigation of conditions on Angel Island involving this German crew, and that on July 5 a number of these men were returned to the Island and that J. X. STRAND, Inspector in Charge, is said to have made an official count of the crew members; that on this occasion I saw a lot of strange faces among the crew members whom I had never seen before and on that evening I made a personal check of the count in the quarters occupied by the German crew and 20 of them were missing. There were a group of these crew members under my direct supervision in the immigration barracks, known as the shed. There are supposed to be 150 crew members in this shed, three of these are officers and live outside of the police quarters in the hospital building. The actual number of this German crew in the shed is 147 according to the official records and there are never more than two or three of the crew members who are in the local hospital. On July 6, 7, and 8, I conducted a physical count of these crew members and found on these occasions the following

numbers: 130, 129, and 128. During these last three nights, there were between 12 and 18 unaccounted for. Out of this group, the ship's officers permit not more than 10 to stay away from the Island all night, and taking this number into consideration, there still are a number who are absent from their quarters without authority. The number permitted to go ashore at one time from this group, according to verbal instructions issued to me by J. X. STRAND, is not to be more than 10. They arrive and depart at and from this immigration station without any record being made by any of the immigration authorities.

On the other side of the Island, about one-half mile away, is the quarantine station of the Immigration Service, where approximately 300 of these crew members are quartered. At this quarantine station there are no immigration officers to check this crew in any way.

Some of these crew members have a very intricate and complex radio receiving set not of the type usually sold commercially for receiving short wave radio messages. It is quite probable, and it is my opinion, that these men actually send messages through this radio set, as well as receive such messages. Heretofore I have listened to these Germans receiving messages in code, which was very loud and distinct, about 2:00 A. M. and at the present time the power is shut off at 10:30 P.M. until the early morning. The German crew have expressed their displeasure at this practice of shutting their radio at 10:30 P.M. This was done without the authority of J. X. STRAND. He was familiar with this practice which met with his approval. The crew members stated to me that they were going to complain to Mr. Strand in order that their radio would be permitted to operate during the night hours.

One of the leaders of this ship's crew is a German by the name of Lothar Allweins, who was formerly ship's clerk and is very brilliant. He has had numerous telephone conversations with a woman, known only as Katie, from San Francisco, Telephone Tuxedo 0551.

On the night of July 8, 1940, at 6:00 P.M., Lothar Allweins received a message from this number. He talked with this party about 10 or 15 minutes in German. He then went to the quarters of the ship's officers, who live in the hospital building, returned upstairs to the administration building, where the ship's crew have an office. He was there about 10 minutes and went back to the hospital. He then went to the crew quarters, was quite excited and was running around double time.



I called one of the guards, R. H. JAMES, to watch him. All of the crew went into their own quarters and apparently discussed some matter of great importance, the nature of which was unknown to me as none of the guards present were familiar with the German language. R. H. JAMES, a guard, then went to the radio room where there were gathered about 10 petty officers of this crew and about 12 members of the crew. R. H. JAMES, the guard, reported to me that he rushed into the radio room hurriedly and observed the radio operator apparently engaged in the operation of the radio. JAMES reported to me further that he left this radio room and had later observed that the Germans had posted a guard outside of the radio room and as soon as JAMES went by, this guard immediately stepped into the radio room for the apparent purpose of warning of the approach of this guard.

It is the practice of the members of this German crew to wear shorts and exercise every evening after supper and it was particularly significant that on last evening, July 8, they did not exercise but remained in their quarters.

Guard JAMES reported to me that every night about between one and two A.M. he has observed a boat without lights close to this Island and that it would be quite possible for this boat to load or unload members of this German crew or any unauthorized individuals and take them from or to the Island without being detected by any of the guards, as this boat could land around the point on the sandy beach, which is not under observation.

The German crew stationed at the immigration station use the same sanitary facilities with approximately 30 alien ex-convicts from federal and state institutions who are there awaiting deportation. They are permitted to mingle freely with these convicts, some of whom are murderers and are potentially dangerous characters.

Since the German Crew has arrived, their effects have not been searched. I was told by Mr. J. A. STRAND, Inspector in Charge, that these crew members were to be treated with the greatest courtesy, that they were not prisoners or enemy aliens or detained against their will, that they were to be considered in the same category as passengers in a vessel without a passport. Mr. STRAND told me that it was quite possible for the German consul general in San Francisco to have all of these men released to the United States on a writ in the event that their treatment was not considered entirely satisfactory.

These men go back and forth freely between Angel Island and the mainland and also go back and forth between their two quarters and

I have seen a number of strange faces among the crew. It is impossible to keep any accurate count of these men. The officers of the crew are supposed to take charge but they are very lax in issuing and taking up the passes and supervising the conduct of these crew members. Since the investigation conducted by the Department of Justice these men continue to come back to the Island at times in an intoxicated condition, at which times they are hilarious and belligerent. Usually one of the German officers of this group is present but he does not do anything about it at all.

The khaki uniform issued to this crew is strikingly similar to that worn by the U. S. Army and the only addition required to make it complete would be an overseas cap. The similarity is so striking that the military authorities at Ft. McDowell advised the immigration authorities that these German crew members would not be permitted on the military reservation wearing such a uniform and would be required to wear civilian clothes. They are, however, permitted to enter the military post of Ft. McDowell, which is adjoining Angel Island, on two occasions during the day for the purpose of attending moving picture exhibitions there. They are not supposed to be on this military reservation at any other time, but I have been informed by soldiers from the U. S. Army that these crew members go on the army post without authority recently, and continue to fraternize with the military personnel.

Angel Island is an old government reservation. There are many old wooden buildings located thereon, including a number of old buildings in which 124 Chinese and their families, including a number of small children, are quartered. There is a considerable fire hazard on this Island due to the inadequate water supply, as all water used on the Island is brought over in boats from the mainland and pumped into two large water tanks on the hill adjoining this Island. These German crew members are permitted to have free access to these tanks and I have frequently seen them sitting on top of these wooden tanks. These tanks are on tall metal towers with a platform on the top which permits an excellent view of the bay. These German crew members are permitted to have free access to the top of these tanks and if they were so disposed are in a position to commit sabotage or pollute the water supply of the Island. In the event of a fire on the Island, the fire fighting facilities and trained personnel would be entirely inadequate and may result in a serious loss of life.

One of my guards, R. H. JANES, reported to me that he had a conversation with one of the German crew members, who boasted to him that "some day the United States is going to be one of Germany's most prosperous colonies." Guard JANES also reported to me that he overheard one of the

crew members stated that "If the Americans started pushing the Germans around, we have access to plenty of guns and we could teach the Americans a lesson."

The German crew members do not call themselves "crew" but speak continually of themselves as a "battalion" in referring to their own organization. Last night, July 8, one of the guards, MR. EMMONS, reported to me that a crew member had objected to him living on the Island, stating that the German government was paying \$1.50 a day for the room and board of these men and that they could live on this very nicely in San Francisco.

I am reporting this matter on behalf of myself and the members of the Guard of the night crew as I feel that there is a serious situation in which the lives of our men are in great jeopardy, since these German crew members are manifesting a most belligerent attitude and may at any time cause a serious disturbance. We would be outnumbered 100 to 1. There are no fire arms on this Island, we are not permitted to carry any weapons of any kind or clubs to defend ourselves and we would be at the mercies of any of these crew members or any aliens who may suddenly decide on violence due to their physical and mental condition.

Another serious condition existing on the Island is the use of intoxicants and the bringing of intoxicants on the Island by this German crew and that we were instructed not to interfere in any way with any of the German crew bringing liquor on to this reservation, but to report any disturbances or any violations of any rules to the officers of the German crew. These officers have repeatedly failed to cooperate and the First Officer, MR. RUPPERT, who has been particularly unfriendly and belligerent in his attitude, is not disposed to cooperate in enforcing discipline among the crew members who have free run of the Island and freely come and go to and from this Government reservation.

The German crew have maintained the attitude that they will do as they please and they look upon the American guards with contempt, realizing that we have no jurisdiction or authority to supervise any of their operations on the Island.

Some of the Government employees at this Immigration station are known to freely fraternize with members of this crew and on numerous occasions I have observed some of these crew members visiting one of the

guard's cottages when the guard was on duty and his wife was alone in the residence. This occurs so frequently that it was general knowledge among the guards that the wife of one of these guards was entertaining these German seamen from time to time.

These men are accorded every courtesy and are not mistreated in any way but they have maintained a very superior, dominating, typically Prussian attitude. They not only visit San Francisco and the Bay district but it has been reported to me that they have visited Seattle, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Reno. One of the crew members was making inquiry of R. H. JAMES, one of the guards, as to the bus fare to New York City.

I want to add to this statement that the opportunity that these German crew members have of fraternizing with the aliens awaiting deportation on the Island, many of whom are well known in San Francisco, affords them ample opportunity to become acquainted with women of the underworld in San Francisco and to obtain confidential information from various sources. It was also reported to me that members of this crew had visited Mare Island Navy Yard, where a number of important operations relating to our National defense are now in progress.

I am acquainted with a number of other guards who feel exactly the same as I do about this situation and who are anxious to fully cooperate with the Department of Justice and furnish whatever information they may have in their possession. These guards are JOHN J. TROTTER and WILLIAM FIELDS, who are on different shifts and who both live on the Island and may be in possession of additional information.

I have learned while at Angel Island that an investigation was conducted by some representative of the Department of Justice relative to the crew of the S. S. COLUMBUS. In connection with this investigation I was not interviewed by any representative of the Department of Justice. I was readily available at all times and as far as I know no attempt was made to interview me relative to this situation. I have talked with a number of the guards at Angel Island and none of the guards as far as I know have been interviewed by any representative of the Department of Justice and conditions at the present time are exactly the same as they were heretofore. It is my opinion that this investigation was nothing more than a "whitewash" and I am earnestly furnishing this information to the Government for the purpose of having the Federal Bureau of Investigation informed fully of the facts in my possession.

S/d James H. Newport  
JAMES H. NEWPORT

Subscribed and Sworn to Before Me This Ninth Day of July, 1940, at San Francisco, California

S/d Louis D. Wine  
LOUIS D. WINE, Special Agent

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Suite 1729, 111 Sutter  
San Francisco, California