

Rohatyn's Fascist Roots Are Showing

by Jeffrey Steinberg and Pierre Beaudry

During and immediately following the Second World War, U.S. intelligence agencies, including Military Intelligence, the State Department, and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), developed exhaustive files on the Synarchist International, the international financier and industrial cartel behind the Fascist and Nazi Axis.

To appreciate the depth of understanding of the Synarchist International among U.S. intelligence professionals of that era, just consider the following brief summary of a 100-page July 1941 U.S./French dossier on the French Synarchist organizations—the Synarchist Movement of Empire (SME), the Synarchist Revolutionary Convention (SRC), and the Secret Committee of Revolutionary Action (SCRA), the military leadership arm of the SME, also known as the “Cagoulards” (“the hooded ones”):

“The Synarchist movement is an international movement born after the Versailles Treaty, which was financed and directed by certain financial groups belonging to the top international banking community. Its aim is essentially to overthrow in every country, where they exist, the parliamentary regimes which are considered insufficiently devoted to the interests of these groups and, therefore, too difficult to control because of the number of persons required to control them.”

The dossier continued, “SME proposes therefore to substitute them by authoritarian regimes more docile and more easily maneuverable. Power would be concentrated in the hands of the CEOs of industry and in designated representatives of chosen banking groups for each country.”

Vichy France

In France, the United States maintained diplomatic relations with the Nazi puppet Vichy regime, in part, as a means of maintaining links to French resistance circles, including military resistance networks inside the Vichy government. Thus, the U.S. had extensive access to intelligence on the French Synarchist apparatus, which dominated the Hitler collaborationist Vichy government in southern France (Hitler directly occupied the north of France, including Paris, and, in 1942, grabbed all of France, sending the remnants of Vichy into exile in North Africa).

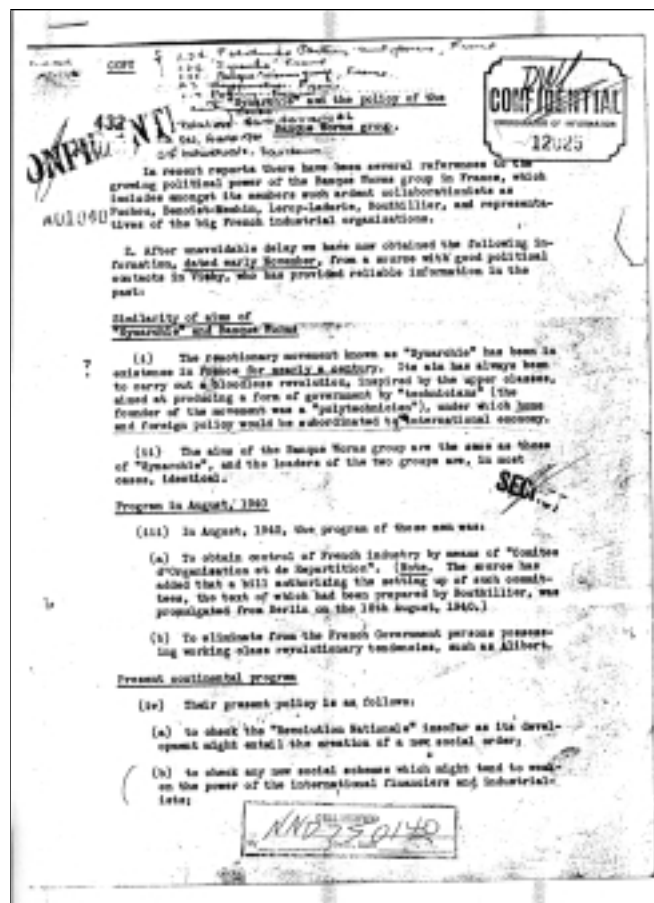
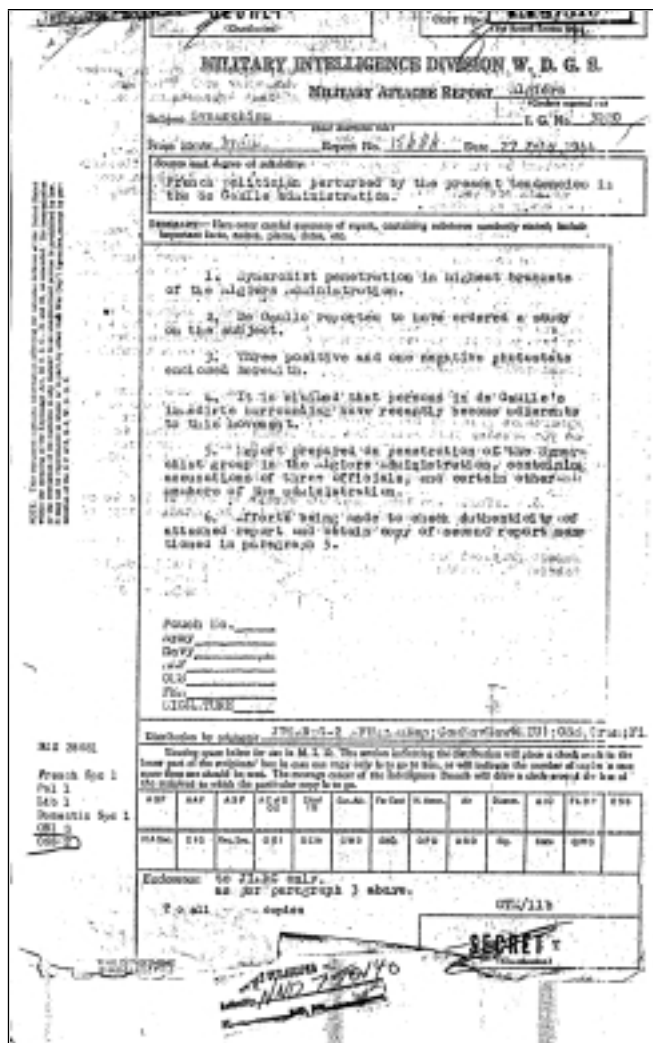
In 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt assigned William Langer, the Director of the Research and Analysis Branch of the OSS, to prepare an official account on the complex and controversial U.S. diplomacy toward Vichy France. His re-

port was published in declassified form in *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947). Langer drew upon thousands of pages of classified wartime documents. He would later take a leave of absence from his post as chairman of the History Department at Harvard University to organize the CIA's Office of National Estimates, the premier U.S. intelligence community analytical agency, and he served on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board from 1961 until his death in 1977.

Langer's *Our Vichy Gamble* carefully delineated the Vichy regime factions, and identified “the Banque Worms clique” as the most hard-core of the pro-Hitler elements. In discussing Adm. Jean François Darlan, at one point a leading Nazi collaborator, Langer wrote: “But Darlan's henchmen were not confined to the fleet. His policy of collaboration with Germany could count on more than enough eager supporters among French industrial and banking interests—in short, among those who even before the war had turned to Nazi Germany and had looked to Hitler as the savior of Europe from Communism. . . . These people were as good fascists as any in Europe. They dreaded the Popular Front like the plague and were convinced that they could prosper even under Hitler's iron rod. Many of them had long had extensive and intimate business relations with German interests and were still dreaming of a new system of ‘synarchy,’ which meant government of Europe on fascist principles by an international brotherhood of financiers and industrialists.”

Langer continued: “But peculiarly identified with the Darlan regime was the Banque Worms et Cie, headed by Hippolyte Worms, with Gabriel Leroy-Ladurie and Jacques Barnaud as the dominant figures. To realize the extent to which members of the Banque Worms group had been taken into the government by the autumn of 1941 a brief survey of the council and of the Secretaries of State will be most profitable. . . . Pierre Pucheu (Interior), and Yves Bouthillier (National Economy) were members of the Worms clique. General Bergeret (Secretary of State for Aviation) was included by some among Pétain's personal following, by others among the Worms group. Excluding Bergeret, the Secretaries of State were almost to a man associates of the same clique. They were Jacques Barnaud (Delegate-General for Franco-German Economic Relations), Jerome Carpopino (Education), Serge Huard (Family and Health), Admiral Platon (Colonies), René Belin (Labor), François Lehideaux (Industrial Production), Jean Berthelot (Communications), and Paul Charbin (Food Supply). . . . From this list it appears at once that practically every ministry or secretaryship touching economic affairs was in the hands of one or another of the Worms clique.”

A Coordinator of Information (the forerunner to the OSS) report from late 1940, titled “Synarchie and the policy of the Banque Worms group,” further underscored the links between the “Banque Worms group” and the most hard-core Nazis in the Vichy regime: “The reactionary movement



Two of the World War II U.S. intelligence documents obtained by EIR researchers from the National Archives, which demonstrate the sophisticated understanding at the time of the role of the Synarchist International in directing the Nazi-Fascist axis.

known as ‘Synarchie’ has been in existence in France for nearly a century. Its aim has always been to carry out a bloodless revolution, inspired by the upper classes, aimed at producing a form of government by ‘technicians’ (the founder of the movement was a ‘polytechnicien’), under which home and foreign policy would be subordinated to international economy. The aims of the Banque Worms group are the same as those of ‘Synarchie,’ and the leaders of the two groups are, in most cases, identical.”

Penetrating the Gaullists

Despite the association of the Banque Worms/Synarchie with the most extreme Nazi collaborationist factions in the Vichy regime, on July 27, 1944, the U.S. Military Attaché in Algiers issued a source report/warning that the Synarchists were also penetrating the Free French administration in North Africa.

Under the heading “Synarchism,” the report noted that “Some of the oldest and formerly most faithful supporters of General de Gaulle are worried by what they call a tendency

to let ‘Synarchism’ penetrate even the highest brackets of the Algiers Administration. It is believed that General de Gaulle, up to recently, opposed Synarchism, which is a strongly reactionary movement, financed by the *Haute Banque*. He has even ordered a confidential study to be made on the subject, a copy of which has been seen by American officers, but since its dissemination is not known, it was again reproduced. . . . Our source of information claims that while there is no direct evidence that General de Gaulle has had a change of heart in regard to this movement, some of the people around him are known to have recently become adherents to it. In this connection the Minister of War Diethelm, Colonel Passey and Commandant Pelabon are prominently mentioned. A confidential up to date report has recently been prepared by this group of original de Gaullists on the penetration of the Synarchist group in the Algiers Administration.”

Attached to the Military Intelligence document was a secret “Appendix A” which named leading Synarchists and Synarchist institutions in both Vichy and Algiers. Prominent on the list was: “Banque Lazare (André MEYER).” The same

list included “Barnaud,” unquestionably a reference to the same Jacques Barnaud who was named in the earlier COI report on the Banque Worms clique. Barnaud was the Director General of Banque Worms prior to the war, and was also a director, along with several Lazard Frères officers, of Raffineries Françaises de Pétrole de l’Atlantique, which handled all French oil dealings with Royal Dutch Shell. Barnaud was also on the board of the Central Company of Land Credit of Amsterdam, which was a joint Worms-Lazard venture, and another point of intersection with the top echelons of the Anglo-Dutch oligarchy. Royal Dutch Shell, of course, was one of Paris Lazard’s biggest clients.

Royal Dutch Shell, Lazard, and Banque Worms

It is no surprise that the managing director of Lazard Frères, André Meyer, should show up on a 1944 U.S. Military Intelligence list of known wartime Synarchists. Banque Worms, from its inception, was virtually a creation of Lazard, and both Lazard and the Worms group were leading French assets of the Anglo-Dutch combine, centered in Royal Dutch Shell and in the Rothschild banking organization. Hippolyte Worms, the founder of Banque Worms, was a shipping magnate, whose business was built on its contracts to deliver Royal Dutch Shell oil. He was also one of 12 founding members of the Synarchist Movement of Empire (SME), the secret organization behind the delivery of France over to Hitler and the Nazis. Lazard Frères was the French investment bank for Shell, and it was in that capacity that Lazard was instrumental in the creation of the banking arm of the Worms group, Banque Worms et Cie.

A 1954 French intelligence report on the activities of the Paris branch of Lazard Frères further detailed the bank’s pivotal role in paving the way for the Franco-Nazi wartime collusion: “When Von Ribbentrop came to Paris on December 6, 1938 to sign a ‘good neighbor pact’* with Georges Bonnet, there was a dinner at the Quai d’Orsay that evening attended by Daniel Serruys of Lazard Bank. At that time Mr. André Meyer, new associate manager of Lazard Frères, had excellent relations with Georges Bonnet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Daladier government and is said to have supported him at the time of Munich.

“The Lazard managers,” the document continued, “did not want to burn all their bridges with Germany because they still had friends in the German world of finance. Furthermore, the Lazard house in France was the official bank of the Royal Dutch, a Dutch company with British capital. Furthermore, the president of Royal Dutch, Sir Henri Deterding, after having served England for a long time, had shown a certain sympathy for Hitler’s Germany and provided funds to the National

Socialist Party without breaking with the business world of the City of London. At the time of Munich, Deterding contributed to ‘expediting’ Mr. Chamberlain before Hitler in Godesberg in September 1938. Because of the position of Deterding, the directors of Lazard and especially André Meyer, had to adopt an attitude of expectation vis à vis Hitler, regardless of his anti-Semitism. It appears that they approved of Munich.”

The André Meyer of the Munich treachery and the promotion of the Worms clique, would, at the close of World War II, adopt Felix Rohatyn as his protégé and successor as managing partner of Lazard. Meyer once described Rohatyn in a *New York Times* interview: “In some respects, I consider him as my son.”

Postwar: The Worms Crawl Out

Following the liberation of France, a number of leading Synarchists, including top Banque Worms officials who were among the leading collaborationists within the Vichy regime, were jailed for their treasonous activities, only to be later exonerated, and incorporated, wholesale, into the Cold War anti-Communist crusade.

At the close of the war, Georges Villiers, the leader of the French National Employers Council, a hotbed of Synarchist bankers and industrialists, approached Hippolyte Worms to bankroll an anti-Communist front group, to target particularly the European labor movement.

Worms hired Georges Albertini, the head of the openly pro-Nazi RNP party, and the staff director of the Ministry of Labor in Vichy. Albertini was ostensibly hired to run the “labor department” at Banque Worms, but his actual assignment was to establish the Institute of Social History, which served as a hiring hall and front for wartime Nazi collaborators. Albertini had been arrested on Sept. 25, 1944 by the de Gaulle government and sentenced to five years of hard labor. After spending four years in the Prison of Poissy, he was freed in February 1948 by a Presidential pardon—specifically to lead the anti-Communist front group. Hippolyte Worms had also been arrested during the liberation, but had been released after several months. Jacques Barnaud, Banque Worms’ top official in the Vichy regime, was arrested on Oct. 18, 1944 and spent four years in jail, until charges against him were abruptly dismissed in 1948. Barnaud had not only been the liaison between France and Germany on all economic policies. He had also been Director of Cabinet in the Vichy Ministry of Labor, under the Nazi Marcel Deat. In effect, Barnaud had been Albertini’s boss under the Vichy regime. Barnaud returned to work at Banque Worms, and remained there until his death in 1962.

The Banque Worms-funded Institute of Social History was fully integrated into the umbrella anti-Communist agency, the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Boris Souvarine, a former leading French Communist, who was expelled from the Party in 1925, was one of the first people hired by Georges Albertini, to work at the Netherlands-headquartered Institute of Social History, which produced a flurry of anti-Communist

* This pact confirmed the Munich Accord of Sept. 29, 1938, about the invasion of France. It was at that dinner that the famous turnaround of Hitler’s policy of “going against Russia first” was agreed upon by the French Synarchist bankers.

and anti-Soviet tracts, and ran Synarchist penetration and disruption operations into the labor movement throughout Europe. This Amsterdam-based operation of French-pedigree Synarchists was an integral part of the Anglo-Dutch Cold War structures, centered out of the Bilderberg Group of wartime princely Nazis, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Prince Philip of Britain. Souvarine was then deployed by this crowd to the French Institute of Social History.

This bankers' subversion of the labor movement is but one of the Synarchist tricks that Felix Rohatyn learned from André Meyer.