Appendix B. Examples of René-Eva and Robert-Eclair Correspondence

René-Eva correspondence

The following examples of Office of Strategic Services (OSS) memoranda summarizing correspondence and documents sent by René Bertholet to Eva for transmission to the OSS give an impression of the nature of these materials.

“Memorandum for OSS” regarding “Information from RENE” dated July 31, 1942

The following documents have just been received from René and relate to the movement of resistance in France:

1. Rassemblement des Forces de la Libération. Grave warning to patriots to look out for spies and secret police.
2. Pourquoi nous mourons de Faim? [Why are we dying of hunger?] Claims that with the connivance of Vichy, Germany commandeered from July, 1941 to April 1942: 92,600 head of beef; 55,000 sheep; 31 million liters alcohol; 11 million liters brandy; 13 million liters vermouth; 166 million liters wine; 18 million kilos vegetables and fruit; 23 million kilos grapes; 31 million kilos potatoes; 15 million kilos almond cacao; 700 thousand kilos green coffee; 2,300,000 quintals of WHEAT, all in car lots, to which must be added far
greater quantities of foodstuffs consumed by the Germans in the country, the countless truckloads and millions of parcels of food sent to Germany by them.

3. Address by DAUPHIN-MEUNIER on lamentable condition of French prisoners in Germany, including the workers.


5. Number of press directives of German censorship.


7. Leaflet urging French workers to sign up to work in Germany.

8. Pamphlet on anti-Semitism issued by French Christian socialists, circulation 25,000.

9. Leaflet against persecution of Jews circulated clandestinely in 15,000 copies.

10. Leaflet circulated by clandestine papers containing de Gaulle’s declaration, reported well received.

11. Leaflet inciting French workers to sabotage German war production, 100,000 copies distributed.

12. Article on the Pope distributed by Catholics of Montauban and Toulouse.

13. Leaflet with photo of starving Russian prisoners circulated by COMBAT.


15. LIBERATION, July, 1942. Circulation now 35 to 40,000. Also issue of June 24, 1942.

16. COMBAT, June, 1942; LIBRE FRANCE. Paper published by French students.

17. Circular of Christian Syndicalists against recruiting French workers for Germany.


20. German report by Dr. Weizman on complete failure of food rationing system in France.

21. Vichy Labor Dept. invitation to Christian Syndicalists delegation to Laval, and their reply refusing to take any such political action.

22. Quotations from articles in Paris Revues.
24. Leaflet circulated by COMBAT urging French workers to remain in France and refuse to accept German inducements.
25. Patriotic leaflet on 14th July.
26. Leaflet to French workers urging demonstration May 1st.
27. Article on New Religious Front in France.
28. Letter July 6, 1942, from Secretary of State for Industrial Production at Paris to all organizations of industrialists ordering dissemination in all plants of Laval’s appeal for workers to sign up for Germany.
29. Letter in Russian to KURSKI and mimeographed Hebrew sheet circulated by associates of the “Bund” in France.

Covering letter from René to EVA dated July 28, 1942, is likewise enclosed. Note that article entitled “Ou va la France?” sent with last batch of papers was not written by Fernand de Brinon but by Francois Poncet, former French Ambassador to Germany.¹

“Memorandum for O.S.S.” from Bern, August 7, 1942, “Subject: Documents from René re conditions in France”

The following documents have been received from René and are destined for Eva:

1. Copy of clandestine sheet published by Catholic Republicans, date apparently in June, 1942.
2. Report on address by German Prof. Grimm in Marseille June 8, 1942.
4. Leaflet “Thou shalt not be Hitler’s Slave” circulated among workers by “France-Liberté” advocating refusal to heed Laval’s appeal for workers to go to Germany.
5. Copy of a circular of the Légion indicating dissatisfaction with efforts of Legionnaires.
6. 2 reports on recruiting of French workers for Germany: July 6, train with 690 left for Dijon. 130 from Nice and 180 from Toulon came in special cars attached to regular train. Of 380 from Marseille 200 were natives from Africa. Only 60% were French, and of them 40% negroes.


8. Copies of communist tracts from Marseille.


10. Series of censor’s orders to French press, in Free Zone.

11. German order relative to return of refugees to Alsace.

12. Various reports from Germany and Poland.

13. Declaration of clandestine Italian Socialist Party against Italian preparations for military occupation of Tunis, Corsica, Nice and Savoie.

Memorandum from Arthur Goldberg to David Shaw dated March 25, 1943 entitled “Message for Eva” (Example of Efforts to Provide Relief Funds for Refugees)

We are in receipt of the following cabled message from Switzerland for Eva:

The family of Ryba Nathan are very thankful for the transmittal of the twelve thousand nine hundred. The Nathan family wishes you to tell Kursky that Peskin, Stark, Dobin, Honikman, Madame Jelin and Dr. Bonchewskyan and son have been deported. Their family, which is staying in France, is in great danger. Kursky is requested by Nathan to send the equivalent of $6000 in order to save them by means of the same channel and me. Will you please inform Sascha that Baccia has safely arrived here. Anschi desires some news of Theo. Although the difficulties are increasing the work continues. Will you kindly inform us if you receive the important documentation on French resistance which we are giving to Sam [reference to Uncle Sam, the U.S.].
The deportation of young French [laborers who were sent to Germany to support the war effort] is nothing but conscription, in collusion with the old Sadist of the Hotel Sévigné at Vichy and the arch-liar Laval, who hates the truth. The truth is that these youths are being sent for the most part to the German étape in the East. Orders which have been seen mention Danzig, Königsberg, Silesia. French conscripts are being dispatched to the depots of the Wehrmacht, and so, brigaded with German troops they will be helpless; they will be ordered to the massacres of the Eastern Front to fill the gaps in the ranks of the Nazis.

Laval says there are a million of these youths of the classes of 40, 41 and 42. Making allowances for exemptions, etc., that means 700,000, or 45 to 50 new divisions presented by Laval in a fortnight to his Berlin Master. These youths have been delivered to Nazi recruiting offices, where they are examined, passed and deported in less than 10 days.

Let our British and American allies ponder this as well! These thousands of young men would not have left had they had the slightest hope. On the one hand there were the political intrigues in North Africa, the suspicion of collusion between Pétain and certain persons in Algiers patronized by Gen. Eisenhower, and on the other hand the tremendous disappointment caused by the failure to establish the Second Front after so many months, despite so many promises and oft repeated boasts that all was absolutely ready. The net result is that France has lost classes of a million men who could have supplied the Allies with a magnificent army. Once again the United Nations have lost the race against the Axis. It is high time, indeed, that the Allies learned the importance of audacity and decision.

At Lille 23 German officers were killed at the Casino, and German quarters were attacked by patriots with bombs and grenades. In Paris several buildings were attacked by them and in
the rue Laborde sentinels guarding a garage were killed and all military trucks were burned. All patriots escaped.

At the Renault plant 5,000 out of 15,000 workers were conscripted.

Extensive railroad sabotage is reported from Paris-Batignolles, Bethune, at St. Cyr-en-Val, Macon, between Lille and Valenciennes, and at Sedan.

Official French documents relative to the evacuation of Marseille and vicinity. A zone 300 kilometers from the sea is proscribed, all through the collaboration of French authorities. Railroad authorities have issued special orders for patrol of lines constantly to prevent sabotage.4

Examples of the “Robert-Éclair” correspondence for the Special Operations Executive (SOE)

*Brief typed letter in the SOE files dated May 23, 1942, from “J.Q. 100” to “J.Q.”*

This letter would be meaningless if it did not include handwritten notations for the reader to understand the references. The source of these notations (shown below in brackets) is unknown. Even with the notations, the message is not completely clear. It appears to refer to Bertholet’s efforts to have funds transferred from the United States to support resistance efforts in France, which was also referred to in the René-Eva correspondence:

The accompanying letters from A [Robert] to B [Éclair] and C [Éva] in D [United States] deal with a question which A [Robert] raised some time ago, namely as to the possibility of E [transferring funds] for the F [good work] from D [U.S.A.] to be made available in 38 [France]. . . . I suggest that you should draw the particular attention of our friends to these letters in case they should be in a position to pull strings for the purpose of facilitating the operations in question. . . . The letters are in the envelope marked G. [Mr. John].5
SOE Memorandum from “X/G” to “AD/X” Dated September 20, 1943, Listing Messages Received by Eichler (“Eclair”) from Bertholet (“Charles”)

This memorandum included reports about reactions to the fall of Mussolini (“joyfully welcomed”), the efforts by the Nazis to crush dissent (“S.S., S.A., and H.J. are being trained with most modern equipment for stamping out demonstrations, strikes, etc. Every second man must be regarded as a Nazi agent”), the resistance of foreign workers at Siemens (“[r]oughly 75% foreign workers at Siemens whose alleged laziness is certainly deliberate”), and sabotage efforts within Germany (“Considerable sabotage on works and communications especially during raids. Also anti-Nazi wall inscriptions. All this much hushed up.”). The document also included the sobering assessment “The Nazi machine is still firmly in hand. Hopes [for rebellion] lie in hunger, bombardments and serious military defeats.”