

AIR POUCH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE

PRIORITY
FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

(Security Classification)

787.001/4-554
R 5-11-87

FROM AMEMBASSY, BAGHDAD

697

DESP. NO.

TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

April 5, 1954

DATE

REF

APR 7 1954

Use Only	ACTION	IN FO	DEPT.
	REC'D		OTHER
	NEA-4		DCR-2 OI-6 P-1 ECR-1
	H-12		USIA-10 CIA-7 OCB-1

SUBJECT: REPORT OF PAO DINSMORE SHOWS EXTENT OF COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION IN SULAIMANIYA LIWA

There is enclosed a report from Lee Dinsmore, PAO in Kirkuk covering a recent trip to some of the smaller centers of Sulaimaniya Liwa with the USIS film unit.

According to Mr. Dinsmore's report Halabja is a strong point in the Communist organization outside Baghdad and the Qaimiqam, Ismail Ali Al-Shaikh is unable to control the situation. It will be remembered that he made a poor impression on me when I visited Halebja in July 1953.

RECEIVED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1954 APR 12 AM 11 32

DC/R
RECORDS BRANCH

Burton Y. Berry

Enclosure
As stated herein.

cc: Tehran

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.3
NND 822900
By MSS, NARA, Date 12-17-84

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ABAllen/jh
REPORTER

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

This Document Must Be Returned to
DC/R
Central
Files
APR 13 1954
NEA CENTER
D-10

787.001/4-554

CONFIDENTIAL FILE
LBD-WC
MAY 24 1954

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(Classification)

Comments following trip in Suleimaniya Liwa, Iraq March 15, 1954

As Antranik, our films technician, put it during the film show in Penjwin two nights ago, "Their microbes are everywhere." In this case, according to him, it was the non-commissioned officer in charge of the police of that town on the borders of Iraq and Iran. Some stones had been thrown at the portable screen and had torn holes in it during the show; the policeman had scurried among the crowd and moved his men about apparently looking for the stone-thrower, but he was not to be found. Antranik had known the policeman in Suleimaniya and said that he was friendly there with local Communists. In an otherwise very friendly town, amid curious but hospitable officials and townspeople, stones were being thrown at another mobile cinema. Perhaps it was only boys being boys, but perhaps it was a new ripple on what seems to be an ever-widening wave of opposition to and demonstration against "western imperialistic" influence.

Four hours from Penjwin down the muddy mountain, in Halabja, there is no doubt of this opposition. There are 7-10 young men in jail there awaiting trial for the recent attack on the British Mobile Van. The town is tense, we were not allowed to show a cinema, police are obviously afraid of their responsibilities and young men wear red handkerchiefs and ties to broadcast their sympathies. To stop the demonstration in question, police from Suleimaniya (2-2½ hours away) had to be brought in; local police were intimidated, some sympathetic to the demonstrators--they refused to move on the crowd and restore order. The weak Qaimaqam had no control over the situation. My visit to the school headmaster (intermediate school) was a bit like a page out of a spy thriller. Once in the office, he shut the door behind me, at the same time instructing the janitor to let anyone in. Then he shook my hand warmly and said

not that he was very glad that I had come in. He also said that his students called him "the American spy" because some years ago he had been friendly with Mr. Gnade who was then in charge of the USIS and had received a gift book from him. According to him, on the day the British films unit came to Halabja a meeting was called just out of town to which most of the students went and "others from the market." At the meeting it was decided to make a demonstration against the cinema. This meeting and its deliberations were known by the police and almost everyone in town. Nothing was done to either call off the cinema or to prepare for the coming demonstration other than the normal police supervision provided for public showings. The headmaster says that he has little control over the students, of any kind. For instance, his English language teacher has studied in England and is well-qualified. The students however, decided that they did not want to hear any English in the school and demanded that lessons in English be taught in Arabic!

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

(Classification)

This procedure is now being followed. I asked how they passed government examinations and he replied that no teacher dared fail students in Halabja. Since students took to going to the Qaimaqam with many requests and complaints he has decided to refer all of their requests to that government official since he, as headmaster, is not really running the school nor is his advice wanted. The school bell rang for the break between classes and the headmaster went to the door, opened it and asked me to not come to the door. After five minutes during which he carried on conversations outside the door, the bell rang again and he waited until all students had gone into rooms and the hall was empty. Shrugging and grinning somewhat sheepishly he said that I could leave, that no one would see me. He did not want to confirm in their minds the myth that he was a "spy". Next to Najaf comes Halabja in the degree of organization and activity among young Communists, according to the opinion of the Headmaster. Whether this is the case or not, it appears to be an ideal situation for the organization. The Qaimaqam has been weak and has tended to look the other way in order to avoid unpleasant relations. The police do not relish their job and are afraid that, perhaps, they are on the wrong side. Young government officials are more or less sympathetic to the movement. The new Qaimaqam, coming in from Koi Sanjak, is, according to the Mutasarrif of Kirkuk, not a strong man, only a bit more clever than his predecessor. When I suggested that we might put on a film show in the Officials Club, that we had films with Kurdish sound, the police officer was no more enthusiastic. He obviously wanted no trouble, and didn't trust in the possibilities of a peaceful show even inside a building for government employees. His greatest concern was to get us into a room where we could put up our cots and stay put for the night. We sat in a tea shop, the owner of which, according to our films technician is an active member of the Suleimaniya Communist group, and talked to some truck drivers who spat when the local trouble-makers were mentioned. One client, a well-dressed young man, was wearing the badge--a prominent bright red handkerchief in his upper coat pocket and a red tie. He left when I sat down. Shortly after a young, poorly-dressed fellow came in and sat next to us, straining his ears to get our conversation.

We were well received in Chwarta, which, although the provincial seat of the district, is a sleepy, end-of-the-road settlement where the few government officials and teachers stranded there do little more than bemoan their bad luck, and look forward to occasional visits to Suleimaniya. This was the first real test in Kurdestan of our films with Kurdish sound tracks and the response was encouraging. Whereas the health cartoons usually draw little more than appreciative laughter from Kurdish audiences which, except for the literate, cannot understand the Arabic, this audience of Kurds of all ages were quiet and attentive. The simple lesson was being understood. Comments by officials were gratifying. In

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
(Classification)

Penjwin there was much of the same comment except that after the show some of the teachers said that the films would be even more enjoyable if there were more humorous use of Kurdish in the obviously humorous presentation of the subject matter in the film. I do not take this as a serious criticism, and their praise outweighed such suggestions.

Several copies of PAYAM, the USIS Kurdish weekly and the USA News in Arabic were seen on desks in both Chwarta and Penjwin.

Radio reception from Baghdad is not good after dark in the areas visited. During the daytime it is clear, but after dark crackling interference reduces its effectiveness. In Chwarta and Penjwin the Voice of America comes in with a strong signal. I heard VOA in Penjwin and reception was perfect. Tehran is also well received. An occasional quarter hour program in Kurdish from the VOA would get a good audience.

Lee Dinsmore
PAO, Kirkuk

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~