



THE PSYCHOLOGY AND POLITICS OF LUDWIG CARL MOYZISCH, AUTHOR OF *OPERATION CICERO*

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This article explores the intimate relationship between psychology and personal politics, as shown in the life of Ludwig Carl Moyzisch, the handler of Cicero, who was arguably the most successful spy of World War II. An analysis of Moyzisch's book 'Operation Cicero' and other sources reveal Moyzisch to be a man possessing the qualities of astuteness, imagination and empathy, but also being of doubtful moral compass. There is also evidence of uncertainty over personal identity, a characteristic which can explain his successful handling of Elyesa Bazna, also known as Cicero, himself a man of confused identity.

Keywords: Moyzisch, Cicero, Bazna, Von Papen, Knatchbull-Hugessen, Schellenberg.

From October 1943 until March 1944, the British Embassy in Ankara was the site of a leakage of information in the form of photographs of Most Secret documents that were potentially disastrous for the Allied cause in World War Two, had the Nazi leadership acted upon them. They included the texts of the Allied conferences at Cairo and Teheran, attempts to get Turkey into World War II on the Allied side, and references to Operation Overlord, the forthcoming D Day Landing. The source of this leakage was Elyesa Diello Bazna, an ethnic Albanian of Turkish citizenship and Muslim religion, who was valet to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, British Ambassador to Turkey. While Sir Hugh was sleeping or taking his twice daily bath, his valet Bazna was able to photograph a large number of important and top secret documents, which he then offered for sale to the German Embassy for an outrageous price. The German Ambassador to Turkey, Franz von Papen, a classical scholar and former statesman, gave the valet the cover name "Cicero", in a reference to the eloquence of the original Cicero [1, 2], though Bazna was unaware of his code name until near the end of his period of spying. Despite concentrated effort, neither Von Papen or the spy's handler Moyzisch were aware of Cicero's real name until after the war had finished.

The release of the Cicero Papers by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2005 showed that it was not until after the war that the British Security authorities were able to establish the identity of Cicero and the British secret service MI5 was able to give a full account of the affair [3]. This was obtained from the interrogation of several Germans involved with Cicero including Ludwig Carl Moyzisch, his case officer in the German Embassy, and other German officials. Initially the British authorities tried to cover up news of the major security breach, but the publication in 1950 of Moyzisch's book *Operation Cicero* caused a sensation and led to the asking of a question in the House of Commons as to the soundness of British security. Foreign Office papers also reveal that when British security authorities were made aware that there was a leakage, they went to elaborate lengths to trap the spy, including planting a forged War

Cabinet paper, without the Foreign Secretary's knowledge, in the Embassy in late January 1944. Bazna was in fact interviewed as a suspect in a security operation conducted by Sir John Dashwood but was cleared on the grounds that he did not speak English and was "too stupid", though Dashwood reportedly wrote a "withering condemnation" of the leaky security conditions Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen had allowed to develop in his Embassy at Ankara [1]. In reality, Bazna, also known as Cicero, had a good knowledge of English and was certainly not stupid, as later was to become clear.

Another potential area of damage concerned the possibility that the Cicero information enabled Franz von Papen, in his capacity as German Ambassador to Turkey, (and himself the subject of a Soviet assassination attempt), to cause the Turkish Government to delay a declaration of war by Turkey on the Anglo-American side. On 4 February 1944, all Allied military supplies to Turkey were cut off and the military negotiating team returned to Cairo. Knatchbull-Hugessen was told to avoid official contact to the best of his ability and by that time the Cicero leakage had been ceased by the departure from employment of Bazna. It is now known that some of Knatchbull-Hugessen's reports to the Foreign Office on the state of the negotiations with the Turkish Foreign Ministry were passed on to the Germans; however, it was known that the Turkish Foreign Minister was himself keeping a number of diplomatic missions informed on the progress of negotiations and there was no reason to suppose that he did not discuss the matter equally freely with von Papen. It is interesting to note that some of Cicero's photos showed two fingers clearly not his own. It was believed therefore by the Germans that Cicero had an assistant in the Embassy, and in his own account, Bazna tells of having two female accomplices. In so doing, Cicero took an enormous risk, as the uncovering of his identity would have meant his certain liquidation. The identity of the first of these accomplices was later established, but not that of the second.

Ludwig Carl Moyzisch

Behind the scenes of the Cicero Affair lies the ever-present but shadowy figure of Ludwig Carl Moyzisch. Born in Austria in 1902, he was raised a Catholic but reportedly had some Jewish ancestry [4]. While working as a journalist, he applied for and became a member of the Nazi Party, and then later the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) or Secret Service of the Schutzstaffel (SS), but was unsuccessful in his attempt to join the SS in 1942 [4]. His SD membership led to his appointment as Commercial Attache in the German Embassy in Ankara, the capital of neutral Turkey, from 1941 to 1944. While in Ankara, Moyzisch lived a quiet family life with his wife and son. A rare photograph reveals Moyzisch to be of slender build, neat in the attire of suit and tie with well-polished shoes, and a slightly dark of complexion, probably reflecting some Central European ancestry, with the name Moyzisch being of possibly Hungarian origin. At the end of World War II in Europe, Moyzisch was sent for trial but was only used as a witness. He later returned with his family to Austria where he did some script writing and worked in business until retirement.

The Personal Politics of Moyzisch

Moyzisch consistently showed the soundness of his political instincts as he worked. Realizing the probable reaction of complete denial to the claims he was about to make in the publication of his book *Operation Cicero*, Moyzisch sought and gained as a postscript the endorsement of his former Ambassador in Ankara, Franz von Papen, who stated that the account was, apart from a few details, "perfectly correct" [5]. This endorsement was given not without some personal pain on account of von Papen's high personal respect for the British Ambassador, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen [2].

Moyzisch's most difficult challenge lay in his dealings with what has been described as the "witches' cauldron" of Nazi politics [6], specifically in his need to serve no less than four political masters who were divided not only by intense personal rivalry but by profound personal animosity, between whom he had to distribute the explosive information supplied by Cicero. His first priority was to show the material to his immediate superior von Papen, which he mostly but not always did, then to send it by courier to Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister who mistrusted von Papen. Soon after establishing

the connection with Cicero, Moyzisch was summonsed to Berlin by Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the head of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) or supreme state security department which incorporated the SA, Moyzisch's official employer. There, in an interview, Kaltenbrunner stated

“You're too much one of von Papen's men for his (Ribbentrop's) liking, and there is no need for me to tell you how much Ribbentrop loathes von Papen.”[5]. (Parenthesis added).

Later in the same interview, Kaltenbrunner made clear his own hatred of Ribbentrop and demanded that Moyzisch supply only him with the Cicero documents. An additional complication was the question of the authenticity of the Cicero documents: Kaltenbrunner and his deputy Schellenberger believed them to be genuine, while Ribbentrop believed them to be a British plant. For this reason, while he was in Berlin, Moyzisch was subjected to intense questioning as to details of Cicero's true identity. However, neither Moyzisch or von Papen were aware of Cicero's real name, knowing him only as “Pierre”, the holder of an unknown position in the British Embassy in Ankara. Moyzisch was only able to add that Cicero claimed that he hated the British after his own father had been shot by them, but surprisingly, he wanted payment in British currency, which was authorized by Ribbentrop. The payment finally totaled £300,000 sterling (\$1.2 million) which was paid in mostly counterfeit notes produced as part of Operation Bernhard, a plan to undermine sterling and the US dollar [1]. Interestingly, both Moyzisch and Papen were suspicious of the banknotes on account of their newness and small denomination [5].

In his dealings with the Nazi hierarchy, Moyzisch earned the respect of von Papen, who wrote

“In spite of his dual loyalties, Moyzisch played very fairly with me, and himself handled Diello (Cicero) quite as skilfully as anyone of the Abwehr (Military Secret Service) could have done.” [2]. (Parenthesis added).

With Ribbentrop and Kaltenbrunner, Moyzisch did not enjoy respect or confidence, though he did with Schellenberg, who was himself one of Kaltenbrunner's “worst enemies”. [6].

Moyzisch's Handling of Cicero

Moyzisch's handling of Cicero could very easily have been disastrous for Cicero, and ultimately for Moyzisch himself, but for his astuteness, informed with imagination, empathy and courtesy. As Moyzisch wrote about Cicero after a meeting early in their dealings

“Perhaps there was a motive more noble than mere greed for money. For the first time, and for a few minutes only, I had a fleeting sympathy for the man behind me.”[5].

Despite the huge pressure from Berlin to ascertain details of Cicero's identity and background, Moyzisch maintained a respectful distance and did not attempt to negotiate the enormous sums of money demanded by Cicero in exchange for documents.

On one occasion Moyzisch and his personal assistant were shopping in a department store in Ankara when they inadvertently met Cicero, who, without displaying the slightest sign of recognition, offered to translate German into Turkish to the shop assistant. [5]. This strategy was fortunate for both Cicero and Moyzisch because the personal assistant, Nele Kapp, (called Elisabet in *Operation Cicero*) was in fact a spy for the Americans [7].

Moyzisch's non-awareness of Cicero's identity saved Cicero not only from exposure by Nele Kapp but also from another spy, Fritz Kolbe. Kolbe was a devout Catholic and opponent of the Nazis who worked in a middle range position in the German Foreign Ministry, and who, under the code name “George Wood”, delivered a large number of highly secret files to the Americans in Bern, Switzerland [8]. The information that there was a leak from the British Embassy in Ankara was duly conveyed to the British who were slow to react, but did eventually send two agents to Ankara to investigate, only to clear Bazna [8].

Moyzisch again revealed his political astuteness after Nele Kapp disappeared in what turned out to be a defection to the Americans, in what was in fact the second defection of staff from the German

Embassy in Ankara. Moyzisch was urgently summonsed by Kaltenbrunner to present himself in Berlin, to travel there on the next courier plane. At this time Moyzisch received a letter from a friend in the Foreign Ministry warning him that he would be arrested immediately he set foot on German soil, on grounds of suspected complicity [5]. In addition, he received a phone call from the British Embassy advising him that he should himself defect or risk being shot [5]. Moyzisch's next move, which probably saved his life, was to obtain a medical certificate which denied him permission to travel [5].

The Psychology of Moyzisch

It is clear that Moyzisch's handling of Cicero and his dealings with his powerful and dangerous superiors who were themselves locked into bitter conflict, showed him to be an astute and sensitive individual. From a psychological perspective, Moyzisch as he recounts *Operation Cicero*, does not exhibit any evidence of disorder of mood or thought; to the contrary, he presents as exceedingly well grounded and very sympathetic to his subject. He observed that Cicero is a complex figure, motivated by a range of considerations other than greed [9], and that on one occasion, he was "...nothing if not a gentleman..." [5]. Moyzisch was also aware of Cicero's feelings of class and status resentment [5], noting at another time that his motives were "obscure" [5], possibly referring to his complicated ethnic background

It is probable that Cicero's minority status as an ethnic Albanian in the Ottoman Empire and later Yugoslavia, born in Pristina, now the capital of Kosovo, and of Turkish ethnicity, may have led to identity confusion and an identity disorder. It is interesting to note that his languages, as claimed by himself, were Turkish, French, Serbo-Croatian (now officially two separate languages), a little Greek and a smattering of German, and with an ability to read and understand English but only to speak with difficulty [10].

In this connection, it is possible to suggest that Moyzisch himself may have had inner confusion over identity. Suggestive of this is the assertion by Kahn that he was not able to "prove that he was 100 percent Aryan" and therefore turned down for SS membership [11]. Baxter also observed that Moyzisch was of Jewish origin [12] while Wires also noted that Moyzisch joined the Nazi Party in 1932 but was denied membership of the SS in 1942, even though he was employed by them [1]. It has also been stated that Moyzisch was unable to prove the identity of his mother's father and that he was 100 per cent Aryan [4]. In view of the fact that Moyzisch was unable to join the SS, the possibility of Jewish background does appear to carry weight. This could well be the case but Jewish background did not always exclude enlistment by the Nazis: it has been asserted that Himmler was aware that the head of the SS, Reinhardt Heydrich, himself was of Jewish background [13]. In his memoirs, Schellenberg, one of Moyzisch's Berlin superiors, wrote that during his post-war interrogation, a British officer stated that

"You know, Moyzisch told us that he's really Jewish, and that you forced him to join the SS and work for you at pistol point." [6].

Schellenberg stated that he laughed at this proposition as he and Moyzisch had always worked together on the friendliest of terms. In an overall sense, Moyzisch himself presents as exceedingly well grounded in spite of the political, ideological and military madness which surrounded him.

Moyzisch's Moral Compass

Underlying the book *Operation Cicero* is the question of how could its writer work for and be part of a genocidal regime. Moyzisch presented some evidence of his concern over the morality of the regime when in December 1944 a British document photographed by Cicero stated that an Allied air raid would take place targeting Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria on January 14. Senior Nazi officials decided that no warning of the raid should be given to officials in Sofia, as a test of the authenticity of the document. Troubled by his conscience, Moyzisch tried to call the German Legation in Sofia a few hours before the

raid was due to take place but the call could not be connected. After learning that the raid had occurred, Moyzisch wrote,

“I wondered if Berlin was satisfied now. They had their proof. Cicero was genuine. Four thousand Bulgarians, men, women and children, had vouched for it with their lives.” [5].

In *Operation Cicero*, Moyzisch does not make reference to the genocidal policy of the regime he is working for, but does reveal an awareness of the existence of the concentration camps. This is when, after the defection of Nele Kapp, he asks himself whether this event will lead to his ruin, death or internment in a concentration camp [5].

Moyzisch leaves no doubt as to his moral assessment of the criminality of the Nazi regime. This is shown when on reading the Most Secret minutes of the Allied conference in Teheran, as supplied by Cicero, and makes the comment that

“Here a new world has been planned, whose premise was the utter blotting out of the Third Reich and its guilty leaders.” [5].

Conclusion

Never personally prominent in the pages of *Operation Cicero*, its author Ludwig Carl Moyzisch is ever present in a low-key, self-effacing way, as he facilitates the transfer of photographs of Most Secret documents from the British Embassy in Ankara to the Nazi leadership. What becomes clear is the masterful way in which he protects his source from the dangers of the minefield in which he operates, based on a sympathetic but not uncritical understanding of Cicero’s complex personal identity. Here it is possible to propose that Moyzisch’s own complex identity provided him with the basis for the necessary insight to enable the successful handling of Cicero. While Moyzisch showed genuine moral concern over the killing of innocents in Sofia in order to cynically prove a point, and stated that he regarded the Nazi leadership as guilty, this did not prevent his working for a genocidal regime.

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