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C.S.D.I.C.(U.K)
GRGG 332 (C)
7 Aug 45

THIS REPORT IS SECRET

Report on information obtained from PW CS/2513 Genobst a D Franz HALDER
Chief of the German General Staff
1938-42, captured at PRAGSER WILDSEE,
5 May 45

In conjunction with: PW CS/2159, Genmaj MULLER-HILLEBRAND
Staff Pz AOK 3, formerly Adjt to
HALDER and later Chief Organisations
Abt, captured near SCHWERIN, 2 May 45

OKH -- OKW

PREAMBLE

1. HALDER was Chief of the German General Staff from 1938 to Sep 1942 as successor to BECK. The unanimous opinion of those of his brother officers who were questioned on the point is, that he was the most capable General Staff officer produced by the post-1919 German Army, and that he was the only one who inherited the "cloak" of MOLTKE and SCHLIEFFEN. His dismissal by HITLER is regarded as one of the symptoms of the decline and fall of German military might.
2. HALDER, a Bavarian, 61 years old, is of slight physique and makes the impression of a mild, inoffensive and exact civil servant. In fact, he has an exceptionally lucid brain and great hidden reserves of strength. He was a well-known horseman in former days, in spite of being so short-sighted that a British eye specialist informed him that he would certainly never have been accepted for the British Army.
3. HALDER's political views are traditionally conservative, but far from narrow, and there seems to be no doubt that he was opposed from the beginning to the Nazi regime, being too far-sighted to be deceived by the superficial advantages accruing to the German Army. It may well be, however, that this opposition was more to the principles and methods than to the ultimate imperial aims of the HITLER REICH. His promotion to Chief of the General Staff, in spite of his well-known anti-Nazi views, HALDER ascribes to the influence of his predecessor BECK, and to the general scarcity of first-rate staff officers.
4. There is no reason to doubt HALDER's story, given in this report, that during the Czech crisis in 1938 he was prepared to overthrow HITLER, and that all arrangements had been made for WITZLEBEN to march on BERLIN with Pz tps to arrest the Fuehrer, but that the instructions were cancelled at the last moment on the news of Mr. CHAMBERLAIN's visit to MUNICH. He also mentions similar attempts by BECK and GOERDELER in 1939/40. (See Part III, B of this report).

5. HALDER was not connected with the events of 20 Jul 44, although the same circles and persons were involved; he was, however, arrested on 21 July and kept first of all in solitary confinement for 6 months, of which he spent 4 months without seeing daylight. Later he proceeded via concentration camps with a party of distinguished prisoners to the South, where they were freed by the Allies advancing from ITALY. HALDER is unaware of the motives involved in sparing his life, although he has no doubt that only the unexpectedly speedy advance of the Allies saved him and his companions from eventual execution.
6. Since his capture HALDER has co-operated unreservedly with the Allies, and for the last weeks he has worked long hours each day on preparing his notes on events up to his dismissal in Sep 42.
7. The first part of these notes, dealing with mainly the organization of the OKH - OKW, is given in unabridged translation and forms this report. It will have to be borne in mind that HALDER is obviously intent on providing an apologia for the German Army General Staff, but considering his singularly well-informed and clear mind, this need not necessarily detract from the intrinsic interest of his observations.
8. HALDER has had to rely on his own memory and on the help of his former Adjt, Genmaj MULLER-HILLEBRAND (later Chief, Organizations Abt.). Lack of references and records may have given rise to some inaccuracies or vagueness.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

9. The concept of OKH is clear. It is the supreme command of the Army, responsible for the employment and directing of the Army.
10. The concept of OKW is not clear. In theory it is the supreme command over Army, Air Force and Navy, and is responsible for looking after service matters in relation to civilian authorities.
11. In practice the OKW lost the character of a purely military command when HITLER assumed the supreme command. As a result of the combining of the functions of head of the State, head of the Party and Supreme Commander of all the services, and as a result of the application of Party methods, there began a growing effacement of the boundaries between various departments and this process was accelerated by the creation of special plenipotentiaries (Sonderbeauftragte) and other ad hoc arrangements. The OKW became the military office of the politician and revolutionary Adolf HITLER.
12. Only a person who has watched with a critical eye the development of the OKW right to the end will be able to define the concept OKW as it developed in the course of the war, becoming all the time more and more hazy and finishing up in indescribable chaos. (1)
13. My own office (Chief of the Army General Staff) was concerned with the OKW only with respect to the employment and direction of the Army. These matters were dealt with by the Fuehrungsstab of the OKW. In the following notes, therefore, unless otherwise stated, OKW (KEITEL) and Fuehrungsstab (JODL) are to be regarded as executive organs of HITLER.

(1) Gen von LOSSBERG (PW) might be able to contribute his opinion.

I. THE PROCESS OF THE OKW - OKH

M A C H I N E

14. During the period of the 100,000 Army, the Minister of War (Reichswehrminister) had a Ministry (Ministeramt) to help him which, if I remember rightly, consisted of the following departments: Foreign (Ausland), Home (Inland), Intelligence (Abwehr), Supply (Versorgung), Budget (Haushalt), Law (Rechtspflege) and Press.
15. The Minister of War was responsible in the Reichstag for the demands of the services, and he had to make decisions on questions affecting more than one branch of the service.
16. The C in C Army (Chef der Heeresleitung) and C in C Navy (Chef der Marineleitung) were directly subordinate to the head of the State as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht.
17. The Army was kept completely apart from questions of home and foreign politics, and difficulties with the Ministry arose in the main only on budget questions. The General Staff of the Army was numerically very small, and its work included the training of officers and troops, the organization of the Army, the safety of the national boundaries, and observations on foreign armies. Difficulties regarding spheres of responsibility rarely arose between the High Command of the Army and the superior office of the Minister of War.
18. On the re-introduction of conscription and the setting-up of an independent Air Force, tension arose between von BLOMBERG - now called Minister of War and Supreme Comd of the Forces (Reichskriegsminister and Oberbefehlshaber der Wehrmacht) - on the one hand, and the Supreme Comd of the Army - now called OKH - on the otherhand. The differences fell in the main into two categories: the political field and the question of organisation.
- OLITICAL 19. In "Fortress EAST PRUSSIA", which was continuously threatened, von BLOMBERG and his Chief of Staff, von REICHENAU, had learnt to know and to think highly of the Party and its organisations, especially the SA, the members of which acted as enthusiastic and willing helpers to the numerically weak Army. On the mistaken assumption of finding similar conditions in REICH territory, they had offered their services with enthusiasm to HITLER and submitted unconditionally to his will - probably without being able to recognize his real aims.
20. The Army in all its leading elements - headed by Freiherr von FRITSCH and his friend BECK - was against the "Movement". The main reason for this was the generally conservative creed of the old Officers' Corps and the influence during the preceding years of Frhr von HAMMERSTEIN, Chef der Heeresleitung. Only a few people, however, seem to have recognized clearly that HITLER, with the fervour of a revolutionary, hated the old type of Officer as representative of an upper class which was in his view rotten and incompetent, and that he refrained from doing away with such officers only because he thought he would need them in the near future. One of the few who did realize the position was BECK, who trained the General Staff, which was subordinate to him in accordance with his own views. The younger Officers' Corps, although generally unpolitical, either withheld judgment or sympathized with the "Movement", owing to experiences with the Party system in the post-war years, and by HITLER's propaganda.

21. Von BLOMBERG spared no effort to lessen the opposition between the leaders of the Army and of the "Movement", and to influence the Officers' Corps towards HITLER. Von BLOMBERG acted mainly on the instructions of HITLER himself, who was encouraged by the fanatical hater of the Army and the General Staff, GOERING. There was a continuous stream of lectures by leading personalities of the Party, and political education weeks etc. were instituted, but they could do nothing to eliminate the fresh differences which were always arising as a result of the growing ascendancy of the Party and its organizations, the anti-Semitic campaign and other scandals, and the events of 30 June 34.
22. Frhr von FRITSCH, spokesman of the Army, could make no headway from his side. HITLER refused to discuss with him questions of general human or home political problems. (1) BECK, as head of the General Staff, an institution particularly odious to HITLER (2), had no opportunity of direct access to the Supreme Comd of the Wehrmacht and never had a chance to utter a word. Methods other than purely evolutionary in the fight against the "Movement" were not approved of by von FRITSCH nor, at that time, by BECK. The differences in the political sphere between OKW and OKH continued without a solution being found.
- ORGANI- 23. The central problem of the position and tasks of the General
SATION Staff of the Army was the main difference in questions of organization and responsibility. Before the First World War, preparations for the case of war had been made by the Great General Staff (Grosser Generalstab). It put forward the requirements which appeared necessary for readiness for war. The Minister of War was responsible for putting these demands to Parliament.
24. During the period of the Versailles Treaty no preparations for the case of war were made, except frontier protection manoeuvres (Sicherungsaufmaersche), which were to be regarded purely as gestures, and the fixing of lines to which a withdrawal could be made if necessary. There was no General Staff in the old sense. (3)
25. After the enlargement of the Wehrmacht (increase of the Army and setting up of the Air Force) and after the re-introduction of conscription, the question arose as to who was to be responsible for making necessary preparations for the case of war. OKH was of the opinion that GERMANY could be involved only in continental wars.

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- (1) According to a personal report of von FRITSCH.
- (2) The FUEHRER called the Army General Staff "the club of intellectuals" and "the last Lodge" and frequently complained about the "damned objective views" of the Gen Staff.
- (3) Statements about a "Black Gen Staff" are legends. Among the Reserve Officers (Ergaenzungsoffiziere or E-Offz) permitted as office staff there were several General Staff officers of the old Army, but they carried out purely auxiliary work in subordinate positions. Camouflaged General Staff work in civilian ministries, as used to be carried out in HUNGARY, was impossible in GERMANY, because of the after-effects of the Erzberger period. The "Truppenamt", which had a very small staff only, concentrated on training, lessons to be learnt from war experience, observation of foreign military powers and studies of organization. How weak in numbers the General Staff was can be seen from the fact that an annual intake of only six to eight officers was possible. An increase took place only with the enlargement of the Army.

25. (contd)

In these the decisive factor would be the Army, aided by the other services, and for this reason the routine preparations for the case of war should be made by the General Staff of the Army, as in former days. OKW was to be responsible for coordinating the preparations of the other services with the basic work of the Army. In accordance with the decisive role of the Army, strategic decisions in the case of war were also to be the responsibility of the General Staff of the Army, which because of its organization and experience possessed the essential facilities for such work. The OKW had not the staff suitable for this kind of work.

26. OKW, however, insisted on unlimited predominance when making preparations for the case of war, and asked the various services to put the ideas, the result of hard work of their General Staff, at the disposal of OKW when needed. This would have meant that the OKW would practically direct the General Staff work of the Army, and the C of GS of the Army would be degraded to the status of office manager in the service of the small Gruppe L (Landesverteidigung) of the OLV, which was at that time commanded by an Oberstleutnant.

27. The conflict between OKW and OKH on this question, and the resulting problem of chain of supreme cmd (Spitzengliederung), continued for years. At times it assumed such acute forms that BECK forbade his Gen Staff officers to come into official contact with the officers of the OKW.

28. As far as the OKW was concerned, this tension led to the idea of forming their own Combined Services General Staff (Wehrmachtgeneralstab) in order that OKW might become independent of the General Staff of the Army and of the other services. This plan was pursued by JODL especially, and, in preparation, a Wehrmacht-Akademie (Wehrmacht Staff College) under Gen ADAM was created which actually held an annual course during each of the years 1935 and 1936 but then was dropped because of the resistance of the services. The other branches of the Wehrmacht also fought stubbornly against any infringement of their independence by the OKW, but for different reasons and with different methods.

29. Up to the time of his departure, von BLOMBERG did not succeed in gaining any ground in his struggle against the services. The OKW tried to clarify the problems of chain of cmd in case of war and the delimitation of responsibilities between OKW and the supreme comds of the services, and to reconcile the Cs in C with the idea of a central leadership. ~~to~~ to this end Wehrmacht manoeuvres were held in which the leading representatives of all the services included in the Wehrmacht took part. (1) The General Staff of the

(1) Participation in these manoeuvres was strictly limited, and I did not take part in any of them. Secrecy was especially strict. How far they included studies for possible cases of war I cannot say. Genobst JODL ought to be in the picture about this. I only know that the ideas discussed at these manoeuvres had no further repercussions on the work of the General Staff of the Army. When I took over the position of Chief of General Staff of the Army, in Sep 38, my predecessor, BECK, handed over no strategic plans for the case of war, except the annual frontier protection manoeuvres East and East and the military measures of the Czech action (Tschechen-Aktion), which were at that time in full swing.

29. (contd)

OKW remained, however, restricted to the small Abt L (Landesverteidigung), which was not numerically strong enough to undertake large tasks. (1)

30. The Amt Wi Rue (Wirtschaft und Ruestung) (Gen THOMAS) had in the meantime been formed to make the necessary preparations for the case of war in the spheres of industry and armaments. These tasks did not lie in a sphere claimed by any of the services themselves, and the formation of this department was therefore not resisted. The organization of the OKW, as far as I can remember it, in the years 1936 - 37 is given in Appendix L.

31. A fundamental change arose with the departure of von BLOMBERG which was closely connected with the elimination of von FRITSCH. HITLER took over supreme comd of the Wehrmacht; the OKW ceased to be a military comd representing experts who dealt with the political leadership and who acted on their own responsibility when they dealt with the leaders of the State. It became instead the military organ of the revolutionary politician HITLER. Methods which had proved useful in the home political struggle and in the Party were now used against the resisting services.

32. That the leaders of the Army, who were sharply opposed to HITLER and were in a great state of excitement over the FRITSCH affair, did not find sufficient energy for counter-measures is presumably mainly due to the lack of a determined personality. The fruits were now harvested of the training in the 100,000 Army, which had created high-class military experts but not men. HITLER asserted his will without much difficulty in all the differences of opinion which arose with the newly created C in C Army (OB d H), his direct subordinate, who was still trying to create a firm basis for his own activities.

33. BECK, beaten everywhere, withdrew disgruntled about the end of Aug. 38. He had still to observe how the preparations for an action of brute force against CZECHOSLOVAKIA were carried out by the C in C Army, on the orders of HITLER. I do not know what talks went on between HITLER and the C in C Army, before the orders of the OKW were issued in this matter. (2) I only know that in the spring of 1938 BECK wrote a comprehensive memorandum in which he firmly expressed the opposition of the General Staff of the Army to a policy drifting towards military developments and in which he stressed that all warlike developments would lead finally to a new world war and have a tragic end for GERMANY. I also know that HITLER received this memorandum and read it. (3)

34. A forcible solution of the conflict OKH (General Staff) - OKW was becoming imperative after the FRITSCH case which had caused deep resentment among the leaders of the Army, and after the departure of the universally popular Gen BECK, which had occasioned a feeling of animosity in the General Staff; a solution of this

(1) For example, the preparation and direction of the large Wehrmacht manoeuvres in 1937 had to be handed over to the General Staff of the Army.

(2) Von BRAUCHITSCH and JODL could give information about these matters.

(3) After I had taken over BECK's position I was blamed on various occasions for this memorandum, which was adduced as proof of the inferiority and mental incompetence of the General Staff. The memorandum had been made known to the leading Army Generals (among them von RUNDSTEDT).

34. (contd)

conflict had to be found also because, of the OKH's sharp opposition to the military adventure which was obviously planned by the OKW as a solution of the Czech question. The feeling of excitement and depression among the thinking classes of the population, caused by the danger of war, provided an opportunity for forcible measures which would have affected wider circles transcending the Wehrmacht.

35. Preparations had been made, and the execution of the plan was about to begin when the news came, as a complete surprise, of the imminent meeting with CHAMBERLAIN in MUNICH. The foundations for the planned action (OKW-OKH) had therefore collapses. (1) HITLER returned from the conference at MUNICH as bloodless victor, with the result that, militarily speaking, CZECHOSLOVAKIA was finished. This success naturally reinforced HITLER's position considerably, also within the forces. Regarding the methods which HITLER, fully conscious of his success, believed he could now use against the OKH, the fact is significant that HITLER himself, in collaboration with his personal advisers from Party and OKW and without consulting the General Staff of the Army, fixed the demarcation line between the German and Czech Armies which was to become the new frontier.
36. Von BRAUCHITSCH did not for the time being embark on a fresh struggle against the OKW. He did not raise any objection when the order for the occupation of the remainder of CZECHOSLOVAKIA, with all details of forces and organization, was given by the OKW without consultation with the OKH. On paper these preparations were only for the case of military unrest in that country.
37. On the occasion of the entry into PRAGUE, HITLER appeared in the occupied capital and gave his orders direct to the Army generals concerned. Von BRAUCHITSCH furthermore yielded on the question of the extension of the Westwall, which for practical purposes was taken away from the OKH and given to the OT (advanced positions) and the Air Force (rear positions). This was done by HITLER in a manner which expressed in an offensive way his low opinion of the expert and systematic work of the Army and his preference for the usual improvised Party measures, which were mainly designed for outward effect.
38. I cannot remember accurately the chronological order of developments in the Polish conflict. I believe that it was towards the end of April or beginning of May 39 that HITLER ordered the C in C of the services, with their C of GS, to a conference at the Reichskanzlei, where he stated that a military conflict with POLAND was to be reckoned with and where he ordered the necessary preparations. I cannot tell if this subject had previously been discussed at the regular conferences of the C in C Army (BRAUCHITSCH) with HITLER. No official opinion of the German General Staff on this question had been asked for until that date.

(1) The plan did not include political murder, but envisaged the military occupation of the OKW and of all important offices in charge of Party members, and had as its final aim the reconstitution of the government, after a free decision by the people under the protection of the Army.

39. At this conference HITLER disposed straight away of the argument that GERMANY was not capable of carrying out a two-front war by declaring that he was certain that ENGLAND, and therefore FRANCE, would not intervene in an armed conflict with POLAND.(1) The task of the Wehrmacht in the event of such a conflict was clear and simple: to destroy the Polish forces by a surprise attack. The government would take care of the surprise effect outside the military sphere. The various services were to make known their intentions.
40. Soon afterwards, the Chief of the General Staff gave a verbal explanation of the plan of operations of the Army; this was subsequently made into a directive (Weisung) of the OKW, in which the tasks of the various services were stipulated. The result was, therefore, that the OKH received back the work done by the Gen Staff of the Army as an order, with the rubber stamp of the OKW. This procedure was followed until well into the Russian campaign and is characteristic of the solution of the dispute between OKW and OKH on the responsibilities for directing the troops which was arrived at after the fall of BLOMBERG and FRITSCH.
41. The structure of the OKW had in the meantime been reorganized into a form which underlined its claim actually to direct the forces. The department Landesverteidigung had been extended into the Wehrmachtsfuhrungsstab; its comd was nominally subordinate to the Comd OKW but in fact he (JODL) secured for himself direct access to Adolf HITLER and was therefore the decisive voice in questions of comd. The Comd OKW, who had to represent the demands of the forces as opposed to those of civilian authorities, apart from his responsibility within the forces, had moved up into the position of a Reichsminister.
42. The peacetime structure of the OKW is given from memory in Appendix 2, and the peacetime structure of the OKH at the same period in Appendix 3.
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(1) I remember his exact words: "Ich muesste ein Idiot sein, wenn ich wegen der lausigen Korridorfrage in einen Weltkrieg hineinschliddern wuerde, wie die unfuehigen Menschen des Jahres 1914". ("I would be an idiot if I slid into a world war like those incompetent men of the year 1914 because of this lousy corridor question".)

II. STRUCTURE OF THE OKW AND
OKH AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, 1939

43. The structure of the OKH intended for the case of general mobilization came into force with the move to the command post at ZOSSEN. This structure is shown in Appendix 4.
44. Under the C of GS of the Army, the departments necessary for carrying out operations were concentrated as "Hauptquartier OKH". Of the Quartiermeister departments (O Qu), only I, IV, and V were to function in the case of mobilization. O Qu I was permanent deputy to the C of GS in all his functions and his close collaborator on questions of operations. The Operationsabteilung and Organisationsabt were subordinate to him. He was responsible for keeping other departments of the HG in the picture re the progress of operations and re intentions, as far as was necessary for their tasks.
45. O Qu IV was the collaborator of the C of GS in the evaluation of intelligence. Of the departments subordinate to him, only those required at the time were at HQ (e.g. during the Polish campaign the dept "Freunde Heere Ost"). The departments not required and the Attache Dept remained in BERLIN.
46. The Comd of Army Transport (Chef des Heerestransportwesens), a dept which had been formed from 5 Abt of the General Staff, worked on questions of railway transport for the whole of the Wehrmacht area under the responsibility of the C of GS of the Army. (1)
47. The QMG (General-Quartiermeister), was formed out of 6 Abt of the General Staff. He was responsible for all supplies to the field army, for which he had to indent beforehand in collaboration with the Ops Abt and Org Abt, from Chef H Rue u BdE; and he had to ensure the arrival of supplies with the field army, in cooperation with the Heerestransport Chef. He was also responsible for the administration of those areas administered by a military government. (2)
48. The Generals in charge of various Arms (Waffengenerale) had been created to assist the C of S and the depts of the General Staff (Org Abt, Ausb Abt and Gen Quartiermeister) in looking after the various Arms, and to ensure liaison between the front and the home authorities and schools responsible for replacements of officers and men. The Waffengenerale were consulted as experts on particular questions (as for example, employment of arty against fortresses, or construction of rear defense posns). As their tasks entailed frequent visits to the front, they became in practice important links between the front-line tps and the General Staff.

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- (1) Only later was the responsibility for the Wehrmacht transport whifted to the OKW, and the Heeres-Transport-Chef then combined in his person, with the same staff, the job of Wehrmacht-Transport-Chef. No alteration in the sphere and method of work therefore occurred.
 - (2) Regarding the dept Gen Quartiermeister, Gen TOPPE (PW) will be able to give full details.

49. The links between the OKH and the other services can be seen from Appendix 4. There were liaison officers of HQ OKH with OB d L (General des Heeres beim OB d L) and with the Seekriegsleitung.
50. The "Allgemeines Heeresamt" of the peacetime structure was originally intended to become "Chef H Ruest" in the case of mobilization, i.e. to form the basis for replacements in personnel and material and for supplies to the Army, with important structural changes. Apart from that, it was proposed to create a Demd of the Replacement Army (BdE) above the stellv General Kommandos; BdE was to be responsible for the training and directing of the replacement army.
51. As the first holder of this position had to abdicate after a few days for political reasons, the C in C Army united both functions under Gen FROMM into the dept Chef H Ruest u BdE. The detailed responsibilities of the BdE were taken over by the staff AHA (see Appendix 3). No far-reaching changes in the structure of the office of Chef H Ruest were caused by the union of the two depts. (1) The work of the OKH in its wartime formation went on smoothly and without tension. Operations under the C in C Army were directed by the Gen Staff (fundamental operation orders were signed by the C in C Army on principle). The C in C Army ensured the collaboration between the PA and Chef H Ruest u BdE, in conformity with operational requirements.
52. The OKW retained unchanged its command post in the Reichskanzlei and its machine in BERLIN. Only in case the Comd of the Wehrmacht were to travel to the front were a special travelling staff from the Fuehrungsabteilung and a special escort troop formed. I cannot remember if the Fuehrungsstab received an increase in personnel with the commencement of hostilities. A fundamental change similar to that in the Army General Staff certainly did not occur.
53. A division of spheres between OKW (Fuehrungsstab) and OKH (Generalstab) had been arranged so that strategic considerations and decisions which cannot be separated from political questions, were matters for the OKW. (2) These were to be condensed by the OKW into "requests" (Auftraege) to the Cs in C of the services, which were to be carried out by the Cs in C on their own responsibility; so far as the Army was concerned, these requests were to be dealt with by the General Staff.
54. No arrangements had been made regarding the spheres of responsibility arising from the administration of occupied territories. OKH presumed, following the precedent of the last war, that the military administration of occupied territories would be its responsibility, and made the necessary preparations.

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- (1) The union of the two depts avoided tension between two home authorities both subordinate to the C in C Army. The strain of work of the newly-formed united dept which resulted from its considerable preoccupation with ministerial tasks caused a decrease in its influence on the Wehrkreis Comds (stellv Kommandierende Generale) who were responsible for the training of replacements.
 - (2) The Supreme Comd of the Wehrmacht had theoretically the assistance of the Cs in C of the services. In practice this was not done in any case so far as the C in C Army was concerned.

55. OKW took over completely all questions connected with foreign policy. The Foreign Office was not allowed to keep the General Staff informed regarding current political questions. The OKW (HITLER) reserved the right to inform the OKH. (1) The liaison personnel loosely attached to the General Staff from the Foreign Office were merely concerned with keeping the Foreign Office informed about the development of the war.

(1) Result of the fundamental order by HITLER to the whole Wehrmacht: Everybody is allowed to know only what is absolutely essential for the execution of his respective task, and this not earlier than necessary for the task.

III. OKW AND OKH IN THE PRACTICAL
CONDUCT OF THE WAR UP TO THE
DEPARTURE OF VON BRAUCHITSCH
(DEC 41)

A. THE POLISH CAMPAIGN

56. HITLER did not interfere in the preparations of the Army after he had heard the plan of operations (except that he planned, down to the smallest details, the preparations for a special undertaking against the bridge at DIRSCHAU). (1) The zero-hour fixed by OKW for the crossing of the Polish frontier was postponed by HITLER for several days, for political reasons, eight hours before the operation was due to start. (2) It was only just possible to carry out this postponement, and it annoyed the OKH and the troops, as it proved the ignorance of the Supreme Command on practical difficulties.
57. No difficulties arose between the OKH and OKW in the first part of the campaign. The OB d H reported about twice a day by telephone to HITLER on current operations. Apart from that, the Fuehrungsstab of the OKW was kept informed morning and night by the Operationsabt of the General Staff. Also daily, the Army contributed its share of the OKW official communique (Wehrmachtsbericht), which was frequently issued only after it had been retouched by HITLER.
58. Twice during the Polish campaign the OKW interfered in operations. The first case was the withdrawal of German troops before the Russian entry into EAST POLAND, which had been ordered by OKW for political reasons without any consultation with the General Staff. The time and area factors of this order proved again the ignorance of the OKW on the difficulties of troops who were still involved in hard fighting. The Army consequently suffered considerable casualties at various places; at other places it had to give up imminent gains. OKH and troops were very much angered.
59. The second case was the bombardment of WARSAW. OKH was not interested in the destruction of a prosperous city which was of no military value, as the city was surrounded and relief measures were out of the question. The bulk of its artillery had therefore started to move to the WEST when HITLER, for allegedly political reasons, ordered the bombardment of the city from the ground and from the air. (3)

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- (1) HITLER took a really boyish interest in such escapades, as was shown later, particularly in the sudden attack on the Belgian Fort EBEN EMAEL. Such undertakings were considered officially as Wehrmacht affairs because of the participation of the Air Force.
- (2) Apparently this was because of an attempt at mediation undertaken at the last moment by MUSSOLINI.
- (3) The reason given was that the speedy conclusion of the Polish campaign was politically essential. This could only be considered as having been effected with the fall of WARSAW, which therefore had to be forced to surrender.

60. During the last days of the Polish campaign, the fight between HITLER and the OKH began over the question of the administration of occupied Polish territory. OKW had prepared Military Administration for the occupied territory, which came into force with the movement of considerable bodies of troops to the WEST. These measures incited the rage of HITLER, because his intentions in POLAND would never be carried out by a Military Administration subordinate to the OKH. (1) Unpleasant discussions followed, which finished with the handing over of the administration to the General Government formed in undue haste under FRANK. It was thus made painfully clear that the OKH was to have no power except in the directing of troops, and especially no power in political matters.

B. BETWEEN THE POLISH AND THE FRENCH CAMPAIGNS

61. The Polish campaign had ended in a discord between OKW and OKH; this discord sprang from the distrust of the revolutionary HITLER for the leaders of the Army. During the following months, tension between OKW and OKH rose to the limits of endurance. The reasons were partly the militant attitude of HITLER towards the leaders of the Army, and the uncertainty of the OKW on questions concerning the prosecution of the war in the WEST.
62. HITLER put the Party machine in motion to prevent the success of the Polish campaign from increasing the power of the Officers' Corps. Propaganda for "the greatest soldier of all times" began: The question of the "executive power" of Army Comds in the Army areas was hotly contested between OKW and OKH and, contrary to the demands of the OKH, the position of the Gauleiter was very much strengthened in dealings with the Military authorities, which resulted in high military authorities being forced to negotiate with numerous Gauleiter to carry out the simplest military necessities. They were also forced to suffer the Party machine (SD etc) in the midst of their own area. The pressure of the OKW on the Party political education of the Army increased. (2)
63. HITLER called a conference of all the leaders of the Army immediately after the Polish campaign, and, in an excited and uncontrolled manner, told the Generals that they were the representatives of a spirit the incompetence of which had been proved by the results of the World War. This spirit was still alive, as had been proved again by the "chivalrous" actions of officers in the Polish campaign. He blamed the leaders of the Army for having opposed all his successful actions, instead of thanking him for having created the new Army, frequently against the opposition of the OKH, which alone had made the success of the Polish campaign possible. He demanded whole-hearted agreement with his ideas and unconditional obedience.

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- (1) I heard later from an eye-witness that HITLER himself referred to his orders given to Governor-General FRANK before taking over his job as "devilish".
- (2) The result of this pressure was the creation of the Department "Heereswesen" in the OKH (see Appendix 4).

64. The result was the rekkncling of differences, which were nourished by the growing rumors of "Polish atrocities"(1), by the "Women's order" (Frauenerlass) of Heinrich HIMMLER (2), by the suppression of religion in the forces, and by other unpleasantnesses. HITLER got to hear of this and had a private talk with von BRAUCHITSCH, in which he gave him the alternatives of fight or submission.
65. BRAUCHITSCH remained, now a willing henchman of HITLER, and from now on in touch with the Party, SS and SA. He managed to foil the endeavors of certain circles to force a revolution with the cooperation of the OKH during the winter of 1939/40.(3)
66. Soon after the Polish campaign, HITLER made the militarily impossible demand that attacks in the WEST should start in Oct 39. This was completely impossible. No plan of operations existed because the most important political factors - the attitude towards HOLLAND and BELGIUM - had not been clarified. The reconstitution of the Army, which had begun after the conclusion of the planned mobilizations, had not been completed. The numerous improvizations accepted during the Polish campaign had not yet been replaced by military organizations.(4) The equipment and armament of the Army had not reached a sufficiently high standard for a campaign in the WEST.
67. C in C Army had therefore energetically to oppose HITLER's demands. Long-drawn-out and serious differences between OKW and OKH were the consequence. These differences were increased by the uncertainty of the OKW on questions of the war in the WEST: on one hand Dutch territory was to be avoided, and on the other hand HOLLAND was to be included in the operations. Sometimes it was emphasized that it was strategically of particular importance to take ANTWERP as quickly as possible; sometimes the idea was played with of advancing through LUXEMBOURG and penetrating the French frontier fortifications at their weakest point to meet, first of all and decisively, the French army.

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- (1) Criminal acts of the SS in POLAND, and measures of the Governor-General against the intelligentsia, the Church and Jews.
- (2) German women were asked to serve the policy of increasing the population without tying themselves to old-fashioned morals.
- (3) It was an action to be undertaken by non-military circles, with the support of the Abwehr, the OKW, leading personalities of the General Staff, and some highly placed comds and diplomats. The aim was to come to terms with the Western powers, before the beginning of the Western campaign. A condition for the terms was a change of regime in GERMANY.
- (4) Rly formations, sigs units, MT columns, medical installations had been improvised by civilian authorities and transport organizations.

68. The uncertainty of the basic factors forced the OKH to adopt a provisional plan of operations.(1)
69. Finally, towards the end of the winter 1939/40, definite operation orders could be issued, as some information on enemy intentions had been obtained. The Schwerpunkt of the first attack was definitely fixed. These orders concerned, of course, only the first stage of the French campaign. The possibilities of a second stage were only verbally discussed between OKH and OKW. The idea of an attack on ENGLAND in the case of a quick success on the Continent was never discussed.
70. The procedure by OKW re the chain of cmd was the same as in the preparation of the Polish campaign; on the basis of the drafts for the operations, prepared by the General Staff of the Army, the OKW gave its directives to the whole of the Wehrmacht. The planned execution of the operations was made known by the C in C Army, Air Force and Navy to Adolf HITLER in a conference at the Reichskanzlei. Remarkable changes did not occur. Only the attack on EBEN EMAEL was the subject of personal orders by HITLER, down to the smallest detail.
71. A subject of continuous contention was the idea, held tenaciously by the OKW, of starting the attack in the WEST as early as possible without consideration for the state of preparedness of the Army. Complete readiness by the Army, first of all demanded for Oct 39, was then postponed by OKW to Nov and Dec, and then continually postponed for short periods tight through the winter. OKH finally decided not to pass on these orders any more, as they meant each time considerable movement and rly transport. The situation calmed down only when the MT refused to function in the exceptionally cold winter.
72. There were more excited differences between OKH and OKW about organization. GOERING had considered it proper to make fundamental changes with the OKH. Difficulties in the directing of operations of the army were unavoidable as a result of these changes. OKW, being incapable of coping with GOERING's influence on HITLER, decided in favour of the BAF, and comds and troops of the Army had to bear the consequences.
73. It is characteristic of relations between OKH and OKW that C in C Army and the Army General Staff received no final notification about the pending attack on DENMARK and NORWAY. They just received an order to place at the disposal of the OKW some divs, staffs and personalities "for special purposes".
74. Basic alterations in the structure of the OKH and OKW did not occur during the winter 1939/40.

(1) Only one thing was clear, the decision had to be arrived at by attack in order to keep the RUHR area out of the battle and out of reach of enemy air forces as far as possible, as it was of vital importance in the German economy. The attack had to be carried out in two stages, the first of which was to fulfill this condition, the second, however, to force the final defeat of the enemy. The main idea of the provisional plan of operations, considering the hesitant attitude of the OKW, was therefore to reserve the final Schwerpunkt up to the last moment. The distraction of the Army in the WEST was made according to this thought. The provisional plan of operations had been through several variations, one of which became known to the Western powers when a German plane made an emergency landing in BELGIUM.

C. THE FRENCH CAMPAIGN

75. During the night 9/10 May 40, the HQ of the OKH was transferred to the WEST. The place, fixed personally by HITLER in the Eifel near his HQ, had room only for the C in C Army, for Chief of the General Staff, and for his closest collaborators from the Operationsabt and Abt Fremde Heere West. The remaining departments of the HQ were distributed over GIESSEN and GODESBERG and were represented by liaison officers with Chief of General Staff.
76. The O Qu I was ill for a considerable period, and an old and very capable General Staff officer was temporarily given the job of O Qu II, with the same responsibilities as O Qu I had previously held.
77. The HQ of the OKW only contained the Fuehrungsabt and the liaison officers to the other offices of the OKW and to the civilian authorities. The C in C Army spoke daily by telephone, generally at noon and in the evening, with HITLER. Personal talks were rare. The routine reports by the OKH to the OKW were similar to those during the Polish campaign.
78. I remember two important occasions during the first stage of the campaign when HITLER interfered in the direction of the operations.(1)
79. The first had to detrimental consequences: when, after the crossing of the NEUSE, the Southern portion of the Army Group RUNDSTEDT approached the AISNE NORTH of RHEIMS, HITLER was suddenly filled with completely unfounded anxiety about the safety of this sector. Sufficient provisions had been made for this case in the plans of the Army, but it was quite impossible to convince HITLER of this.(2) He succeeded in persuading the C in C Army to take a Corps from the Southern part of the Army Group von BOCK and to transfer it further SOUTH into the area von RUNDSTEDT.(3)

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- (1) Nervous telephonic enquiries from HITLER to C in C Army, or from Fuehrungsstab to the Army Operationsabt, in which more or less clear directives were recommended to the OKH, were numerous but were ignored by the General Staff. They occurred regularly when the movement of the Army slowed down temporarily in one spot. They were hardly considered to be an interference.
- (2) It is practically impossible to communicate to somebody else, and certainly not to an amateur, the mass of considerations and preconceived ideas which are contained in a well-thought out plan of operations. HITLER had been informed by the General Staff only about the first stage and the first objectives, not however about all the measures prepared against possible enemy actions, and he frequently considered events that were expected by the General Staff, as surprise dangers. His nervous excitability and his continually growing distrust made him demand immediate measures by the OKH.
- (3) By the time this movement was completed the hypothetical danger to the Southern flank of von RUNDSTEDT had long been forgotten. The decrease in strength of von BOCK could easily be replaced by reserves of the OKH.

80. The second occasion when HITLER interfered had far-reaching consequences: the British-French forces were on the defensive against German attacks from the EAST and SOUTH in area COURTRAI and NORTH of it. The spearheads of KLUGE's armoured formations of the Army Group RUNDSTEDT advancing from the SOUTH had already reached the rear of the enemy and threatened the line of retreat to DUNKIRK. It was a question of a few days before this line was finally out. On the personal orders of HITLER, the armoured formations were stopped, the spearheads were even withdrawn, and thus the way to DUNKIRK was cleared for the British Army. (1)
81. The operations approved for the second stage of the French campaign, which had been worked on by the General Staff during the first stage, were verbally communicated to HITLER and the OKW in the now usual manner. Again the OKW issued their directives on this basis.
82. The question of a continuation of the attack into English territory, which should have been a typical OKW matter as an amphibious operation, was never mentioned to the Army. I do not know if it was discussed at that time with the C in C Air Force and Navy.
83. HITLER did not interfere much in the second stage of the French campaign, which offered no great risks for the Army. C in C Army went more frequently during this period from his HQ OKH, transferred in the meantime to SOUTH BELGIUM, to the nearby CP of the OKW, and sometimes he informed the General Staff about HITLER's ideas on operations mentioned in these talks. They were ignored by the General Staff unless they conformed with their own ideas. No conflicts arose out of this, as day-to-day questions - nothing else was involved - were very quickly out of date in the fast development of events.

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- (1) The development of this action was dramatic. One day, I cannot remember the date, BRAUCHITSCH told me, after a conference with HITLER, that the OKW was very worried about the armoured formations because they were in considerable danger, in difficult country honeycombed with canals, without being able to attain any vital results. One could not sacrifice the armoured formations uselessly, as they were essential for the second stage of the campaign. I refused, on behalf of the OKH, to interfere in the movement of Army Group RUNDSTEDT, which had clear orders to prevent the enemy from reaching the coast. The quicker and more complete the success would be here, the easier it would be to repair later the loss of some tanks. The next day I was ordered, together with BRAUCHITSCH, to a conference. The excited discussion finished with a definite order by HITLER, to which he added that he would ensure execution of his order by sending personal liaison officers to the front. KEITEL was sent by plane to Army Group RUNDSTEDT, and other officers to the front CPs.

I have never been able to fathom how HITLER conceived the idea of the "useless endangering of the armoured formations". It is most likely that KEITEL, who was for a considerable time in FLANDERS during the World War, had originated these ideas by his tales.

84. When FRANCE collapsed the Armistice conditions were compiled by the OKW without the participation of the OKH. Demarcation lines between occupied and unoccupied FRANCE were fixed by OKW without the collaboration of the General Staff, in spite of their great military importance. The Army had to be satisfied with its C in C taking part, as HITLER's companion, in the final propaganda meeting at COMPEIGNE.
85. ITALY had meanwhile entered the war as GERMANY's ally. OKW retained the responsibility for military discussions and agreements with ITALY, as later on with other allies, without contacting the Army General Staff.
86. At the beginning of stage two of the French campaign, negotiations were held about employing an Italian Army in the VOSGES; these could never become effective in the time available. Later on the new ally received promises from the OKW that the German Army would open the way across the Western ALPS; finally, when the OKH refused to attack with tanks the rear of the French front in the ALPS, useless discussions went on about transferring Italian troops by air to the area SE of LYONS.
87. During the Armistice, when general interest was focussed on a victory parade in PARIS (which was first of all announced with much sounding of trumpets, later on however was cancelled), the basis for an attack against ENGLAND was clarified. The results were the preparations for the crossing of two Armies to the British SOUTH Coast, an operation to be known as "SEELOEWE".
88. The Army was the leading spirit behind "SEELOEWE" and worked out a plan of operations in a very short time. It insisted with great emphasis on means of transport and special technical equipment being available, and it trained the attacking troops and, rather hurriedly, the staffs involved in the attack, in their special tasks. OKW had given the fundamental order for the preparation of the operation, but continually increased the time allowed to the other services, especially the Navy, for preparation, which made the carrying out of the undertaking appear doubtful straight away, particularly in view of the approaching Autumn. The Navy never completed their preparations, and "SEELOEWE" was cancelled.(1)

(1) I have never been quite clear as to what really prevented the execution of "SEELOEWE", which, beyond any doubt, was seriously intended by HITLER. An important part was doubtless played by the active and passive resistance of the C in C Navy. It may have been decisive, however, that HITLER probably lost confidence in the success of the undertaking, ordered by himself. In the order by the OKW cancelling the undertaking, it was postponed until the next year, but this was generally regarded as camouflage, particularly as at the same time other means of damaging ENGLAND were being tried or considered: air attacks on ENGLAND, preparations against GIBRALTAR which consisted in the drafting of a plan of attack by the General Staff, technical experiments, and special training of Army troops in the rocks of COTE d'OR.

89. After the conclusion of the Armistice, form of administration in the areas occupied by the Army was fixed by the OKW (HITLER). No important differences of opinion arose, as at least for BELGIUM and Occupied FRANCE, the Military Administration instituted by the OKH remained as far as the form was concerned. In FRANCE, however, political representatives of HITLER were very soon created, taking the form of a German Embassy in PARIS, which was to ensure that the policy of the Head of the State towards the French civilian population was carried out by the Military Occupation Authorities. Civilian Reich authorities also received considerable powers in the area of the occupied territories. The SD entered, much against the will of the OKH and the Military Authorities. The C in C Army could not prevent the Military Administration in FRANCE, responsible to him, from becoming within a short space of time the executive organ of the respective powers in the REICH. It was only left to the General Staff of the Army, without envy, to carry out the difficult tasks of leading the populations back and reconstructing the railways, roads and communications.
90. The Military Administration created by the OKW for BELGIUM and Northern FRANCE remained untouched. I do not know if this was due to the quick and great achievements of the Military Administration, or to obscure plans for the future.(1)
91. In this area also the SD was forced on to the Army. In HOLLAND, where there were no important military commitments, the Military Administration was replaced by civilian administration without opposition.
92. As a gesture of the victor towards the homeland, HITLER ordered the demobilization of a considerable number of divisions after the cancellation of the PARIS parade. The General Staff did not share this optimistic feeling, and circumvented the orders by transferring the divisions to training areas in the homeland and from there by sending them on leave only. This measure was also influenced by the continuously increasing strength of the Russian forces on the Polish demarcation line where, on the German side, only a thin covering force had been left behind which was not even sufficient for customs purposes. After the conclusion of the campaign in FRANCE, the General Staff asked for an increase of the protection in the EAST by several divisions. This was approved by the OKW and was carried out at the same time as the return of several German divisions to the homeland.

D. PREPARATIONS FOR THE RUSSIAN AND BALKAN CAMPAIGNS

93. The relations of the C in C Army with the head of the state, and of the OKH with the OKW, remained tense in spite of the vote of thanks to the Army passed at a session of the Reichstag after the end of the French campaign. The Party encouraged HITLER's anxiety that the success of the campaign in the WEST might increase the reputation of the Army leaders in the eyes of the civilian population, which for internal political reasons would be an undesirable result. The consequence was the grotesque propaganda about "the greatest commander of all times". This tension was expressed continually in small current matters (e.g. interference of HITLER in the giving of decorations within the Army) and was only bearable at times through the prolonged absence of HITLER from BERLIN.

(1) In these days the OKW gave much thought to the idea of future German frontiers in the WEST. Under the camouflage of historical rights, the incorporation of HOLLAND, BELGIUM and considerable parts of Northern and Eastern FRANCE into the German REICH was discussed. The Army General Staff heard about this purely by accident.

94. The first (if only vague) indications that HITLER considered the possibility of a war of aggression against RUSSIA became known from Aug 1940 onwards (hints to BRAUCHITSCH, orders to build bombproof OKW and OKH Command Posts in EAST PRUSSIA). On its own initiative the General Staff therefore began to consider this problem whilst still in its HQ at FONTAINEBLEAU.
95. I can no longer remember when the OKW gave the official order for the preparation of a war of aggression against RUSSIA on the basis of a surprise attack. I only know that the Army General Staff worked intensively on the problem after its return to ZOSSEN (1 Oct 40).
96. The plan of operations was ready towards the end of Jan 41, and improvements to railways and communications in Eastern frontier areas, the preparation of maps, and other measures of organization were in full swing. (1) While preparations were being made the General Staff had asked that ROUMANIA should be prepared as a base for the German Army. The measures initiated by the OKW during the French campaign to provide assistance for ANTONESCU, who was reorganizing his army (2), were enlarged by the sending of Mot "Training divs" (Lehrdivisionen) to ROUMANIA, and by energetic steps to improve communications. The OKW was in charge of negotiations with ROUMANIA.
97. I can no longer recollect when the finished plan of operations of the General Staff was communicated to HITLER. I remember only the following points: stressing of the completely inadequate intelligence on RUSSIA was answered with silence (3); when it was emphasized that RUSSIA's strength in military personnel was completely unknown, this was brushed aside with the remark that the important factors were quick and decisive initial blows which might cause the crumbling up of the whole Bolshevik regime, so distasteful to the Russian people; hints about the material strength of RUSSIA were answered by HITLER with the statement that Russian tanks were completely out of date and that it would be unwise to fall for the Russian propaganda bluff concerning the great strength of their armament industry.

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- (1) If I remember rightly, it was a matter of increasing the Field Army to 20 Pz Divs, 10 Mot Divs, 1 Cav Div and about 120 Inf Divs, with corresponding increases in army arty, technical tps and supply tps, and also a resulting increase in the Home Army (replacement units, schools, etc.) I believe also that the Waffen SS was increased to 4 Mot Divs.
- (2) The sending of German officers and training staffs to the Roumanian General Staff, military schools and troops.
- (3) It had been found in the archives of the occupied countries that these - including the "ally" FRANCE - had just as little news about RUSSIA as had the German General Staff.

98. The plan of operations could take into account only the first objectives. These had to be at such a distance that the territorial conditions were suitable for complete destruction of the Russian forces employed at the beginning of the war, and also in order to eliminate the danger to the German home area of the Russian Air Force. The first objectives, therefore, were for Army Group Sued on the Lower DNIÉPER, for Army Group Mitte in the heights EAST of SMOLENSK, and for Army Group Nord in area LÉNINGRAD. The plan of the General Staff was accepted without discussion and was made the basis for the usual "directives" of the OKW.(1)
99. These directives went further than the plan of operations of the General Staff and asked for the employment of a group of German Divs in Northern FINLAND to assist the Finnish Army, which would enter the war when the German attack started. OKW had taken charge of the negotiations with the Finnish Army. The Army General Staff had to be satisfied with hints and had to accept that FINLAND was made into an "OKW theatre of war", which meant that OKH had to supply the number of troops ordered by the OKW, apart from quipping them and keeping them supplied, but that their employment was entirely a matter for the OKW.(2) Considering the connections between the German Army Group Nord and the Finnish SOUTH flank, the General Staff was permitted to exchange liaison officers with the Finnish General Staff from the beginning of the operations.
100. It appears that the outbreak of war between ITALY and GREECE came as a surprise even to the OKW. OKW gave orders to OKH regarding the armaments to be supplied to the ally, and these had to be completed by Chief H Ruest u BdE; C in C Army had very little influence in these matters. The OKW also generally gave answers to official requests by ITALY for information on the strength and organization of the German Army, but the contact between the General Staff and the Italian Military Attache was usually restricted to current information on the general outlines of the war situation.(3)
101. The German Army General Staff played a more important part in the relations with the Roumanian and, later on, the Bulgarian Army. This had to be because it was a matter, first of all, of organization and training, and later of operational areas and supply bases for German Army units, the C in C of which were inevitable representatives of Army interests.

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- (1) A remark made when the plan was expounded that further operations would depend on the result of the initial stage, but that MOSCOW would always play a decisive role as the centre of the Russian comms.net, was sharply interrupted by HITLER, who stated that thinking of MOSCOW was a sign of completely out-of-date ideas, and that he intended, once this stage was reached, to wheel from the centre towards the NORTH and SOUTH.
- (2) OKW fixed the objectives for the German Groups in Northern FINLAND in their directive, after having contacted the Finnish Supreme Comd. These objectives completely disregarded the numerical weakness of the German troops and the road and climactic conditions. They were never reached or even approached.
- (3) This was necessary because, at the request of HITLER, the Italian ally had received from the beginning very exaggerated figures on the strength of the German Army which could hardly be reconciled with the actual facts. Sober, truthful statements by the General Staff had therefore to be suppressed.

102. When the war with JUGOSLAVIA started, a group of German divs had already moved into BULGARIA (now attached to the Tripartite Agreement). These German divs were there in order to implement HITLER's promise to MUSSOLINI to assist in the war against GREECE. (1)
103. The plan of operations of the General Staff provided only for the entry of these forces into MACEDONIA (centre of thrust towards SALONICA). Further objectives depended on the development of the Italian situation, and were to be synchronised with this.
104. This dispersal of German forces into BULGARIA, the extent of which had been ordered by OKW, was not welcome to the Army General Staff in view of the imminent armed conflict with RUSSIA. (2) It had, however, to bow to the prime considerations of politics. The intentions of the General Staff were passed to the OKW and noted without discussion.
105. On the day when JUGOSLAVIA's hostile attitude to GERMANY became clear through the forcible change of government in BELGRADE, the Supreme Comds of the Army were called to HQ OKW for a conference on operational intentions against RUSSIA. The C in C Army and Chief of the General Staff received from this conference a surprise summons to the Reichskanzlei, where they were received by HITLER, in the presence of the Foreign Minister, with the words "I have decided to quash JUGOSLAVIA". Next came the question to the Chief of the General Staff: "When can you start, how are the operations to be directed? HUNGARY cannot be used as an area of operations; it might, however, take part, with weak forces, in the occupation of former Hungarian territory."
106. This decision on the part of the political leaders gave a new task to the General Staff at a most inopportune moment, even apart from the fact that the assembly of the forces available against RUSSIA was already being done (under camouflage, of course), and that a considerable part of the German Army was not ready for operations because new units were being formed. (3) For the General Staff the campaign against JUGOSLAVIA was therefore a matter of pure improvisation under extreme pressure of time, with only a small number of divs at its disposal in difficult country.
107. The fundamental ideas of the plan found no opposition, as it was governed by the existing distribution of the German forces and by the German railway system. The plan provided for the entry into Southern SERBIA from BULGARIA, and into Northern JUGOSLAVIA from STYRIA, in order to destroy the Yugoslav Army by the cooperation of both these attacking groups. The extent of Hungarian participation could be left to political decisions, as the German plan of operations was not dependent on it. It was more difficult to answer the question of the time required until the operations could begin, as no preparations had previously been made. (4)

(1) The OKW (HITLER) had first of all thought of assisting its friend MUSSOLINI by employing German mountain troops in ALBANIA. This idea was dropped as a result of opposition from the OKH, and preparations for an independent German operation out of the Bulgarian area were ordered instead. These preparations started towards the end of 1940.

(2) Besides, the Army was not in the mood for a campaign against GREECE, which had always been on friendly terms with GERMANY. The fact that the German soldier owed this campaign only to the failure of an ally did not exactly help to make the war against GREECE more popular.

(3) This was done by splitting up experienced formations and bringing them up to strength by replacements.

(4) Not even maps were available in sufficient quantity.

108. OKW used the basic ideas of the plan of operations, plus the demand for eight days for preparations, as the basis for its directives, which went in the usual manner to the services. Political leadership undertook to bridge politically the period of the preparations, in order to preserve the element of surprise aimed at.
109. The Yugoslav campaign was directed from the OKH Command Post at WIENER NEUSTADT, staffed only with the most essential personnel, and the operations were strongly influenced by the OKW. The rapid collapse of Yugoslav resistance on the Northern frontier, the speedy entry of German troops into SLOVENIA, CROATIA and SLAVONIA, and the appearance of Italian forces on the Yugoslav Adriatic Coast, were quickly followed by political problems, which in turn caused the OKW to make definite demands concerning German Army movements.
110. These demands could easily be met by the General Staff, similarly the wishes of HUNGARY, who had meanwhile entered the war on the rapid collapse of the Yugoslav Army. (1) A request by HITLER, made after the German entry into Southern SERBIA, was more serious, as it asked that German forces should join up with the Italians from area SKOPLJE to PRILEP, for the latter were afraid of being thrown into the sea by the Greeks. The fulfillment of this demand was followed by a complete change in the operation of the Army LIST, which was intended to move as quickly as possible into GREECE from the NORTH to cut the retreat of the Greek Army in EPIRUS by advancing on ATHENS. The General Staff had no personal contact with HITLER during the whole of the Yugoslav campaign and was content with sending very small reconnaissance bodies in the direction of Northern ALBANIA, leaving the planned operation of the Army LIST otherwise unchanged. (2)
111. The OKW further interfered by demanding that some forces be split off to the WEST during the advance over THERMOPYLAE in order to attack the rear of the Greeks, by whom the Italians still considered themselves to be menaced. The meeting of this demand corresponded with the intentions of the Army LIST and the despatch was therefore merely speeded up by OKW interference. Both occasions were justified by the OKW as being necessary out of political consideration for MUSSOLINI. (3)

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- (1) The collaboration between German and Hungarian General Staff ran smoothly as the OKW did not interfere. As basis of contact, small liaison staffs were interchanged.
 - (2) HITLER's Command Post was in a rly train in the area SIMMERING. C in C Army kept up the liaison between OKH and OKW by telephone conversations and occasional personal visits to HITLER. The daily reports by the Operationsabt were done in a manner similar to previous campaigns.
 - (3) HITLER met the military demands of MUSSOLINI in a manner which was in contrast to his usual obstinacy. He believed that he had to protect MUSSOLINI's home political position from the danger of military failure, and he therefore agreed to measures contrary to the interests of the German forces. When these measures were carried he showed particular nervous impatience.

112. The OKW interfered in the surrender negotiations between FM LIST and the Greek Supreme Commander in such a manner that the agreement reached between LIST and his enemy was nullified and replaced by a new agreement reached by the OKW.(1) Considerable bad feeling towards the OKW resulted.
113. The occupation of CRETE was entrusted by HITLER to the C in C Air Force without contacting the OKH and was carried out outside the sphere of responsibility of the Army, which only later occupied CRETE with Army troops and included it in the Military Administration of GREECE. The building up of this administration was very strongly influenced by the OKW because of the necessary cooperation with the Italians. Officially the German Military Administration, just as the administration in SERBIA, remained subordinate to the C in C Army. The Political reorganization of the BALKANS and the fixing of the frontiers of the newly created CROATIA were done without participation of the C in C Army and Army General Staff.
114. The assembly of forces against RUSSIA meanwhile proceeded slowly and steadily, retarded somewhat by the Yugoslav campaign.(2) During the preparatory stage HITLER was informed, as he had been in the previous campaigns, of the intentions of the responsible Comds of each Army Group and of the higher Comds of the Air Force active in Army Gp areas; HITLER did not interfere to any extent.
- 115.. In a conference with the Supreme Comds of the three services, HITLER stated his opinions on the imminent war; he said "It is a racial war which has to be waged relentlessly. At the same time it is a war of ideas in which no compromise is possible." He asked for uncompromising hardness - "The EAST is no area for out-dated notions of chivalry." "The bearers of the Communist idea are outside the rules applicable to the treatment of prisoners of war and are to be made harmless." The Comds in Chief were charged with the obligation to see that these ideas of his were strictly carried out, even if no further written orders were received.
116. The fully justified objections of the Army leaders were uttered, as usual not to HITLER, but only to the C in C Army after HITLER's speech. If the C in C Army made these views known to HITLER I do not know. In any case HITLER's opinion remained unchanged, and his distrust of the leaders of the Army was very much alive.
117. The African theater of war, the demands for which were already proving a burden on the Army's resources even at the end of 1940, had been declared an OKW theater of war from the beginning.(3)

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- (1) This was done purely for reasons of prestige, as the factual contents of the surrender negotiations had already been notified to OKW because of their political significance.
- (2) No fundamental changes were made necessary in the areas of Army Gps Nord and Mitte by the unexpected Yugoslav campaign. A change took place in the area of Army Gp Sued because it was most convenient for rly reasons to take the formations leaving GREECE into Southern POLAND. As we could lose no time, this disadvantage had to be accepted. It weakened the German Army in ROUMANIA, as compared with the original intentions, and therefore forced Army Gp Sued first of all to a practically exclusively frontal attack. HITLER had, for reasons of secrecy, vetoed the use of Hungarian territory, as well as any communication to the hitherto Allies regarding the new intentions before the opening of the hostilities. The Yugoslav campaign delayed the beginning of the Russian campaign by about two months compared with the originally intended date.
- (3) The General Staff of the Army had recognised that the complete abandonment of the North African Colonies would put ITALY into an intolerable position, but had nevertheless insisted on extreme limitation of the German forces to be employed, because the difficulties of supply could be foreseen. The General Staff left no doubt that on the whole it was purely a fight for gaining time.

118. NORWAY was immediately subordinated to the OKW. The administration of the German occupied territories within EUROPE and in the BALKANS was only under the orders of the C in C Army as a matter of form. C in C Army was, from the beginning of the Russian campaign, restricted in practice to the direction of the troops in the EAST - less OKW theatre of war FINLAND - and of the security troops in Western EUROPE, SERBIA, and GREECE. Air Force and SS had continued to develop at the expense of the Army and also utilised their position as favourites of HITLER to obtain replacements of personnel and armaments.

E. RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN UP TO THE DEPARTURE OF GENERAL FELDMARSCHALL VON BRAUCHITSCH

119. The Hqs OKW and OKH were transferred to EAST PRUSSIA at the start of operations. The organization of both offices had in the main remained unchanged. (1) HITLER's belief in his own infallibility and the omnipotence of his will had grown. So had his nervous irritability. His interference in the directing of the Army, even in small matters, increased, and tense debates about strategical and even tactical questions which were purely the responsibility of the C in C Army became more and more frequent in the course of the Russian campaign.

120. There was no doubt that HITLER was under considerable pressure because of the advanced season. I am firmly convinced that he entered the Russian campaign with the preconceived idea, which was not shared still less encouraged, by the Army General Staff, that Russia could be forced to make peace even in 1941, and that thus the further prosecution of the war would be hopeless for the Allies. Spoiled by the quick successes of the previous campaigns, he expected operations to be carried through in a space of time which ignored completely the conditions of terrain and roads in the EAST. He obstinately refused to take notice of the results obtained from studying the map and working with a compass. (2) The advance on Russian territory could never be fast enough for his impatience.

(1) Already at the beginning of the French campaign the position of the "General zbV des OB d H" had been created at the OKH. This was now enlarged by the taking on of some more personnel. Originally used as a special representative of the C in C Army with high leaders in the field in questions of morale and general opinions, the General zbV became later on increasingly the military adviser of C in C Army in the sphere of military law. Nominally he belonged to the HQ Army General Staff but was, in practice, immediately subordinated to the C in C Army.

(2) In a conference with all Gauleiter, held immediately before the beginning of operations, HITLER promised to be in LENINGRAD within eight weeks.

121. The number of divs employed for the initial attack against RUSSIA was sufficient for the frontier battles (1) but was not enough to cover later needs which were going to arise when the front advanced further to the EAST and became progressively longer, and presumable twice as many divs would be needed. HITLER, in view of the noticeable pressure on home morale brought about by the war against RUSSIA, did not wish to agree to a more intensive utilisation of the German manpower strength. He always stressed the idea, therefore, that the enemy's superiority in numbers would have to be levelled down by cracking large lumps out of the enemy front in each single action and destroying them completely. These ideas were not new and did not interfere with planning. The necessity for reconciling this demand, however, with the nervous haste with which he pushed on towards the EAST became disturbing. The limited forces available and the lack of communications made it impossible to carry out both demands simultaneously.
122. HITLER was also continually dominated by the illusion that there was a continuous front. He could not understand the necessity for keeping weak forces together as powerful groups in wide open spaces, nor the art of containing the dangers of the resultant gaps by the manner in which operations were conducted.
123. Difference arose even during the first phase of the Russian campaign (up to the area around SMOLENSK in the centre and the area around PSKOV in the NORTH). The C in C Army, who received the benefit of HITLER's teachings when he saw him, was severely opposed by the General Staff, which refused to interfere without urgent necessity in operations for which Army Groups were responsible. (2) The passive resistance of the OKW was, of course, felt by the OKW and increased the already existing tension.
124. When Army Group Mitte had reached its first objectives and it became necessary to move up troops and organize supplies, Army Gp Nord was still moving up to the EAST and NORTH of PSKOV. The Southern flank of Army Gp Nord was met by a Russian counter-attack, from the direction of the VADDAI HILLS, which was considered hopeless by the General Staff. This gave HITLER the opportunity of carrying out the ideas already voiced during the preparation of the campaign, namely to wheel NORTH with considerable portions of Army Gp Mitte. It would have been impractical to carry out this idea without beforehand decisively defeating the still strong formation TIMOSHENKO, which carried out in quick succession locally superior attacks against the halted Army Gp Mitte. It was possible to stop a formal order by the OKW only with considerable difficulty and by creating new bad blood. The temporary transfer of weak mobile forces from Army Gp Mitte to Army Gp Nord had to be accepted.

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- (1) I cannot remember exactly the number of formations at the disposal of the German Comd. I believe there were a total of 20 Pz Divs, 10 Mot Divs, 4 Mot SS Divs, 1 Cav Div and about 120 Inf Divs.
- (2) The story current at that time is typical: "What is the task of the General Staff?" Reply: "To prevent anything worse happening."

125. HITLER also tried to interfere, by personal pressure on the C in C Army, in the operations of Army Group Sued, which at first had advanced more slowly after difficult frontal fighting, and which could be reinforced only later by forces assembled in Roumanian territory. HITLER's attempts at interference soon went right into details and before long dealt with the direction of attacks of single corps and divs. The General Staff managed to sabotage most of these "wishes" and "ideas" of HITLER, which generally did not take the form of official orders. It could not, however, prevent these wishes from becoming known to the troops from the conversations between the C in C Army with the comds of the Army Groups, where they caused great annoyance and were detrimental to the reputation of the OKH.
126. The interference of HITLER which had the most decisive influence on the Russian campaign was the official order of the OKW for "the battle of KIEV". This order represented HITLER's decision regarding the continuation of the war of attack in RUSSIA after the first objectives had been reached.
127. ¹/₂ The Army group Nord was at that time advancing SOUTH of Leningrad, after overcoming various difficulties. In front of Army Group Mitte there was still a considerable portion of the original Russian forces in area between SMOLENSK and MOSCOW. These forces had expended much of their strength, it is true, in useless frontal counter-attacks, but had also proved the will of the comds and unbroken combat spirit of the troops. Feverish activity was shown in building rear posns between SMOLENSK and MOSCOW, which proved the sensitiveness of the Russians against thrusts in this direction. It was known that further to the rear considerable new formations were being organized. A considerable portion of these were near MOSCOW, to the WEST of the VOLGA. The centre of gravity of Russian strength was therefore in front of Army Group Mitte.
128. In the SOUTH Army Group RUNDSTEDT, increased by weak Hungarian troops and several Roumanian divs, fought slowly against the Lower DNIEPER in fluent advances. Russian forces facing it under BUDJENNY lost more and more their power and will to fight. Only in the Eastern part of the PRIPET Marshes and NORTH OF KIEV did Russian forces hold on tenaciously, supported by the peculiar nature of the country. There were indications that the Russians had started to abandon the area up to the DONETZ and partly even further EAST.
129. The General Staff had been brought up with the idea that it must be the aim of an operation to defeat the military power of the enemy, and it therefore considered the next and most pressing task to be to defeat the forces of TIMOSHENKO by concentrating all available forces at Army Group Mitte, (1) to advance on MOSCOW to take this nerve centre of enemy resistance, and to destroy the new enemy formations. The assembly for this attack had to be carried out as soon as possible, because the season was advanced. Army Group Nord was in the meantime to fulfil its original mission and to try to contact the Finns. Army Group Sued was to advance further EAST to tie down the strongest possible enemy forces.

(1) These included some newly arrived formations.

130. The 6 in C Army was of the same opinion and, after verbal discussions between General Staff and Fuehrungsstab OKW had failed, submitted a memorandum of the General Staff to HITLER. The effect was explosive.
131. HITLER himself prepared a counter-memorandum, full of insults, in which he stated that only minds fossilized in out-of-date theories could overlook that the slowness of Army Group Sued compared with Army Group Mitte had created a break in the front which simply asked for a decisive action against the forces of BUDJENNY. It would be possible to defeat the enemy decisively there and to open the way for the German Army into the industrial area of the Eastern UKRAINE, so vital for the Russians. The strongest possible forces from Army-Group Mitte and Sued were to be concentrated for a great pincer movement against the forces EAST of the DNIEPER.
132. This was followed by a corresponding official order of the OKW. The clear line which aimed at destroying the Russian centre of strength was therefore abandoned in favour of a second-rate undertaking, which under the most favourable conditions would lead only to a quick collapse of an already weakened enemy front, paying for this success with irreparable losses in time and strength. The aim of defeating the Russian forces decisively was subordinated to the desire to obtain a valuable industrial area and to advance in the direction of the Russian oil.
133. After the "Battle of KIEV" had been fought (making unsparring use of the already severely worked MT engines) the OKW ordered the attack in the direction of MOSCOW; for this strong forces had again to be brought up from the UKRAINE. By now, however, the MT engines had reached their limits of endurance. The Autumn mud period delayed the movement after the successful attack of VYASMA. The Winter, unusually early and severe, acted as a powerful ally of the Russians before the objective was reached.
134. The result of "his battle" at KIEV revived HITLER's confidence. He never did recognize the importance of MOSCOW as a military nerve centre of the Russians.(1)
135. HITLER made little of the news of the reinforcement of the enemy front by forces from the EAST and of the imminent employment of the new Russian formations. Any hints concerning the now noticeable fatigue of the German troops and the dangerous condition of the MT were branded as defeatism. HITLER was convinced that the Russians were militarily finished after the battle of KKEV and he gave expression to these thoughts.(2) It is typical for differences between OKW and OKH, and also for the loss of prestige of the C in C Army caused by the discussions about "the Battle of KKEV", that HITLER at that time gave the order for the dissolution of about forty Army divs, the manpower to return to industry, and the order to stop munitions production for the Army, without previous

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- (1) On the other hand, the towns of LENINGRAD and STALINGRAD had a magnetic attraction for his political imagination even early on, as they were reputed to be "nerve centres of Bolshevism". It is possible that the idea which germinated in his mind of holding the movements of the forces in the middle and creating centres of gravity on both flanks, had been influenced by this mystical-political idea, incomprehensible to a soldier.
 - (2) The declaration made at that time by Reichspressechef DIETRICH on his orders that RUSSIA was finished was the actual opinion of HITLER, given in a coarse propagandistic form.

135. (contd)
consultation with the C in C Army. (1) The consequence was, of course, renewed severe annoyance and renewed opposition on the part of the OKH.
136. Further tension arose over the question of prisoners. The General Staff of the Army had made all preparations for the transport back in the approved manner of the prisoners so far taken in the EAST. Ample accommodation to house the prisoners in the home area had been provided by the Chef H Ruest und BdE. The sudden order from HITLER, when operations were already under way, not to take any Russian prisoners back into the home area came as a complete surprise. The reason given was the danger of Bolshevik contamination.
137. As at the same time various "Kommissariats" were formed close behind the advancing front as administrative authorities in the newly occupied territories, which were now no longer the responsibility of the C in C Army, the General Staff declared that it was not in a position to solve the prisoner of war problem with the means at the disposal of the OKH. The OKW (KEITEL) therefore took over the forwarding of Russian prisoners outside the narrow limited area of operations and the responsibility for their welfare. The result was the death of masses of Russian prisoners. The OKH used this as material for serious criticism of the OKW, and the repercussions of this unpleasant development could be felt right down to the troops. (2)
138. A series of military reverses set in soon after the early and unusually severe beginning of the winter. The main causes were: the results of the strategically wrong decision taken before the battle at KIEV; the tired condition of troops who, in full confidence in their leaders, had exerted their full strength without hesitation in unsuccessful attempts to accomplish the tasks set them; and the enemy counter-measures, which could be foreseen by the expert eye, but which HITLER in blind arrogance refused to see. Mistakes made by the local German comds did the rest.
139. The reverse suffered at ROSTOV was sufficient to induce sensible German leaders to withdraw the front to the MIUS. When this decision was reported by Army Group Sued, HITLER vetoed its execution and, from his comd post in EAST PRUSSIA and working only from the map, fixed a line in the Eastern UKRAINE which had to be held "to the last man". RUNDSTEDT asked for and was granted his retirement. C in C Army was never consulted.

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- (1) This order became known to the C in C Army through the Chef H Ruest und BdE, who had received it direct from OKW. These methods were typical. They were used regularly by HITLER towards persons who were to be made powerless without straight away being dismissed from their offices for political reasons.

The reason for these orders by HITLER was presumably the intention to meet the imminent entry of AMERICA into the war with a timely increase of armaments for Navy and Air Force. The further developments of the Russian campaign made the dissolution of Army formations impossible. The order to stop munitions production was cancelled, but had a very detrimental influence on munitions production for the duration of one year.

- (2) The state of affairs was notorious and soon became known to foreign countries. Finally HITLER was induced to open the German frontiers, with the surprising declaration that the homeland was now immune against Bolshevik contamination.

140. Army Group Nord had reached the Southern point of LAKE LADOGA and had therefore cut off LENINGRAD, but had not been in a position to contact the Finns. OKH refused to make new demands on the over-tired troops. HITLER personally gave C in C Army the order for motorized formations to advance across the VOLKHOV in the direction of TIKHVIN, hoping to force the Russians to withdraw from the small area between the German and Finnish fronts. This order was passed on, despite resistance from the General Staff, and was finally carried out by Army Group Nord, which had also unsuccessfully demurred. The result was a complete failure which cost the numerically already weakened Army Group Nord further heavy losses in men and material.
141. The first heavy Russian counter-attacks around MOSCOW were launched towards Army Group Mitte; these were soon followed by further German reverses further SOUTH (OREL, KURSK). During this period the C in C of the Army suffered a recurrence of his old illness (an ing pectoris) and was for a time in danger of losing his life. No doubt his fight against the OKW, with its excitement and its severe worries, helped to bring about this. The friction with the OKW occurred mainly in personal discussions between von BRAUCHITSCH and HITLER, and mainly concerned Army appointments, in which HITLER interfered more and more. There were also differences of opinion regarding the treatment of the Russian population, and on ideas of strategic direction. (1) Further annoyance was caused by the proposal to utilize for the Army the winter sports clothes and winter sports equipment which was available in sufficient quantities at home. (2)
142. The C in C was extremely worried by the balance sheet of the last six months; the myth of the invincibility of the German army was broken. The enemy appeared with strong and fresh, if frequently only improvised, forces. He was filled with the impetus of new confidence. The German troops, on the other hand, had reached the limit of endurance; the equipment was worn out, and connections with the homeland were threatened by a transport crisis which caused much worry. The morale of the Army had deteriorated and confidence in the supreme command had suffered. Replacements for the Army

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- (1) HITLER's policy on the treatment of the population of the occupied areas of the EAST was governed by two points of view: unrestricted utilization of the occupied territories, and the fight against the Jews. His tools were the civil authorities (Kommissariats) led by particularly "active" Party members and the SS. Through their methods of administration and policing, the civilian population, who at first had been quite cooperative, was practically forced into the Partisan movement. The OKH succeeded in keeping the small operational area behind the front free from such methods "with occasional exceptions", but the mistakes in the treatment of the Russian people indulged in by the Kommissariats influenced the population even in the area of operations. The objections raised with HITLER and the OKW by several high leaders of the Army and by the C in C remained completely without success.
- (2) This idea was originated by the General Staff already in Aug and had been made by HITLER into a Party matter, used afterwards in most vile fashion against the OKH.

142. (contd)

were restricted by the OKW, whilst Air Force and SS could make full use of anything available. New forces had been promised by the OKW in the shape of newly-formed allied Armies. These, however, could not be made available before the Spring of 1942, and their performance could never come up to that of the lacking German forces. It also meant an extra burden on OKH, who had to direct and equip them. (1) The replacements of material for the Army had been interfered with by the direct intervention of HITLER, and the influence of the C in C Army was continually being narrowed down more and more through the powers given by HITLER to special plenipotentiaries (Sonderbeauftragte).

143.

The C in C was oppressed by the thought that his position was being systematically undermined by the head of the State; that his opportunities of effectively representing the interests of his Army vis a vis this unusual personality were being diminished further and further; and that he had no decisive influence in the larger issues of the war. These issues were all the more worrying because they were not being tackled by the supreme authority with far-seeing, sober consideration, but on the basis of self-deception and overconfidence in his own strength which could or would no longer recognise the limits between the possible and the impossible. Clear planning far ahead, an essential of military leadership, had been replaced by improvisation as a leading principle.

144.

When von BRAUCHITSCH recovered, he no longer felt that he had the strength to take up the battle afresh, and asked to be relieved from his position. This request was quickly granted, apparently with pleasure. On 19 Dec 41 von BRAUCHITSCH left the HQ of OKH.

(1) In the negotiations carried out with our allies by KEITEL, without participation of the OKH, they had been promised that their contingents would be used independently and as integral formations, not mixed up with German troops.

IV. OKH AND OKW AFTER THE ASSUMPTION
OF THE ARMY COMD BY HITLER
(19 Dec 41 to 24 Sep 42)

145. After von BRAUCHITSCH had asked to be relieved, I was commanded to see HITLER. In a tete-a-tete interview he stated that he regarded the National Socialist education of the Army as the most important task of the C in C Army. (1) He did not know an Army General in whom he could confide this task. He therefore had decided to take over the position of C in C Army himself. I was to continue in the position of Chief of the General Staff, immediately subordinating to him, as I had been hitherto to the C in C Army. The remaining functions of the OKH would be carried out by KEITEL.
146. The relations between OKH and OKW were fundamentally altered by this new arrangement. It had an ominous similarity to the change in situation which occurred previously when HITLER took over the OKW and the supreme command of the Wehrmacht. Now that the offices of C in C Wehrmacht and C in C Army had been combined, the OKH was no longer able as a homogeneous HQ to represent the interests of the Army in dealings with the OKW. Conflicts on spheres of responsibility between OKH and OKW, which so far had played an important part, lost their significance. How far the material differences of opinion between the two offices could still be fought out depended on the will and the militant spirit of the leading personalities in the OKH, and on the possibility of their keeping in close touch with each other.
147. The resulting change of comd in the OKH after the departure of von BRAUCHITSCH is shown in Appendix 5. Changes in the personnel structure within the various departments of the OKH did not take place.
148. To represent the Army point of view in differences of opinion in the direction of operations was now a matter for the Chief of the General Staff, who was able to do so by virtue of his immediate subordination and daily verbal report. The Chief HPA and the Chief H Ruest u BdE fought under less favourable conditions. They were subordinate to KEITEL, who alone could decide whether they were to be allowed to report personally or not to HITLER. (2)
149. In questions of appointments (at least so far as appointments of leading comds were concerned), the Chief of the General Staff could voice his opinion as representative of the operational leadership. He had no influence, however, on the main field of debate, the influencing of education and promotion by National Socialist Party standards. In questions of replacements and armaments, which belonged to the sphere of the Chief H Ruest u BdE, the Chief of the General Staff could represent his demands, hitherto made to the C in C Army, now direct to HITLER.

(1) He uttered the words: "Have a National Socialist Air Force, A Conservative Army, and an Imperial Navy."

(2) The Comd HPA, Gen d Inf KEITEL - younger brother of the Feldmarschall G never reported personally to HITLER, and Chief H Ruest und BdE, Gen Obst FROMM, only once did so, and that was shortly after the new chain of comd became operative.

149. (contd)

The degree, however, to which unsatisfactory decisions could be mitigated, or their effect on the Army avoided, depended on the position which the Chef H Ruest and BdE could create for himself within the new structure. (1) This position unfortunately lost more and more of its power.

150.

Apart from the new daily reports at noon by the Chief of the General Staff to HITLER, the Operations Abt of the General Staff continued to report telephonically to the OKW (Fuehrungsstab) in the morning and evening as well as to make the daily Army contribution to the "Wehrmachtsbericht". These possibilities for discussing ideas would have been sufficient for a successful collaboration in questions of Army leadership, had the basis of mutual confidence existed. This was missing. HITLER, more and more distrustful, was not satisfied as BRAUCHITSCH had been, with information on strategic developments in the situation. He frequently asked for details right down to regiments; such details of course were not at the disposal of the General Staff, neither did the General Staff want to furnish them, to avoid interference by the highest authority in local tactical matters. The conflict as to whether comds responsible at the front were to retain their independence began very early after von BRAUCHITSCH's retirement, and continued up to the time when I was relieved of my position. The departure from the classical chain of cmd, as devised by MOLTKE, could only destroy the system of cmd of the German Army, which had functioned well so far.

151.

The most important question of the war, when HITLER took over the cmd of the Army, was the necessity for halting the Russian counter-attack against Army Group Mitte; this counter-attack had been launched from MOSCOW with strong forces and with considerable elan. The troops suffered terribly under the barbarous cold; their mobility decreased. MT engines and often also weapons, failed to function. The cold weather added to the difficulties of the railway position to such an extent that a dangerous crisis was reached. Clear, far-sighted orders ought to have ~~been~~ given the responsible comds at the front a basis for independent actions. Such orders could not be obtained from HITLER. He fought with fanatical rage against the idea of withdrawing the troops to a line in the rear in a well-planned movement, but demanded instead (even in tactically impossible situations) that the troops should defend themselves "to the last man", wherever they were (2). Events proved stronger and, when the Russian attacks finally weakened, the front line showed deep salients (Velikie Luki) while at DEMYANSK a considerable force was split off (3).

- (1) In practice the Chef HPA, an old General Staff officer, and a personal friend of mine, still worked closely with me as hitherto. We were able to fend off many of the things that happened to the Army after our simultaneous departure. The most dangerous opponent of the HPA was the man who had HITLER's confidence in questions affecting Army personnel, Gen SCHMUNDT, who later on became Chef HPA as successor to KEITEL. The Chef H Ruest und BdE depended entirely on written reports to KEITEL, apart from one personal report to HITLER. These reports were dealt with and shelved by the bureaucracy of the OKW, which was strongly influenced by the Party. I personally could report verbally to HITLER only on occasional questions which touched on operations.
- (2) The possibilities of countering the crisis by means of operations were limited. Operations are movements. The mobility of the troops, however, had suffered considerably, but was still sufficient to meet tactical crises in good time. This, however, was made impossible for the local comds by the draconic orders of HITLER. The consequences were heavy losses in men and material, which could have been avoided.
- (3) In area VELIKIE LUKI this deep salient even affected Army Group Nord. This resulted in dangerous differences between HITLER and Feldmarschall von LEEB and caused the latter to ask to be relieved of his cmd.

152. On the difficult question of finding fresh forces, (1) the Army benefited at this critical period from the union of the offices of C in C Army and the leader of the Party. Amazing numbers of GAF field regts and of SS formations appeared suddenly. These had been formed very quietly from the surpluses available in the Air Force and SS at a time when OKW had refused the Army and new tps. HITLER now used the Air Force unhesitatingly to supply these forces.
153. The transport crisis was eased by the fact that the C in C Army was now personally interested in the performance of the railways and that the head of the state, energetically influenced by the General Staff, was also above the Reichs Transport Minister (Reichs Verkehrs Minister). The lack of railway personnel and technical equipment against which the field transport cmd had fought without success for a long time, was now remedied with surprising speed. (2)
154. When, in mid-Jan 42, Army Group Mitte had halted, HITLER again ventilated the idea of a Spring offensive. The difference of opinion between the General Staff and HITLER again became obvious. The General Staff was of the opinion that an offensive continuation of the war was hopeless, in view of the Russian strength in personnel, and material and in view of the weaknesses in forces and material of the German Army. It appeared impossible to obtain a military decision in this manner. The existing forces and those to be expected in the not too distant future (3) were just sufficient to carry out, with some hope of success, the necessary strategic defence. For this it was necessary to eliminate the deep salients by limited attacks, to create a deep defensive system with rear positions and to form a strategic reserve (particularly behind the centre).
155. HITLER, however, kept to his opinion that the Russians had reached the limits of their strength after having used their reserves in the Winter offensive, which had finally failed (4). Continuation of the attack, even if restricted to the Southern flank only, would lead definitely to the final collapse of the Russian strength, particularly if Russian oil wells could be taken. Sufficient forces would be made available by the agreement with the allied nations. The offensive had to be conducted in such a manner that towards the EAST the DON bend and towards the SOUTH the Russian oilfields of the CAUCASUS (MAIKOP) would be reached. When these objectives had been taken, Russian strength would have been expended to such an extent that the objectives of the attack would be advanced up to BATUM-BAKU and up to the VOLGA. Even the PERSIAN GULF was being discussed. HITLER asked KEITEL to begin forming the administrative staffs (Kommissariats) to exploit the oil areas and special formations destined for employment in PERSIA.

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- (1) The Army disposed of no fresh forces apart from a few hastily assembled formations of men originally not accepted for front service, and a few Skk battalions in process of formation.
- (2) Nevertheless the railway transport problem still remained one of the most difficult problems of the Eastern campaign. It is significant, for example, that all horse replacements for Army Group Sued during the sever winter, had to be taken by road from the former Russian demarkation line up to the front.
- (3) Apart from the current replacements, 5 further Pz Divs and 15 Inf Divs could be expected during the first 6 months of 1942.
- (4) HITLER was very much influenced by the reputedly imminent famine in RUSSIA and the frightful effects which the loss of the UKRAINE raw materials and coal was reputed inevitably to have on Russian war industry.

SECRET

156. The General Staff insisted that the Chief of the General Staff oppose this plan; in return he received a "directive" from the OKW, signed by HITLER, which laid down the basic factors of the intended operation (including details of forces) and which ordered the planning of the operation.
157. The General Staff was of the opinion that the increase in the Army personnel essential for an attack could not be carried out. The very urgent replacements in material, particularly in tanks and vehicles, could be speeded under pressure from HITLER, who utilized for this the newly formed Group BUEHE in KEITEL's staff. (1)
158. During these preparations severe breaks in the German front occurred as a result of strong Russian local offensives from LAKE LADOGA and from VOLKHOV in the area of Army Group Nord and from ISYUM across the DONETZ in the area of Army Group Sued. There were continuous small Russian attacks on the remaining fronts; these could frequently only just be halted. In the rear of Army Group Mitte the Partisan movement increased considerably and called for far-reaching counter-measures, which weakened the front line troops still further. Although all these facts were emphasized by the daily reports, HITLER would not budge from his opinion that those were the last convulsions of dying RUSSIA. (2) Among his closest entourage at the OKW he managed to create and maintain an artificial feeling of victory, partly by telling marvellous tales about the new tanks shortly expected at the front (Tigers, etc) (3).
159. When the "Spring Offensive 42" had started, HITLER called it "the greatest victory of world history". The opinion of the General Staff that it was not a defeat of the enemy but a planned and on the whole successful withdrawal - this was proved by the low number of prisoners - was brushed aside in a sometimes sarcastic, sometimes irritated manner. That the large numbers of prisoners hoped for were not forthcoming was ascribed to the mistakes of Feldmarschall von BOCK, who initially led the Northern part of the attack. Von BOCK was relieved of his position (4).

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- (1) This group was formed towards the end of 41. It soon became an organ of HITLER's personal interference in the production and distribution of armaments. He frequently believed that he could eliminate tactical tensions, as they always arose on a very long front, by despatching special equipment by the shortest possible route (especially A tk guns). Without regard for the planning of the Chef H Ruest and the QMG, the equipment was collected by special planes from the factories and flown to just behind the front line. Alternatively, fast transports were ordered, which the field transport comd had to bring up with express train speed without regard for the always difficult transport position. The work of the departments responsible for equipment and transport was thereby severely hampered. The result was sometimes perfectly ludicrous: for example, the arrival of a few A tk guns in front sectors where the enemy had broken in on a front of several corps, or the arrival of guns for which the troops had no ammunition.
- (2) Reports regarding confirmed fresh enemy formations he ignores, on the principle that the General Staff had been fooled by the masterful enemy deception system.
- (3) These tanks were available for the front, i.e. ready for use in operationally effective numbers, only a year later.
- (4) Von BOCK, who had been taken seriously ill during the winter crisis of his Army Group Mitte, had been recalled for the Spring offensive after recovering from his operation, by the request of the General Staff.

160. Whilst the attack was in full swing (the DONETZ had been crossed towards the EAST, the Lower DON towards the SOUTH); HITLER suddenly ordered that a large number of divs, including crack motorized formations, be sent to the WEST; he believed in an invasion from ENGLAND as a consequence of the continued Russian pressure for a "second front" (1).
161. Attempts to convince him that this opinion was completely wrong, and earnest warnings that the crises of the Spring operations were still ahead and that all available forces would have to be used, were ineffective. He not only insisted on his orders being carried out; after the fall of SEBASTOPOL, without previously listening to the General Staff (2) that the Crimea Army (von MANSTEIN) was to be moved to the NORTH. LENINGRAD was finally to be taken, by MANSTEIN (3).
162. The Divs now leaving the Eastern Front for the WEST, as well as the Army von MANSTEIN, had been counted upon when the General Staff on the orders of the OKW, drew up plans for the "Spring offensive". Now that the front was bent towards EAST and SOUTH, it had increased still further in length. The last Army reserves had to be put into the front line. The OKH reserves which were essential in the impending operational crisis for the Armies, no longer existed. (4) The fronts, whose strength had been drained by STALINGRAD and in the Northern CAUCASUS, would not be able to give ~~the~~ decisive battle to the Russian forces massing in the Volga area and in the CAUCASUS for their counter-offensive. All attempts to convince HITLER of the nonsensical nature of his orders were in vain. As I saw no possibility for asserting myself I decided to work for a break with HITLER. (5)
163. There was no lack of differences which would offer suitable opportunities. There were, for example, strong differences of opinion covering the direction of operations; HITLER criticised in unrestrained fashion the achievements of the commanders in the field, particularly when the Russian counter-attacks against the army Group Mitte, which had long been expected by the General Staff, began, and led to noticeable crises in area VYASMA and to heavy losses further NORTH in the area RZHEV. On HITLER's personal orders the inadequate reserves of the centre were used at the wrong place. These orders had been opposed also by the C in C Centre, Feld Marschall von Kluge. HITLER had specifically prohibited the building of rear defensive positions which would have offered a support to the troops (6)
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- (1) He had probably accepted these ideas from the enemy press, which dealt with this idea in a propaganda fashion.
- (2) In view of continuously arising differences, HITLER now used towards me the same methods which he had used towards BRAUCHITSCH, i.e. he avoided discussion and issued final orders without any preparatory warning.
- (3) Again the unique and mystical attraction of LENINGRAD as well as STALINGRAD for HITLER became evident in the ensuing discussions.
- (4) Each operation - apart from special cases (as for example, the second phase of the French campaign) - has to go through its crisis. To be aware of this, and to have at one's disposal, the means to overcome it, is one of the main tasks of a strategic plan.
- age
- (5) I could pretend neither old/ or illness, and as it was impossible for me to ask to be relieved of my position, I had no other possibility but to put the responsibility for the break on to HITLER.
- (6) It was one of the fundamentally wrong tactical ideas of HITLER, in which he persisted, that he believed the building of a rear defensive position would affect the morale of the front line and lead automatically to an unintended withdrawal to that rear line.

163. (cont'd)

When the inevitable results became evident, the blame was laid on the local command and on the troops, who actually fought remarkably well.

164. The Russians also launched heavy attacks against Army Group Nord. The good divisions of the Army von MANSTEIN were expended in defence, and HITLER could not be moved to desist from the blockade of Leningrad, now no longer effective, in order that the front might be withdrawn to a blocking position more commensurate with its strength. Again, commanders and troops were held responsible for mistakes which really arose from the obstinate orders to hold on, orders which were based on a completely false picture of the enemy and the faulty tactical views of HITLER.

165. His adherence to the theory that the Russians had reached the end of their strength can only be described as a mania, in view of the events at Army Group Nord and Mitte, the number of breaches in the Hungarian and Italian DON fronts, and the daily stiffening resistance at STALINGRAD and in the CAUCASUS. He considered as personal insults the daily recurring ~~recurring~~ refutations of his theory. (1)

166. My quiet and sober expositions of the enemy reserves of manpower to be reckoned with, and of the monthly tank production to be expected, led to a fit of practically raving madness. My indications of the remarkable progress made by the Russian Command in their attacks and withdrawals, as compared with the previous year, led to fits of rage.

167. There were also wide differences of opinion concerning army organization. The strengths of the infantry divs, already reduced to two infantry regiments, had been diminished to an unbearable degree by the uninterrupted sequence of heavy engagements and the lack of replacements. Some divs consisted, for practical purposes, of only their staffs, and some signals and supply units. These expensive skeletons were neither dissolved nor used as the basis for new formations, but had to be kept up in their useless state whilst all available personnel were drawn upon to form completely new formations, on the specific orders of HITLER. The dissolution of old formations was specifically prohibited. (2)

168. In Jul 42 the replacements for the Army had covered only half of what was required. KEITEL declared that he was unable to furnish any replacements at all for the following months up to Jan 43. There were continuous arguments about this point until HITLER finally had to decide to transfer half a million soldiers from the abundant ranks of the Air Force to the Army. These, however, were not used to fill up the impoverished army divs, where they could have been fitted into a war-experienced cadre and would thus have been ready for action in a short time; they were formed into special "EAF Field Divs" for which the army had to provide training personnel and commanders, and they needed a considerable period of training before they were ready. (3) This decision, clearly directed against the army, was taken by the man who called himself "C-in-C Army".

(1) These daily reports were made to a comparatively large circle of listeners. Against all military usage it was possible for completely unsuitable people to voice their opinions unless specifically discouraged. To avoid these frequently irritated discussions in this circle, and in order to gain the opportunity for a fundamental talk on the aims and means of the war, I tried and tried again to get an interview with HITLER when no one else was present, but although this was never specifically refused, it was stubbornly prevented by his entourage.

(2) He justified his decision by the statement that it was impossible to have too many divisional numbers for reasons of deceiving the enemy, and that these numbers represented divs of very varied quality and would worry only the schematic theoretician, who could work only with normal "values".

(3) To justify this course it was stated that the National Socialist units of the Air Force could not be spoiled in the Army.

169. Further differences of opinion concerned the methods of fighting the Partisans, who had become rather a nuisance but were mainly restricted to the NORTH and Centre. The OKH had so far avoided using in operational areas the SS methods of the "Kommissariats", but HITLER, as C-in-C Army, ordered this himself and used SS formations to carry it out. Opposition in this sphere vexed him particularly.
170. HITLER furthermore took every opportunity to voice his opposition to the Officers' Corps of the Army, and particularly to the Generals (1). He hated the "non-political" officer. He wanted pious followers, and not subordinates who were able to think for themselves. He tried to get rid of high-ranking officers who courageously stood up for their opinions. Bitter arguments were on occasion waged on some subjects, and in these he abandoned all normal manners.
171. His distrust of the General Staff was always expressed in new ways: without saying a word to me during my daily report, he one day sent me a written order stating that the writing of the history of this war was to be taken over by an officer of his Fuehrungsstab. Experts on military history, of the General Staff and of the army archives, were to be subordinated to this man. (2)
172. The Russian counter-attacks in the CAUCASUS, hitherto local, increased in their intensity (3); enemy counter-moves at STALINGRAD and on the DON became daily more noticeable; the long-predicted crises in the "spring offensive" became inevitable as a result of unambiguous information on extensive enemy troop concentrations.
173. HITLER, tired of the continual opposition, finally decided to relieve me of my position. (4) My successor was General Zeitzler, a GS officer warmly recommended by GOERING. ZEITZLER had been in close touch with the Party for a considerable period and had proved himself by his industry, practical gifts and energy when acting as Chief of Staff to the Army of FM von KLEIST. I personally had no influence on the choice of my successor.
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- (1) GOERING, who was continually intervening in matters of Army appointments, was a bad influence on HITLER.
- (2) The officer entrusted with this task (Beauftragter des Fuehrers fuer die Geschichtsschreibung dieses Krieges) was Oberst SCHERFF, who was completely devoted to HITLER and from the beginning regarded his task as the glorification of Adolf HITLER, without regard for historical truth. This he voiced openly. Later on he took over, on HITLER's orders, the editing of the "Militaerwissenschaftliche Rundschau", hitherto edited by the Military Science Dept of the General Staff, and utilized it for his own purposes.
- (3) FM LIST was held responsible for this and sent home.
- (4) During our last conversation, HITLER gave me the following main reasons for his decision: I had contradicted him continually in all spheres, and had fought this battle in a way which led him to believe that my nerves were badly strained, but which had also weighed heavily on his nerves. In the tasks before the Army, it was no longer expert knowledge, that counted, but the "fervour of National Socialist beliefs" which, after all, he could not expect from an officer of the old school. He bade me think of the fact that "the secret of MOLTKE's success had been the fervour of his monarchic convictions."

174. As long as there was a glimmer of hope that HITLER's ideas, which became more and more confused, might be counteracted, or at least that their bad effect on the troops might be nullified, I fought this battle as stubbornly as my position allowed only in order to help the troops. I would probably have been more successful if the military entourage of HITLER had helped me in my endeavors; on the basis of their military schooling they ought to have recognized the frequent stupidities in the ideas and measures of this obstinate man, and probably did so often enough. The opposite, however, happened. Together with GOERING they supported HITLER in his impossible aims, and frequently glorified his completely contradictory ideas on strategic, and even also tactical, questions as manifestations of a genius who was destined to announce to the world new methods of waging war. (1)

175. When I left there was a mood of victory in the OKW. The motto given out by HITLER's Chief Adjt, General SCHMUNDT, was: Now that the "last barrier" had fallen, the spirit of the General Staff, which had been brought up under false ideas, could be eradicated and the Army could be thoroughly permeated with the spirit of HITLER.

176. When on leaving my HQ I said goodbye to the inner circle of my closest collaborators, I voiced my conviction that the GS would continue the fight in my tradition, no matter who might be the Chief; I also predicted that my successors would follow each other in quick succession and would get further and further away from the principle which had guided FM von BRAUCHITSCH and myself: responsibility towards the German army. (2)

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- (1) Something of an exception was General JODL, who at least sometimes supported my intentions, even if without emphasis and without success.
 - (2) Both have happened. It appears that in this process the GS has been led into channels which were foreign to its training and its traditions.

V. EXPERIENCES GAINED

177. The lessons of the events described above will be crystallized only in the course of time. They will be a matter for a trained historian, and he will need the collaboration of a psychologist and a doctor. They are outside the framework of these notes.
178. In the military sphere the specific lessons which follow from events up to autumn 42 have to be checked by developments of which I have not sufficient knowledge.

RELATIONS 179.
BETWEEN
POLITICIAN
AND SOLDIER

- On the relations between political and military leadership many books have been and will be written. The soldier is an agent of political forces. During war time, when politics are made mainly with the forceful means of the soldier, the politician has to give his support, as far as possible, to the most effective use of military means. There is no doubt that the ideal conditions for this are to be found where political and military leadership are combined in one hand which is the centre of all power. Personalities who can satisfy the high demands made in war time on the politicians and on the soldier are rare exceptions in history. They may become rarer still as the conduct of war becomes more and more influenced by the advances of technical science, and as the demands made on military leaders in respect of technical knowledge becomes even greater.
180. Therefore the rule must be presumable, that the politician considers the possibilities indicated by the soldier, and then gives him his general tasks, leaving him a free hand in the execution of these. This not only demands mutual confidence between the leaders, but also far-reaching understanding between their collaborators. The politicians must have a certain insight into the work and methods of the GS, just as the GS officer must have adequate schooling in historical-political questions and in the ways of diplomacy.
181. Both these conditions were completely absent in GERMANY for as long as I can remember. The training of the GS officers was purely professional (1). The professional politicians and diplomats were fundamentally different, in training and in outlook, from the Officers' Corps, and their insight into military conditions was usually restricted to their experiences with the Army as reserve officers. The GS worked behind closed doors, and the Foreign Office opposed them with a certain tension that was not free from feelings of jealousy.
182. The knowledge of these imperfections, which two wars gave me the opportunity of observing, induced me in 1940 (after the end of the French campaign) to indicate to my collaborator who was responsible for the training of the General Staff the fundamental lines along which it might be possible to eradicate deficiencies in the training of the General Staff. I suggested the inclusion of historical,

(1) An exception, unimportant for the development of the German General Staff, was the training at the Bavarian War Academy before 1914, where more civilian than military lectures were given.

182. (contd)

world political and economic lectures and study groups in the training at the War Academy, and the creation of a new higher school where selected older GS officers, and promising members of the foreign service, could study the fundamental basis of higher leadership in war. The men who would have to collaborate as leaders in war time were to study at this school. The few attaches and diplomatic representatives abroad were to take part in it. The school could have been attended by GS officers of the other services, and would thus take over the tasks of the previous combined forces Academy (Wehrmachts Akademie).

ARMY
GENERAL STAFF

183.

The professional training of the Army General Staff proved itself adequate on the whole. The GS only lacked sufficient experts in the technical and armament spheres; the connections between these and questions of organization and direction became closer as a result of the preogressive mechanization of the army. I am convinced that this lack of experts who should indicate the technical means by which operational demands are to be met, cannot be filled by the extension of GS training into technical spheres, but only by the creation of a special highly qualified corps of army engineers. The Air Force proceeded along similar lines and successfully. Some particularly capable engineer officers will have to be attached to the working group of the General Staff, after they have received some training in commanding troops.

184.

During the war the training of the General Staff was restricted to courses, the students of which had previously been attached to field HQs for training (Div to Army). This system was successful, at least during my period in office.

185.

I was not disappointed in the replacements for the General Staff, to whom I gave my special attention during my term of office. The instructors in the War Academy had been picked with great care; they ensured a uniform and thorough testing of the students for character qualities in the first place and their purely intellectual capacities in the second. During war time, when entrance examinations were out of the question, field units were told to offer only such young officers for GS training in whom they themselves had complete confidence.

186.

To take very capable young officers into the General Staff without the normal training, and employ them for "duration only" was against the jealousy guarded traditions of the Prussian General Staff.

187.

I achieved my aims, where I considered it necessary, by other means, but I have now to admit that this narrowing down of the personnel available for the General Staff denied us the use of many suitable persons.

188.

To use General Staff officers suitable, an exact knowledge of each officer's personality is absolutely essential. Personal contact between GS officers was very much increased, especially since the General Staff officer responsible for personnel (Chef Gz) made a habit of continually visiting GS training courses (1), and of frequently visiting

(1) I myself, in spite of my lack of time, visited each course once, in order to talk to the young officers.

188. (contd)

GS officers serving at Field HQs. Each GS officer passing through main HQ had to report to him; officers who were Chiefs of Staff had to report personally to me. This made for an efficient working of command, and made it easy for me to keep up the even tenor of morale and keenness of the General Staff in spite of its bad treatment by the Supreme authority (1).

189.

It was impossible to transfer GS officers to field comds in sufficient numbers because of the great demands made by the steadily increasing number of staffs and the restricted number of GS officers available. GS officers who could not be employed in Chief of Staff positions were automatically sent as Field Commanders to the front, where practically without exception they proved themselves.

190.

In questions concerning the chain of responsibilities, which had been muddled up by LUDENDORFF's policy with regard to personnel, I insisted on the point of view that the commander alone must bear the intended responsibility in his dealings with superiors and subordinates. Care was taken that no questions which were the responsibility of the commander were dealt with through "General Staff channels". (2)

191.

The GS officer had to deal with all questions as though he were responsible for them, but he was not allowed to assume the actual responsibility, or to appear to give orders (3). If the "marriage" between Commander and GS officer proved to be unhappy, a "divorce" followed immediately. Looking back, I believe I can see that this training of the General Staff has proved its worth.

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- (1) HITLER expressly ordered that in questions of promotion and decoration, GS officers came after combatant officers unless they themselves had fought with distinction. The old principle of the Prussian GS of changing over GS officers in regular rotation between combatant duty and staff duty, could not be carried out, on account of lack of personnel, in the peacetime army after the world war. It frequently happened that GS officers in a period of 10 years held only temporary field commands. In spite of this, numerous GS officers who became involved in fighting proved themselves as excellent fighters.
 - (2) All GS officers were personally subordinate to Chief of General Staff, quite apart from their employment, and could report to him by so-called GS channels (General Stabs Dienstweg), without the participation of the C-in-C Army or other comds, on any official matters which they considered as pertaining to the unified work of the GS and the holding together of the GS corps. Written discussions between leading GS officers on tactical questions were always done with the knowledge and on the instructions of their comds.
 - (3) This meant a measure of self-control and self-denial which demanded a continuous education and influencing of the temperamental personnel of the General Staff. This however has proved itself. Frequently young GS officers have commanded their divisions or even larger formations for several days after the loss of their comds, and have afterwards assumed, without a murmur, the role of first assistant to a newly appointed commander.

PROBLEMS 192.
OF ORGANI*
ZATION: OKW

The continuous conflicts between the OKW and the Supreme Commands of the services regarding spheres of responsibility had nothing but a detrimental influence. In this case there were special circumstances, but the general condition emerges that a clear delimitation of the spheres of responsibility must have been made and proved in peacetime, otherwise in wartime differences will arise which will hinder the fighting troops. In peacetime the OKW employed its energy to oppose the services, instead of working on the fundamental conditions of the total war potential of GERMANY; among other things, the OKW should have prevented undesirable persons from being appointed to positions where they would be called on to give official decisions. The failure of the OKW (KEITEL) to make far-seeing decisions in all questions concerning all the services (replacements, raw materials, industry, armaments, communications, etc.), was the reason why HITLER interfered, using the revolutionary method of the "Special plenipotentiaries" (Sonderbeauftragte), men who had already been in the Party, a method which finally did away with the last vestiges of planned working.

193. The question as to whether the OKW needed a Wehrmacht General Staff has to be answered in the affirmative as regards the inner meaning of the concept, but in the negative as regards the outer form. The OKW should have secured the services of highly qualified experts fully recognized in their civilian spheres and with sufficient influence on civilian authorities. These experts should not have been professional officers in GS uniform (possibly trained for a short period in special spheres), but men experienced in their respective civilian tasks. They should have collaborated with the Fuehrungsstab of the OKW without actually belonging to it.

194. The OKW needed a working group to deal with each of the essential tasks of the upper organization of the Wehrmacht, and one for pure questions of command. In practice, the Fuehrungsstab dealt only with questions of military command. The OKW lacked suitable organizations for dealing with central tasks, which were frequently decisive, and for exercising a unifying influence on civilian authorities with regard to military necessities. KEITEL could not make up for this lack by his personal energy. Energy alone is not sufficient. The necessary far-sighted planning was therefore replaced by the sectional interests of civilian authorities and by improvisations which were influenced by Party interests.

195. The idea of an independent Wehrmacht General Staff was not considered again during the war. The only possible solution for the problem of how the OKW should obtain its General Staff officers was found automatically in practice by the detachment of suitable officers from the services to the Fuehrungsstab.

196. The taking over by the OKW of the responsibility for railway transportation was justified. The course pursued of uniting the positions of Wehrmacht and Army Transport Commanders is sensible and secures for the Chief of the Army General Staff the decisive influence which he needs in order to be able to use the railways for operations.

197. The same applies to the uniting of the offices of "Chef des Wehrmacht Nachrichtenwesens" and "Chef des Heeres Nachrichtenwesens" (Wehrmacht and Army Signals). The OKW cannot dispense with a highly-placed expert for signals matters as well as for rly matters; it is essential that he represent in an expert manner the Wehrmacht interests vis-a-vis the civilian authorities and industry. Ensuring the technical uniformity of equipment and operations in signals matters within the Wehrmacht must also be the task of the OKW (1).
 198. The question was debated between the OKW and OKH whether the "Chef des Kriegskarten- und Vermessungswesens" (Survey) belonged to the OKW organization. Some factors favoured this, as, for instance, the cooperation with the civilian survey (Home Office). During the war, however, the services, particularly the Army cannot dispense with an office of their own for the preparation, production and distribution of war maps, as this matter is closely connected with operational intentions and gives an insight into plans which have to be kept secret as long as possible. A suitable solution was found in that the Chef des Kriegskarten- und Vermessungswesens works under the responsibility of the Chief of the Army General Staff, but if necessary looks after matters concerning all the services on the authority of the Chief of Staff OKW. In this manner, the unified grid system, the basis for which was the needs of the Army, was secured, as it was essential for reports throughout the Wehrmacht.
 199. The organization of supplies was dealt with in an unified manner by the QMG, working under the responsibility of the Chief of GS in collaboration with the Commander of Field Transport for all troops employed in operational areas. This proved efficient.
 200. The need for a small staff working on supply questions in the Fuehrungsstab of the OKW arose only when the OKW theatres of war were created. This office collaborated with the Navy in organizing staffs for overseas transports. I never came into official contact with them and have therefore no personal experience on this. Their activities never became apparent and they never interfered with the work of the Army QMG. I have to assume, therefore, that at least they did no harm.
 201. The OKW had, for the distribution of raw materials, the AMT Wi Rue, an organization which suffered no manpower shortage. However, the dept did not manage to assert itself either outside or inside the OKW (2), or within the services, where, during my term of office, Air Forces and SS had all their own way, whilst the army had to economise. The main reasons
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- (1) The effectiveness of the Chief signals office in the OKW was in practice diminished by the fact that GOERING went his own way in this as well, and as manager of the 4-Year Plan favoured his own signals troops.
 - (2) The Comd Wi Rue never reported personally to HITLER, who only received his regular statistics. ~~KEITEL~~ his superior, made a statement typical of the service conditions in the OKW when he left in disgrace; it was true that he always had the right opinions, but he made the mistake of uttering his views.

201. (contd)

for this were the political power of GOERING and HIMMLER, and GOERING's hold on the raw materials by virtue of the 4 Year Plan. It is impossible, therefore, to make a generally valid deduction. In principle, the procedure is correct that the services report their needs to the OKW and that the latter distributes the available raw materials according to priorities. Planning for certain materials, e.g. petrol, oil and rubber, had to be subordinated to the operational planning to a great degree. That this was lacking on various occasions during my term of office is probably mainly due to KRIEGER, who was very hesitant and would not take any risks in dealing with raw materials - risks which when the operational command does his planning are considered essential with regard to his human reserves.

202. I have no detailed experience of the OKW organization, apart from the above critical remarks. The deficiencies that were continually apparent in the work of the OKW are not really a proof that its organization was faulty. The best organization can fulfil its tasks only if it is well-led and assisted by an intelligent policy with regard to personnel. Steps must also be taken that no sand be continually thrown into the machine by inexperienced hands.

OKH

203. The organization of the OKH usually met the demands made on it. One can ask why the C-in-C Army was not at the same time C of GS, as is usual in other armies and corresponding with the historical position of this office in the German Army, at least in wartime. This solution no doubt has its advantages if the C-in-C Army feels that he is capable of actually directing operations in war, apart from the qualities which he requires for his position in peacetime. This will not always be the case, because the choice of a C-in-C Army in peacetime is made chiefly from a different point of view. If, however, a special personality is essential for the direction of operations, then it is a purely a matter of form if his office is called C of GS, or possibly first QMG as it was in LUDENDORFF's time. I cannot therefore state that an amalgamation of both offices would be a fundamental improvement. The division of the tasks, as it was arrived at between BRAUCHITSCH and myself by mutual understanding, proved its worth in practice, under the existing ~~existing~~ conditions.

204. I do not consider suitable the amalgamation of the two offices at home of Chef H Ruest (armaments) and BdE (Commander of the Replacement Army); it proved too much for the capacity of a single person. (1)

205. The organization of the GS proved itself workable as long as I myself could use the instrument I had built up, and as long as all appointments were made by me alone. The institution of O Qu gave me the chance of passing on the inevitable details and concentrating on the important questions, particularly on the direction of operations.

(1) See Footnote (2) on Page 12

206. Collaboration between OKH and C-in-C Air Force was ENSURED, IN OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS, BY FRIENDLY CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO OPERATIONS ABT. This was favoured by the fact that all the relevant officers with the C-in-C Air Force came originally from the Army and understood army matters. Later on, when the effects of the completely separate training of the respective general staffs and the completely separate education of the two services had become noticeable, a supplementing of the existing organizations would presumably have become necessary, possibly by the exchange of liaison staffs.
207. For collaboration between OKH and Naval Commands the available liaison officers were sufficient. Their work was supplemented by occasional reports from the Chief of the Navy Staff or his representative to the Chief of the Army General Staff.

Experi-
ence
gained in
sphere of
command

208. The higher command of troops is an art. It demands the élan and power of creation of an artist, working on the sober and irrefutable facts of mathematics. Every army has at its disposal some men of this calibre. It is of vital importance to find them and train them, and to put them in the right place - but then to let them work independently.
209. When the normal chain of orders is abolished and when the independence of the responsible commanders is undermined by continual interference from above, all initiative is killed. Initiative is, however, a vital element in a command which has to deal with fast operations, and which knows its aims and how to use the means at its disposal. The command of the future will be more and more dependent on the internal combustion engine (on the ground and in the air). For the men who direct operations from above to try to lead commanders at the front on a short rein is a flagrant misuse of the capabilities of the internal combustion engine. The surest guarantee of success is to give clear and far-sighted orders whose intentions can be achieved by the means at hand. It is also essential for the leading personalities to have confidence in each other and in the affinity of their outlook on strategic and tactical questions; such an affinity can be engendered by a sound peacetime training. This is apart from the value of personality and military ability of commanders, and the military qualities of the troops. That these essentials were lacking on the German side during the later war years is one of the main reasons for their military defeat.
210. The strategic and tactical principles with which the German Army entered the war have proved themselves under fire. The high emphasis placed on tactical and strategic surprise as a condition of success was shown to be justified. The normal form of passing orders and reports in the German Army also showed itself to be the right thing.
211. It is useless to try and crystallise under specific headings the experience gained during the first war years. I believe that only that experience is worth discussing which has been gained in the WEST against an enemy of high soldierly value who was technically advanced and had practically unlimited means at his disposal, or in the EAST against an enemy who had vastly superior masses of troops and was surprisingly advanced in his operational methods on a large as well as on a small scale. This experience was gained during the first years. I unfortunately cannot comment on it as I have no insight into developments.

212. The question has frequently been asked particularly by the enemy - why the German Officers' Corps, and especially the generals, watched the developments of affairs in GERMANY without interfering.
213. The first answer to this is that any attempt at interference would only have been made by the Army. No support could have been expected from the Air Force or Navy; rather the contrary. The notion of "The Generals" signifies a homogeneous group only in peace time, when officers rose to the rank of general by very slow promotion, knew each other and were frequently on friendly terms. The enlarging of the Officers' Corps and the methods of wartime promotion completely eliminated this clear notion of "The Generals" (Generalitaet). There was no longer any close contact between the members of this group, which now comprised men of all ages from 40 to 80. The few peace time generals did not know personally the majority of those who had later risen to the rank of general. The generals were so much dispersed over the front, higher commands, rear areas and home area, and had so many varied tasks to carry out, that the concentration essential for the notion of a homogeneous "Generalitaet" was no longer practicable.
214. In peacetime, when the basis of action by the Officers' Corps could be agreed on by a small circle, there was no lack of unified leadership and preparedness of some people to act. The developments of events prevented this from being done.
215. On mobilization, the structure of the Officers' Corps was decisively changed. The few officers of the old school were soon decimated through casualties and disappeared among the mass of wartime officers, who arose from all classes of the population and from various political camps. It ~~was~~ proved impossible in wartime to create uniformity in political views and in general outlook. Only uniformity in military duty and comradeship could be ~~achieved~~ achieved. To utilize such an Officers' Corps against the Supreme Comd of the Forces was out of the question.
216. The fight against the Supreme Comd had therefore to be carried out by single personalities, who, because of their office, had regular or at least occasional personal access to HITLER and who, because of their personal contact with HITLER and his OKW, could clearly see the dangers of his person and his methods. The number of these personalities was very small. Some of them succumbed to the hypnotic influence of this extraordinary man. The majority of higher ranking officers were so preoccupied with the enemy and with their own troops that they could not see or hear anything else. To enlist their support, it would have been necessary to inform the leaders of the Army specially, and such an action would necessarily have taken on the character of influencing subordinates against the military superior by propaganda, an action which would come under military law. This path could not be followed. The necessary conditions for collective action by the leaders of the Army did, therefore, not exist.

217. The only way that remained was for a single far-sighted personality to take the consequences as far as his own person was concerned. Some of these who did see clearly were prevented from giving up their commands by their loyalty to their troops. Some people tried to draw apart from HITLER as a kind of demonstration, hoping that their example might bear fruit. These attempts, however, had no effect, even in these cases where Hitler let them be made at all. By his complete power over the propaganda machine, particularly by means of effective whispering campaigns at home and at the front, HITLER was able to interpret each demonstration and departure of a well-known soldier according to his own ideas, and to have this interpretation accepted by the public and even by the Officers' Corps (1). This is probably the explanation why nobody refused to take up an appointment as the successor of an officer who had retired. That the personal vanity and ambition of the men chosen might have been decisive in this, is a human weakness, and not historic guilt.

218. When the developments brought home even to the average front commander the fact that HITLER had destroyed the once successful organization of the German Army and that the remainder was going to its doom, it was too late for collective measures by the military leaders, even if they had overcome their aversion to such a step, which, according to German conceptions, would be mutiny. Such an atmosphere explains the 20 July 1944, when personalities who were willing to sacrifice themselves in their despair used means which cannot be approved.

219. Possibly the shock of the 20 July might have enabled the then leaders of the Army to use their influence to warn HITLER, even though there was the danger of their not being supported by the Air Force and Navy; but the clear will and determined leaders were lacking. Most people were satisfied to dissociate themselves from the attempt by demonstrations of loyalty. Intimidated by the effects of the attempt for numerous personalities of the army, the leaders did their military duty silently from then on to the bitter end.

220. The prediction made by Genobst Freiherr von FRITSCH has been fulfilled. In 1937 he said resignedly, in reply to my impassioned demand for a fight against HITLER: "It is useless. This man is GERMANY's destiny, and this destiny must run its course right up to the end".

S.S.D.I.C. (U.K.)
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(1) Examples: It was stated about BRAUCHITSCH that he was responsible for the reverses at the beginning of the winter of 1941, and for the lack of winter equipment (caused by the transport crisis). It was stated about me that I had a complete break-down in health and had to be driven about in a wheel-chair, when in fact I have never been ill for a single day.