

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Lt. Comdr. James O'Malley, Jr.

FROM: John W. Jackson

SUBJECT: Interrogation of Edmund Von Thermann

53

Three additional lines of inquiry based upon examination of this transcript have been suggested by the Director:

1. Ascertain the probability of learning from the witness his first knowledge of a war purpose,
2. Obtain information as to the working arrangements within industry in supporting Hitler in that purpose,
3. Determine if any inducements were held out to industry as to its place in a new order.

Several portions of the transcript are referred to below having the above three points in mind. It is noted that Von Thermann, former Minister and later (1936-1942) Ambassador to Argentina stated on page 1 that in one of his conversations with Hitler upon his departure for Argentina he was told that National Socialism was not for export. However, the transcript is replete with descriptions by the witness of Nazi activity in Argentina directed from Berlin. For example, as shown on pages 7, 8 and 9, Bohle, Chief of the Ausland's organization required the witness to have a Press Attache and a Cultural Attache attached to his embassy and named by the Nazis. In addition, of course, the witness described the propaganda work and the Nazi Party work independent of, and in connection with the embassy in Argentina.

It may be in order to require the witness to reconcile this extensive Nazi activity in Argentina with his earlier advice from Hitler, et al that Nazism was not for export. For example, the line of inquiry may be presented as to whether German foreign policy had changed, and if so, for what reason; and whether the reason for Nazi activity in Argentina was in contemplation of or preparation for war, i. e., whether it was a kind of softening up process so as to assist the Nazis in case of a war, whether it immediately involved Argentina or not.

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SECRET

On page 9 the witness says that in 1939 there was a conference in Berlin of all South American diplomatic representatives, about 40 in all, including ambassadors and ministers. Witness said in part: "In the month of August we were all called together and Weiszacker, as representative of Ribbentrop told us we could go home." (page 10 and 11). "There would be no war."

This comment of the witness on the meeting appears significant. While he assigned as the purpose of the meeting "to regulate the troubles which had arisen between the official representatives of the Ausland's organization" (page 10), it is apparent that the imminence of war was a predominant consideration at the conference. It seems that his remark indicating that they were told that there would be no war ought to be very thoroughly explored as to exactly what the advice was, who gave it, when it was given, what the discussion was, why the subject of war came up and in all respects what was said about it.

It appears throughout the interrogation that the witness was widely acquainted with German political and business leaders, both in Germany and in Argentina (pages 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 18, 32, 35, 54, 56, 67, etc.). It is also observed that he was promised the next post of Gauleiter in the Caucasus (page 53). His close affiliation with the business and political life of Germany being thus manifest, it would seem that extended further questioning along the line of the three points suggested by the Director at the beginning of this memorandum should be productive.

J. W. J.

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