

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

SECRET

30 July 1945

W.S. 3.060
Crime

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lt. Comdr. O'Malley
FROM: John W. Jackson
SUBJECT: Interrogation of Hermann Rochling

Apropos of the instructions of the Director to examine the testimony of Hermann Rochling with a view to further questioning in order to:

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,

the following memorandum is submitted:

It appears that Rochling had his own iron and steel production business centered mainly in the Saar and that later, approximately April or May of 1942, he became the ruler or leader of the iron industry in Germany as President of the Reichsvereinigung Eisen and also he became the Deputy for the same purpose of the industry in the occupied territories. It further appears that with respect to his own steel producing business in the Saar, and incidentally, for other purposes including Hitler's attempt in 1942 to expand steel production, he had approximately seven conversations with Hitler. It further appears that just before the Saar plebiscite in 1935, Rochling was quite active with a Nazi leader named Burkel in propagandizing in favor of the return of the Saar to Germany. Rochling became a regular Nazi party member receiving his card in 1937, but had to contribute to the Party even before that.

Having in mind the suggestions for further questioning of the Director, reference will be made to specific pages of the transcript of the interrogation with suggestions for further questioning apropos of said pages.

SECRET

SECRET

It is to be noted on page 8 that the witness stated in part as follows:

"During this period of all kinds, not finished products but steel ingots, that was annually in the beginning about three hundred thousand tons and afterwards that went up to perhaps five hundred thousand tons a year."

Apparently the period referred to is the period during the operations of the Saar under the League of Nations, ending in the year 1935. In 1938 production had increased to 650,000 tons of steel per year (page 18); and the number of employees of Rochling increased from 5,000 in 1935 to 11,000 in 1939 (page 21). When asked the direct question (page 18) whether the 650,000 tons per year produced in 1938 was for armament, Rochling answered: "No, it was nothing for armament." (page 18), and again on the same page, "Until the war we didn't make anything for armament". The witness beginning on page 20 gives several reasons for the increase in steel production in an effort to show that none of it was for war purposes or armament. He first cited the growth in population in Germany as needing more goods, and also asserted that in the 19 years between 1895 and 1913 Germany was growing at the rate of 800,000 people per year and steel production increased at the rate of 800,000 tons per year or a ton a person. On page 21 the following colloquy took place running over to the top of page 22:

"Q About a ton a person? A Yes, that's funny. That proves exactly that it is not by preparing wars. It is only with increased population and increased wealth. If you take it for these four years, 1935 to 1939, there has been built autobahns which used an enormous quantity of steel. It is not only the bridges but it is steel that is the base of the roads. In the years before the first war there was a lot of armament. That's not true. In May 1914, at the beginning of the first war, I went to our War Minister, Mr. Von Falkenbein. He was chief of a corps in our country, and I begged him to give me the allowance to build a factory for making shells. He said "Mr. Rochling, we have three factories of shells. They are too much for us. We have to shut down one." That was in May 1914.

"Q Did your number of employees increase in these four years from 1935 to 1939? A From 5,000 to 11,000. To a large part it was due to the fact that my son had developed the finishing of steel.

SECRET

SECRET

"Q What do you mean by that? A First we made a lot of springs for the automobiles. We were the only furnisher of springs to Opel. We furnished to all the companies.

"Q Is that what you mean by finishing steel? A Yes, finishing."

It is to be observed that the witness argues that it is not "necessary" to make armaments in order to keep running the life of a country. This, of course, is not the point. It may be conceded that increase in demand because of increase in population always accounts for a greater consumption of steel. The point on the inquiry is whether part of the increase and specifically whether part of the increase of his production at his plant did not go into preparation for war regardless of whether the production or use thereof could be called "armament". The witness himself cites that for four years immediately preceding the war, enormous quantities of steel were used in the construction of the autobahns. There is ample reason to believe that the autobahns themselves were part of the war preparation and it may be the witness is quibbling when he attempts so broadly to indicate that none of the steel produced by him was for armament.

His close connection with the Party Leader, Burkel as far back as the Saar plebiscite in 1935, his subsequent contacts as will be cited below, and his ultimate direction of the entire industry in and out of Germany suggest that he knows a great deal more of the war plans of the Nazis and the place of steel therein than he has disclosed so far.

His illustration that wars are not preceded by increased production of steel referred to in his interview with the War Minister in May 1914 appears to have no validity. The mere fact that a War Minister may have told him that Germany at that time had enough shells would appear to have no relevancy to the argument that considerable quantities of steel had not already gone into war preparation, (page 21).

With respect to his first interview with Hitler in May 1933, the witness says that it was at his request in order to carry on his business in the Saar territory and said that Hitler told him that he would be fighting Communists (page 22) and he would come to the point where every German in Germany could have work. When asked how he was going to do it, the answer of the witness was "He didn't say it in large terms" and the witness added that Hitler said that one way of eliminating unemployment was to build autobahns (page 24). It is suggested that the witness be pressed further as to what Hitler told him, i. e., whether Hitler told him that the autobahns might serve a military purpose as well as to reduce unemployment, whether

SECRET

SECRET

have
Hitler may/given him other suggestions as to how he would meet unemployment; whether Hitler disclosed any additional plans relating to unemployment or otherwise; why the witness said to Hitler that he had more power than Bismarck had and apropos of what was this statement made by the witness to Hitler; whether the method of achieving a uniform Germany was discussed and what Hitler said about it (page 24); whether Germany's relations with other countries were discussed and the usefulness of the unemployed millions to a possible war was referred to.

In connection with the witness' meetings with Burkel, one of which is referred to at page 25, it is suggested that the witness be required to elaborate as to the conversation, especially as to how the Nazis were going to make the working people happy and whether the discussion of war preparation and the employment of the idle therefor, arose between them. It appears that the witness worked intimately with Burkel (pages 24-28).

Hitler was seen twice in 1934 by the witness. The first time they were together with about a dozen people apparently representing political parties other than Communists, (page 29). At this time the witness says that Hitler said that he had proved that he had been able to fulfill his promise to get nearly everybody to work and that he would come to the point when nobody would be idle in Germany. It is suggested that witness be asked to expand on this along the line as to whether Hitler said anything about Germany's relations to other countries and the type of work that was being done in its relation to war preparation, whether or not coming under the narrow word "armament".

Witness saw Hitler again in August 1934 following the Roehm episode, stating that the political parties in the Saarland called for the meeting (pages 30, 31, 32). Although witness (page 32) states that nothing was taken up at the meeting except the status of the Saar territory, a canal from the Saar to the Rhineland, and a theater and radio station in Saarbrücken, it is suggested that the witness be questioned as to Hitler's statements, as to Germany's relation to other powers and the building of military armaments and construction.

In 1938 and 1939, each, the witness saw Hitler again (page 32, 83) on the Winter Help work concerts in Berlin in the Reichschancellery, upon Hitler's invitation. The meeting in 1939 was in the Spring. In response to the question (page 84) "Did you discuss anything with him on those occasions?", the witness answered "Well, at the first one I asked him how it would be with my canal from the Saar to the Rhine." Witness stated that Hitler said he would speak to the Reichsverkehr Minister and that the canal was never built.

SECRET

SECRET

Apropos of these conversations in 1938 and 1939 it is believed that witness should be required to expand his answers. In view of the witness' party membership, his activity with Gauleiter Burkel, his important industrial and political position in the Saar and the imminence of war which started in September of 1939, together with his previous conversations with Hitler, it is suggested that these last two conversations might have had many significant aspects and that the witness should be questioned closely with respect to them. Of course having in mind the foregoing, even if Hitler or Burkel had not conveyed to witness anything throwing light on Germany's war plans and the place of industry therein, it would seem that witness by virtue of his position would certainly have information on these points from other Nazis, whether by way of messages from Hitler, the High Command, or on his own account. It is suggested that this line of inquiry also be explored. It appears that witness saw Hitler next in April 1942 and referred to the conversation at which Speer was present, as concerning increasing the maximum output of steel in Germany and the surrounding territories. It was following this meeting that witness became President of the Reichsvereinigung Eisen, and Deputy for the other similar work in the occupied territories for which he had to be nominated separately by Goering (page 36-37). It further appears that witness had been visiting Goering in Karenshalle.

It is suggested that his conversation with Hitler be further explored in the light of the suggestions of the Director and that his friendship with Goering be thoroughly gone into. It may be that information witness received from Goering might throw light on some of the topics suggested by the Director above.

Witness indicated that it seemed dangerous to him to be dependent on imported ore (page 40). Perhaps he had military plans in mind and might be further questioned along that line. Witness again saw Hitler in August of 1942 with respect to the question of how to make more steel (page 42). Witness' assistants in the Reichsvereinigung Eisen were Dr. Rohland, Second President, Alfred Krupp von Bohlen, Third President. A Mr. Pleiger was President of the Reichsvereinigung Kohlen. All of these met with Hitler probably in August 1942, together with the witness (page 42). It would seem that these associates of the witness must have discussed with him the place of the steel industry both before and during the war, as well as the place of industrialists in the Nazi scheme, both before, during and after the war, and that the witness should have not only through them, but many other sources considerable information along those lines. It also appears that in December 1942, witness visited with Hitler in the East Prussian headquarters (page 59) where

SECRET

SECRET

- 6 -

the discussion as related by the witness concerned itself with how far the Nazis could retreat in Russia without jeopardizing supplies of coal, iron ore and manganese in the Doenitz Basin.

Fundamentally, of course, assuming the witness is not only intelligent, but also willing, the exploration of the three suggestions of the Director directly with the witness could be entirely productive. The foregoing suggestions with respect to specific portions of his interrogation, may serve as a reference and possible points of departure for said examination .

J. W. J.

SECRET