

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Ref No PWB/SAIC/5
30 May 45

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German Intelligence Section

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Field Marshal Freiherr von Weichs, former commander of the Balkan Army, (Army Group F).

Von Weichs explains that his staff was dissolved in March 1945, and that he himself was superannuated.

Concerning Hitler and the Regime he claims to assume the same attitude as did the majority of his colleagues. In the beginning, he states, certain hopes for Germany's "Wiederaufrichtung" (re-establishment) were pinned on the National Socialist movement. Everything which occurred in the latter years, in particular the persecution of Jews, was unworthy of cultured people. "Through this war, the National Socialists have plunged us into exorbitant misery, and were I to judge them, I would not hesitate in shooting all of them."

He found it "Fuerchterlich" (dreadful) having to play a leading military role under Hitler's command. He would have handed in his resignation long ago, had it not been impossible under a Hitler order which came out in 1943. The removal and appointment of Generals Hitler reserved as his personal choice. He had an "infallibility" complex and believed of himself, as he stated in a conference, that he was the only person who could solve Germany's problems, and for that reason must solve them all during his life span.

From the very beginning, he claims, he did not believe in a "total victory" as envisaged by the National Socialist propaganda. After the fall of Stalingrad he considered the situation as completely hopeless. During the past few years, he had often thought of a memorandum written by V. Brauchitsch and presented before a conference of Generals on the occasion of the Czech crisis. V. Brauchitsch had very earnestly warned against any war-like entanglements, since a war would lead inevitably to Germany's ruin. The memorandum however, he states, had the opposite result from that which had been expected, - namely to make Hitler and his Party men distrustful of the Military and to disregard their advice.

Question of War Guilt: Upon the question regarding his judgement in the issue of War Guilt, v.W. replies, somewhat hesitatingly, "That seems rather clear now who started the fight in Poland, and one should not have started it."

Of the Concentration Camps, and of things that went on in the extermination camps in Poland, v.W. had heard. His information came partly from reports he received from his cousin, who had once been interned, and partly from rumors, which could be heard everywhere. He claims to have taken pains to learn more accurate details about this, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. On the occasion of one of Himmler's business trips to the Balkans, he asked the SS Leader personally how much of what was rumored was fact. Himmler is said to have answered, "Those are not rumors, it is the truth." v.W. states that Himmler, even showing a certain pride, related that the exterminations were carried out in a very humane fashion. People were loaded onto railway cars without knowing that they were going to a death both painless and sudden. v.W. claims to have said, "But that's dreadful, that's mass murder! How can you possibly do such a thing?" To which he says Himmler answered, "Ach, they are only criminals, of whom we must rid ourselves!"

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The 20th of July, he considers as an act of desperation on the part of patriotically (vaterlaendisch) minded, wise, and important men, whose fate he genuinely regretted. His congratulatory telegram to the Fuehrer he claims to have sent only "to maintain peace and order among the troops". The 45 officers he is alleged to have shot in connection with this event, he labels a propaganda story of the English radio, of which not a word is true.

Difficulties with the SS: Of the SS division "Prinz Eugen", which was under his command, v.W. says that with these troops he had many difficulties. He had not the right to undertake transfers to relieve anyone of his command. He was only permitted to submit a report to the SS-Reichsfuehrer. His experience was, however, he states, that these reports did little good, and consequently he only utilized this right once or twice. On the basis of atrocities and murders committed by SS men against Croats, he demanded the transfer and punishment of a regimental commander. The Commander was removed from his post, only to soon afterwards, occupy another equally important post.

Reports concerning foreign radio broadcasts were regularly brought to him, but he credited them with no great degree of truth. He himself, he states, was twice reported as being murdered, and such stories had naturally had a detrimental effect on the credibility of the source.

Hans Wallenberg
HANS WALLENBERG
CAPT PWB-CPT

Ernst Langendorf
ERNST LANGENDORF
PWB CPT

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