

Col Quinn
Col Perry

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SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER
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HOFER, THE EXPONENT OF PEACE

1. SOURCE

HOFER, Franz, OGRUF (Lt Gen) NSKK, GAULEITER and REICHSSTATTHALTER of Tyrol - Vorarlberg. HOFER's career is a typical example of success under the Nazi Regime. He rose from modest beginnings to heights of power attainable only in a totalitarian state. Clearly seeing where his advantages lay he joined the Austrian branch of the Nazi Party in 1931, and when the organization was outlawed, sought refuge in Germany, where he joined in plotting the future ANSCHLUSS. Having been placed in charge of elections for Austrians residing in Germany, his work may be considered one of the contributing factors of the Nazi "success" in 1938. He was rewarded with the appointment as GAULEITER of Tyrol.

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2. ADMINISTRATION OF ITALIAN TYROL

HOFER held the office of REICHSSTATTHALTER (Governor) of Tyrol - Vorarlberg (Italian Tyrol) since Sep 41. After MUSSOLINI's fall he was the head of a stringent military government and had absolute authority in this area. The only duties left to the DUCE were to collect taxes, pay his officials, and contribute 10,000,000,000 LIRE to the German war effort monthly. Approximately 40,000,000 LIRE of this sum was appropriated by HOFER, supposedly for the purpose of road improvement, billeting of troops, construction of air raid shelter, payments of bomb damages, etc.

Source claims that he suppressed both the Nazi and Fascist parties in BOZEN and TRIENT under the pretext that this was foreign territory. He installed DE BERTOLINI, an 80-year-old anti-fascist lawyer, who had previously arrested MUSSOLINI, as prefect of TRIENT.

3. HOFER'S EFFORTS FOR EARLY SURRENDER

HOFER got in touch with SS OGRUF (SS Lt Gen) WOLF, Chief of the SS and Police in Italy, who had had talks in early March with a certain Mr. DULLES, who claimed to be a representative of President Roosevelt, in Switzerland.

The purpose of these talks was to arrange for the withdrawal of German troops to a predetermined line in front of the Alps, and cessation of hostilities until the defeat of the Nazis in BERLIN.

In March and April HOFER visited the FUEHRERHAUPTQUARTIER (Supreme Headquarters of the FUEHRER) where, according to his claims, he advocated the retreat in Northern Italy during an interview with Genls JODL, BORMANN, and WINTERDEER (?). Upon his return from HITLER's Headquarters, HOFER contacted GENOBST (Col Gen) WITTINGHOF, Commander of Army Group "C", the German ambassador to Italy RAHN, and WOLF, and told them of the curt rebuff and harsh treatment he received from HITLER. The General was noncommittal.

Later he contacted OGRUF (SS Lt Gen) KALTENBRUNNER, Chief of the SICHERHEITSPOLIZEI (Security Police) for the SOUTH German area, a direct representative of HITLER and successor to HEYDRICH, for the purpose of reaching a definite line of action to avoid further bloodshed and destruction in his (HOFER's) area. No impression was made in this quarter.

On 24 Apr the STEIRMARK, OBERDONAU, KAERNTEN, and SALZBURG regions were added to HOFER's jurisdiction. On 26 Apr he had a conference with Field Marshall KESSELRING and GENOBST (Col Gen) WITTINGHOF, and claimed that he

S E C R E T

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S E C R E T

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24 May 45

implored them to end a hopeless fight. KESSELRING declined to accept his appeal and a few days later sent him a message ordering him to keep his nose out of military affairs.

As a result of talks with an American officer who came to discuss surrender terms, HOFER ordered the removal of the numerous AA guns surrounding INNSBRUCK, and that all the bridges in INNSBRUCK and vic be left intact.

4. THE FUEHRER MISINFORMED

According to HOFER, HITLER was completely misinformed on production figures. HITLER received his misinformation from a certain HERR SAUER, production expert from Dr SPEER's office. Although all figures were practically bare-faced lies, HITLER claimed SAUER to be his best source of information and trusted him completely. HOFER cited the following examples:

HITLER was convinced that he received 2500 cars monthly from Italian factories, while actually only 500 were produced. In one of SAUER's reports for a certain period ending 1 Dec 44, he stated that a certain factory in FOICCHI, Italy was producing 4,000,000 rounds of machine pistol ammunition. However, this factory had not been completed by that date, and did not begin production until 20 Feb 45. Another instance cited by HOFER was a report issued by SAUER in which production of 81 mm mortars in a factory in VIPITENO, Italy was claimed to be 8000 per month. During a conversation with HITLER, HOFER was told that this plant produced at least 1000 mortars per month. The truth, however, was that the factory had just been completed, and production had not started. The monthly quota was set at 200 mortars.

5. WEHRWOLF

HOFER claims that he refused to organize a WEHRWOLF in his district, but despite his opposition that it was organized through other channels. However, in order to keep "order" and to "avoid unnecessary trouble which could only lead to disaster for the people" he appointed a certain TOEPPER, manager of a factory in INNSBRUCK as liaison man between him and the WEHRWOLF organization. Source claims he does not know the name of the leader but that TOEPPER has all the needed information to disrupt this organization. He claims, however, that he knows the No 2 man (but not by name) and offers his services to assist the Allies in rounding up the gang and locating their stores of weapons.

6. ART TREASURES

a) Czech or Hungarian State Property: Source claims that these objects were stored in a railway car near LANDECK, and were supposed to move in the direction of Switzerland.

b) Italian Gold Treasure: Cached in a bunker in the castle FESTE FRANZENSFESTE, vic VIPITENO and BRESSANONE.

c) Property of Florentine Art Galleries: Stored with the knowledge of the Italian government in the ST LEONHARD courthouse. Source claims that persons who may have more information on the subject are Dr RINGLER, who can be reached through the LANDESMUSEUM, INNSBRUCK and GRAF (Count) TRAPP, INNSBRUCK.

S E C R E T

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24 May 45

7. FACTORIES

BOZEN: Underground munitions factory, was to have started production 10 May with a monthly capacity of 20,000, 000 rounds.
Underground ball-bearing factory.
Steel and Aluminum factory.
Truck factory with monthly capacity of 250 trucks per month.

SINNICH: Saltpeter and nitrogen plants.

VIPITENO: A completed factory for mortars; had never started production. Estimated capacity, 200 per month.

KIRCHBICHL (vic WOERGL-KUFSTEIN): A 40,000 sq m light machine gun factory, located in a lignite mine. It is also equipped to build aircraft engines.

8. PERSONALITIES

GAULEITER HABICHT: First leader of Austrian Nazis in exile in Germany; killed on Russian front.

WEISSENBORN : Chief of weapons section in production office headed by SAUER. Last seen in Tyrol, supposed to be hiding in a tunnel in vic REITH.

Dr BILGERI : Former president of INNSBRUCK Chamber of Commerce; later GAUWIRTSCHAFTSBERATER (District Economic Advisor). Expert on food, public utilities. Lives in BRIXLEGG, Austria.

SS OGRUF (SS Lt Gen) GREIFELD : Chief of REICHSKOMMISSARIAT (REICH Commission) for the security of the German people (DEUTCHES VOLKSTUM); in charge of repatriation and relocation.


SS OGRUF PRUETZMANN: WEHRWOLF leader for Germany, second to HIMMLER.

SS OGRUF GLUECKS : Inspector General of Concentration Camps.

SS OGRUF POHL : In charge of finances and business exploitation of Concentration Camps.

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PAUL KUBALA,
Maj, MI,
Commanding.

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