

T O R S E C R E T

CSDIC/CMF/X 172

Copy No.....**87**

The following are the relevant details of the PW mentioned in this report.

Name	Rank	Appointment.
WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer und General der Waffen-SS	Military Plenipotentiary in ITALY and Highest SS Officer.
DOMIZLAFF	SS Sturmbannfuehrer	On staff of the SS und Polizeifuehrer OBERITALIEN-WEST. Formerly in Abt. III of the B.d.S ITALIEN.

If the information contained in this report is required for further distribution, prisoners' names should NOT be mentioned and the text so paraphrased as to give no indications of the methods by which it is obtained.

W.S. Valentine
for (W.S. VALENTINE.)
Lt-Col.
Comd, CSDIC., CMF.

C.S.D.I.C.,
C.M.F.
1 June 45.

T O P S E C R E T

CSDIC/CMF/X 172.

This conversation was obtained when DOMIZLAFF was granted an interview with WOLFF and began by asking for instructions concerning the extent to which he was free to give information to Interrogating Officers. In the course of the ensuing conversation four main topics were discussed: responsibility for war crimes, with special reference to the FOSSE ARDEATINI executions in ROME; the extent to which G.I.S. personnel should assist the Allies to determine war-guilt; the use to which high ranking PW may be put after their release; and the fostering of a new national spirit in GERMANY.

+++++

Personalities mentioned in the text.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
ENGELMANN	Colonel. OC the Fuehrerstelle ITALIEN of the RSHA Militaerisches Amt.
FRANK	SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Minister of State. Senior SS and Police Leader in the Protectorate.
KAPPLER	SS Obersturmbannfuehrer. LO to Italian Police. Formerly OC Sipo und SD Einsatzkommando ROME.
KOCH	Gauleiter and Oberpraesident of EAST PRUSSIA.
LOHSE	Gauleiter and Oberpraesident of SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.
MACKENSEN	Col.General. GOC 14 Army, Feb-Jul 44.

+++++

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment.</u>
WOLFF	SS Obergruppenfuehrer und General der Waffen-SS.	Military Plenipotentiary in ITALY and Highest SS Officer.
DOMIZLAFF	SS Sturmbannfuehrer	On staff of the SS und Polizeifuehrer OBERITALIEN-WEST. Formerly in Abt III of the B.d.S ITALIEN.

+++++

Conversation held on 27 May 45.

DOMIZLAFF : On the whole I have the impression that for the time being

TOP SECRET

CSDIC/CMF/X 172

our people have done with National Socialism.

WOLFF : Yes, for the time being it's finished, except for certain aspects of it which were good. But even those we shall only be able to revive in a new form - not under the old name, or with the same trappings. The swastika, the SS - they're like an emetic to our victors - they react to them as we do to the hammer and sickle.

We were so often so near to final victory ! After DUNKIRK we could have gone over in fishing boats !

DOMIZLAFF : One can see that the FUEHRER was betrayed ...

WOLFF : ...And that at the end it was he who let us down. No, there's nothing left of the old National Socialism - for which, after all, we've given the best part of our lives and our health.

We always made the same mistakes. For the occupied territories, for instance, whether they were in the West or the East or the North, we found no better governors than Herr ROSENBERG, Gauleiter KOCH, Gauleiter LOHSE and Minister FRANK - each one more corrupt and vicious and fond of luxury than the other. We saw what happened as a result: people who had welcomed us enthusiastically as liberators, who had showered us with flowers - what became of them ? Within the shortest possible time they had become members of a most embittered resistance movement. And the only theatre of war in which things were different was really ours, because we purposely adopted a well thought out and careful policy. And as you saw yourself, apart from a few individual cases, a few little lapses, which naturally could not be avoided even during the twenty months I bore the general responsibility ...

DOMIZLAFF : Yes, in that connection I wanted to mention the ROME affair in particular.

WOLFF : The ROME affair is, of course, one of the most awkward cases.

DOMIZLAFF : And I should like to know whether KAPPLER was responsible for the order, and whether we are supposed to mention the fact ?

WOLFF : Well, the real responsibility lies with 14th Army. Colonel General von MACKENSEN - he gave the order. But KAPPLER then made the great mistake of not insisting that the execution was carried out by the unit whose men had been killed. After all, they were the people who had most cause to want to avenge their fallen and wounded comrades. Or at least it should have been the same battalion. And when they refused to carry out the order - they were newly trained South Tyroleans, soft characters who hadn't been in the Army for long - he should either have insisted on it, or have asked Army or the City Commandant to provide the necessary personnel. The mistake was that he did not treat each case individually as we usually did in such cases, the whole proceedings being perfectly correct and carried out without a hitch. But from everything I have heard it seems clear that even in this case no injustice was done, because he took only people who were heavily incriminated, or who had already been condemned to death or who would have been condemned

had the proceedings against them been completed. So the main responsibility lies with 14th Army - or with Army Group; but KAPPLER, of course, can't expect to get away scot free because he did not observe good form, and because, from a mistaken sense of devotion to duty, he undertook the execution of the sentence. In that way he relieved the others, who only had the courage to order the execution, of some of their responsibility; and that, in the eyes of the Allies, makes him guilty. But it can be no more than complicity, and not the main guilt, and I shall do everything in my power to get KAPPLER out of this predicament. And that applies to his comrades too. They, I believe, are also being involved in the matter?

DOMIZLAFF : Yes, as eye-witnesses

(Note: It is possible that this should read:-

WOLFF : You, I believe, are also being involved in the matter?

DOMIZLAFF: Yes. As eye-witness.

DOMIZLAFF was employed at the Sipo und SD Einsatzkommando ROME at the time of the executions.)

...I've been told here that KAPPLER gave an order that every member of the Kommando was to take part in the shooting.

WOLFF : Mmmm -

DOMIZLAFF : And if that order really was given - I don't know quite what they would make of that here. Do you really think they will treat everybody in the Aussenkommando as a war criminal?

WOLFF : Well, I hardly think so; what they did isn't nearly bad enough to make them war criminals. Do you know whether such an unjustified and brutal order really was given?

DOMIZLAFF : I was told so later ...

WOLFF : Yes, but by the enemy?

DOMIZLAFF : No, by one of our people, of course ...

WOLFF : Yes. Well, I think I should adopt the attitude ... I don't know ... have you already been interrogated on the subject? Did they ask you for information about it?

DOMIZLAFF : Yes.

WOLFF : And what did you say?

DOMIZLAFF : I said that I didn't know anything about it.

WOLFF : Well, if we were to start giving them confirmation of every rumour and every unimportant point, we should only be causing quite unnecessary trouble - besides, these things are so unimportant. I have worked in ITALY, and we always used methods which were humane, and decent, and soldierly, and above all, just. We were stern, but just. And those methods are bearing fruit now and have earned us the respect of the enemy.

TOP SECRET

CSDIC/CMF/X 172

But on the other hand, the enemy have also drawn attention to every little breach of good conduct that occurred, and they are anxious to find out who is responsible. Personally, I am of the opinion that if we are asked something really important in this respect, where it is clear, or where there is proof that we do know something about it, that we should then not withhold information, because otherwise we should put ourselves into a very unpleasant position and would certainly get sent home last of all, or even never. But I have always felt that once we had capitulated we had put our fate into the hands of our victors; and in that connection certain promises were made and certain hopes aroused during the talks which took place before the actual surrender negotiations were concluded. But at the moment it is wiser not to mention these things or to make too much of them. So now we have got to carry out our determination in a logical manner and stand by mistakes that may have been made. But by that I do not mean that we should incriminate people unnecessarily - that is, one should never give the names of any of our people only in the hope of ingratiating oneself, or of getting into a better camp, or of getting better treatment. That would be a most despicable action, and I know that these Germanic cousins of ours - these Englishmen - are very sensitive to that sort of behaviour, however interested they may be in any particular case. I can see that from the contemptuous way in which, even with me, they discuss the methods used by the Italians. So the thing is not to tell them anything, not to denounce anyone or report anything, unless it is already known. But if you are asked a straightforward question about something which you cannot deny, you will, of course, have to tell the truth. But it will be as well to avoid mention of all subjects which cannot be proved, that's to say, things you did not witness yourself, and which were not checked, and of which nothing definite is known. On the other hand, you should, of course, tell them most conscientiously anything which contributes to the clarification and easing of the position in general. I gave the same instructions to Colonel von ENGELMANN's men who still had scruples about giving information. I pointed out to them that it is of the greatest importance to the fate of our Army Group in general, and of our sector, the Waffen SS and the Ordnungs - and Sicherheitspolizei that, in particular, one should adopt an unequivocal and loyal attitude towards the English in these matters. Rather than that the whole Army Group should suffer, it is better for three or five or ten men, if it has to be, to suffer more or less severe individual punishment; and I for my part, if I hear of such cases, shall do everything I can, particularly if I know a man to be a decent chap, to plead extenuating circumstances for any mistakes he may have made, or see that at least the length of his sentence is kept within bounds. In two years from now all these things will look quite different to the English, don't you agree? That is the course I think we should follow, and no-one should try to shirk it.

The example set us by the Reichsfuehrer is of course the most shattering thing we could have experienced. You see, one cannot on the one hand build up these concentration camps and gas cells and incinerators on such a scale, and especially allow all those filthy and inhuman acts - of which we after all knew nothing - to be committed, and then not stand by them and acknowledge one's responsibility. Either he should have died

TOP SECRET

CSDIC/CMF/X 172.

at once, and that could have been arranged because there were divisions which fought to the last man - or he should have surrendered immediately after the armistice, after the capitulation. He should have surrendered either because he had a clear conscience, or if he didn't, out of a heroic conception of his duty. He should have said: "All right, I accept general responsibility. I did not know about the BELSEN concentration camp, and I am shattered by the news of what happened there; but I am willing to accept the responsibility". He should have accepted the whole guilt to save some of the others. Because now the consequences of his action will be that everybody will be threatened by the same retribution, including the good, harmless little men who were drafted into the SS and are not in the least to blame - men from AUSTRIA and BAVARIA or from Catholic WESTPHALIA, who could not avoid being put into the SS, and who have never ever seen a concentration camp. Now these people are to be held responsible. We know ourselves how many decent Party cell-leaders and Ortsgruppen-leiter there were, little men and decent artisans who have never in their lives done anything wrong, and who went on believing in the FUEHRER to the very last. If they are all to be held to account now - if they are to pay for what happened at BELSEN just because they were members of the Party, that would be terribly unfair. And then I wonder too about my own position.

The Anglo-Americans say: "The FUEHRER and National Socialism have played havoc with us all. They have destroyed the comfort of our peace-time lives. They have reduced the whole of LONDON, or at least half LONDON, to smoke and ashes. They have cost one of us three hundred and twenty thousand, and the other two hundred thousand, dead. They have run us into debt to the extent of milliards and milliards". And it is only natural that they should say now: "We'll get to the bottom of all this; we'll see who is responsible; this must be rooted out once and for all." And it's perhaps not so very surprising that the Americans, with their arrogance - from BALTIMORE or NEW YORK they simply cannot see where the responsibility rests in the REICH, or in the Party, or in the SS; and they're therefore quite likely to empty the baby out with its bath - it's not surprising; but we have to fight against it, and I have already written memoranda on the subject, and I shall not hesitate to use all my connections to prevent any wholesale retribution. But altogether, if one can make any prophecies at all, I think one might say that for the time being it is quite a good thing that we are interned here. I certainly hope that it will only be for a few months - let's say until the harvest has been gathered in GERMANY, just a few months until the end of the summer.

DOMIZLAFF : Well, to come back to our original subject, I imagine that for some time to come GERMANY will be ruled entirely by enemy powers, and that probably there will be a considerable increase of the Communist elements. But later - it will take time of course - I feel that the healthy elements of National Socialism, and people who represent only the best things the movement stood for, will combine again. But they will be people who are really idealistic in outlook and not merely interested in their own personal gain ...

WOLFF : Only - never under the name of National Socialism. The most we can hope to achieve here is: first, that we don't stay too

long; and second, that we go home from here with an excellent alibi, with a sort of alibi stamp on us - and I'm going to fight for that for everyone of you - so that we don't get back to our homes as second or fifth rate men, but that we can feel that there's no-one before whom we need hang our heads. Then the next question that I want to settle here is how I can help you individually - that is, how you are going to be made use of. Will the Allies give us work to do, or will each one of us have to start at the bottom again and look for some work to support our wives and children? But even that would not be the worst, the most important thing first of all is to go through the Allied machinery here and then get home provided with all the necessary papers and passes - shall we say "tried, tested, and not found wanting". The rest is a question of development. The Allies will know us by then and our future will depend on whether - or to what extent - leading personalities, or perhaps I should say old Nazis of the decent sort, not the corrupt sort, will be used; or to what extent they will let us co-operate or even entrust us with responsibility. If they don't, then something or other will have to happen; but we will only be able to work on a very general national and social basis. I don't know, and I don't think it has been decided, how quickly these people will allow us to have our own parliamentary government. I hardly think that it will be very soon, because to begin with there will be three or four separate zones of occupation. Inside those zones there will doubtless be civil administrations, and one will have to see whether the Allies will approach us and want our services. There is no-one at the moment who can say what is to happen, because it rests purely on the decision of the Big Three: STALIN, CHURCHILL and TRUMAN. They will have to make up their minds first; and they've all got more important problems to solve first. One of them has only just become President, and another has just resigned his post and is preparing for a new election. That certainly hasn't helped to ease the present position; and the first thing now is to see clearly on all political questions. Behind the scenes, of course, the Allies also have all sorts of differences amongst themselves, and quite apart from that the question of JAPAN hasn't been settled yet, although that is actually only a question of time.

DOMIZLAFF : Yes, I can easily imagine that Bolshevism will make enormous headway in the REICH.

WOLFF : Certainly.

DOMIZLAFF : Even in those areas not occupied by the Russians.

WOLFF : Yes, that is the obvious development after the complete collapse we have suffered. What else is there? The German Nationals (Deutschnationalen)? That means monarchy - impossible. An outlived system, and an economy which has nothing to offer. No, except in a few countries, monarchy is finished. As for National Socialism, that has been brought to it's knees too, and only lives on hidden in the hearts of a few idealists who are powerless and have to be very careful not to show their true feelings, or they and their families would have to suffer. But there is still the hope that somehow we will succeed, not only in providing satisfaction for the most urgent practical necessities of life, but that somehow we will again succeed in assembling men around a

TOP SECRET

CSDIC/CMF/X 172.

national ideal, although this may not be possible without the knowledge and the help of the others. We must just hope that it will be possible to mobilise Anglo-American interests which will favour our hopes and wishes. But when that will become a possibility again it is hard to tell. (Note: the following sentences could only be partly understood.) But there may be other ways and means ... a little skillful "cheating" (mogeln) - an artful debtor who has to be interested in "softening up" his creditor (seinen Gläubiger weich zu kriegen), who gives no quarter because his lost capital is outside the country ... well, there are chances there too, so there is plenty of work to be done, and we'll do it somehow! But for the moment we're well off as we are - the mob has been unleashed now, and until things have calmed down a bit and the war-crime trials are over it's better to remain in this atmosphere rather than go back while the hue and cry is still on. You know what our people are like - first they cringed and fawned on us, and now suddenly under the new conditions they'll begrudge us our little crust of bread. That's what life is like, isn't it?

-----000000000000-----