

S E C R E T

Ref No SAIG/15
22 May 45

SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER
APO 758 US ARMY

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:Auth: CG, 7th Army:
:Init: P.K. :
:Date: 22 May 1945 :
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HEDWIG POTTHAST, REICHSFUHRER HIMMLER'S MISTRESS

I. SOURCE

Hedwig POTTHAST is an attractive woman in her early thirties, who might be termed the prototype of the Nazi "DEUTSCHE FRAU". She gave the impression of being an unassuming woman rather than a forceful or calculating type.

Rating: C-3

Date of Information: See Text

Interrogator: W.M.B.

II. HISTORY

Source was born 6 Feb 1912, in COLOGNE, the daughter of a merchant of middle class family. She attended school in TRIER, and later studied at the Economic Institute for Interpreters in MANNHEIM, earning her degree in 1933. From 33-34 she worked as a clerk in a govt office in COBLENZ.

In the autumn of 35 she applied for transfer to a post where she could utilize her knowledge of English, and she was subsequently given a position in the Newspaper Dept of the GESTAPO Office in BERLIN. However, she still had no opportunity to make use of her English, and she asked for a transfer or for permission to resign. She was not permitted to leave the GESTAPO Service, but was given a new position as private secretary to Heinrich HIMMLER, a post which she occupied from Jan 36 until the beginning of 41.

Source states that she supervised HIMMLER's "PRIVAT KANZLEI" (Private Chancellory) and that her work was in no way concerned with his SS activities.

III. AFFAIR WITH HIMMLER

In the course of source's work with HIMMLER an attachment developed which eventually led to a serious love affair. Source left her job in 1941 to lead the life of a loyal, devoted mistress, and she bore two children to HIMMLER in the years which followed. The alliance was not legalized by marriage only because HIMMLER felt that a divorce might result in his wife's death, as the latter had been very ill ever since the birth of her only child. In the autumn of 42 source moved to BERCHTESGADEN, where she remained until just before the Allied occupation.

IV. RECENT CONTACTS WITH HIMMLER

Source states that the last time she saw HIMMLER was during the week ending 22 March 45. At that time HIMMLER was confined to bed in a hospital at HOHENLUTCHEN near BERLIN, suffering from an attack of grippe. While visiting him there source encountered Dr Felix KERSTEN of LINNEGATAN 6, STOCKHOLM, a massage specialist who had been treating HIMMLER for years. Dr KERSTEN told her to call upon him if ever she needed any help. (A wire from source to Dr KERSTEN was intercepted by Allied authorities, disclosing source's location and leading to this interrogation).

While she lived in BERCHTESGADEN, she used to receive daily telephone calls from HIMMLER. She presumes that the calls came from BERLIN, but she is not certain. The last call from him came on 19 April 45. As usual he discussed only personal matters over the phone, although he mentioned the fact that the situation was getting more difficult every day. Before saying goodbye he promised to call again the following day, but source states that she never spoke to him again. A letter from him arrived the same day, however, delivered by

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one of HIMMLER's staff officers. It contained the usual personal messages, but ended with another phrase about difficulties and the hope that God would protect her, the children, and Germany. The letter gave no hint as to HIMMLER's plans, and no directions for source. Source states positively that this was the last word, direct or indirect, which she has received from him.

Previous to the interrogator's arrival, source had been shown a copy of "Stars and Stripes", announcing HIMMLER's capture. She apparently believed this to be true, because she was obviously deeply concerned and shocked when it was suggested that the story might not be true. She could offer no opinion as to his whereabouts, but by a question revealed that she thought he might be in hiding somewhere, "trying to save something for Germany". She does not believe that he has fled to another country, and she claims that he never gave any indication of having any plans in case of a German collapse.

V. HIMMLER'S STAFF

Source mentioned the following personalities on HIMMLER's private staff:

STAF (SS Col) BAUMERT	Acted as private courier between HIMMLER and source
STAF (SS Col) Dr BRANDT	
Lt Col of Police SUCHANEK	
OSTUF (1st Lt) GUTGENSEN	

VI. AFTERMATH

When the Allied advance threatened BERCHTESGADEN, source moved with her children first to ACHENSEE, Tyrol, and subsequently to another address, where this interrogation took place.

After repeatedly protesting that she had burned all her letters from HIMMLER, source finally admitted that she had burned only a small portion of them, as she couldn't bear to destroy anything so precious to her. Appropriate authorities have been notified regarding the disposition of these letters.

VII. HIMMLER

Source states that HIMMLER never discussed politics or SS activities with her, and that she has been completely uninformed on these matters since leaving her job. She considers HIMMLER an idealist with tremendous faith in Germany and in the FUHRER.

She believes that everything he did was for the sake of Germany. He never enriched himself, and never kept valuable presents but gave them to the SS. His only property is his house in GAUND/TEGENSEE, which he bought on a mortgage and paid off over a period of years.

HIMMLER was privately opposed to a continuation of the war against the Western Allies. He attributes the fact that England and the US fought Germany to VON RIBBENTROP's inoptitude, and believes that another Foreign Minister might have avoided such a disaster.

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SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER

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