

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3826
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2008

Att to ROMA-36536

M/R

SUBJECT: Discussion with General HEUSINGER

1. At 2000 on 28 July 1958 [] and his wife met General and Mrs. Heusinger for dinner at the Hotel Dreesen in Bad Godesberg. The invitation to dinner had been extended by [] and accepted by the Heusingers with alacrity although it involved the General's cutting his appearance at the Peruvian Embassy to a courtesy call. Frau Heusinger was only too happy for an excuse not to go to the reception. General Heusinger announced upon arrival that everybody, but everybody, had put in an appearance but that he was glad to get away quickly since he found it difficult to avoid answering questions about the Federal Republic's attitude toward events in the Near East. And because the Federal Republic has no clear cut attitude he feels the answers he might give to any questions would not be very satisfactory.

2. Heusinger immediately launched into a discussion of the atmosphere in Bonn when the American landings were announced. "Everyone" turned out immediately to be an expert on the Near East and most decried the US move. He personally felt that "the Germans" were too hasty in their judgment and that he advised his own staff to be careful and to wait and see. He then discussed the "Stellungnahmen" which he had seen. He did not further define whose analyses he was talking about but he may have had UPSWING's in mind. He stated that it was difficult if not dangerous for Germans to form judgments about an area where they have little political experience. Hence he had turned to General Jacquot who had endorsed the American move. (see EGP- /// 8).

3. [] and Heusinger met for the first time this evening so that the rest of the evening largely dealt with historical matters. Heusinger made no comment when the name of Merker was brought up and avoided any discussion of UPSWING matters. He showed little knowledge of the UPSWING people or events of recent date. His only remark of interest was that the cooperation between UPSWING and his people was excellent. He also stated that it was a good thing so much distance separated the headquarters from Bonn. He felt that UTILITY had now decided that he would leave things pretty much as they were. Other [] efforts to turn the conversation to UPSWING or even military matters failed.

4. The rest of the evening (the Heusingers announced early that 2200 was about the time they would want to return home) was spent in discussions of their visits to Athens and Italy and his to Turkey. The General was in raptures over his experiences visiting the site of Troy and then Mycenaes. Frau Heusinger listed for us a hundred places and paintings we must see on our way to Naples.

Heusinger, Adolf

5. As is inevitable when any general finds an American who had something to do with War Crimes material the conversation turned at one point to the Nuremberg trials. Heusinger recounted his experiences and presented a rather peculiar but at the same time partially valid picture of U.S. law. He stated that the public prosecutor in Germany is interested in determining the truth whereas the American prosecutor is only interested in a conviction, at any price. He told how a certain American named Rapp had tried to trap him into admissions by the use of forged documents. He had been surprised at the alacrity with which Rapp acknowledged the forgery when it was pointed out to him. Heusinger thought that such behavior did not fit with the concepts of justice. [] fought a delaying action by trying to point out that the whole matter of guilt or innocence is at the root of the difference in procedures. Heusinger then discussed the guilt or innocence of the defendants at Nuremberg. He stated that time has healed most of his wounds and that today he understands what it was that the Americans and Justice Jackson were trying to do. He feels that the basic principles will last and that the overall effect was good although he deplores the sentence passed on Jodl whom he still feels was not guilty.

6. He touched on his own difficulty in understanding the purpose of the trials at the time and particularly how hard it was to sit as a defendant (almost) at a trial where the judges (the Soviet ones at least) had as much blood on their hands as the defendants. He personally had been with the Heeresgruppe Mitte at the time of the disclosure of the Katyn Massacre. He knew that this horrible mass murder could not have been staged by the SS. He felt that the United States had been wrong in trying to hush up this evidence of Soviet murder. [] pointed out that the only evidence in U.S. hands had been German documents and that since these documents had contained so many obvious fabrications for propoganda purposes they would have gained little or no credence had they been admitted as evidence for the defense.

7. The conversation naturally drifted to the problem of obedience and then to the 20th of July plot. Heusinger then launched into a long string of anecdotes about his own arrest and interrogation at the hands of the Gestapo; how he had admitted to having said that Hitler should be removed from military command but not to having wished violent removal from power; his confrontation with his most damaging accuser, General Stief, who admitted that he had never heard Heusinger express any other views; his good fortune in the fact that both Treschkow (by reason of his suicide) and Feldgiebel (by reason of his fortitude) did not betray his complicity; the stupidity of the conspirators and their putting everything on paper; Graf von Hellendorf's guest book which led to many unnecessary arrests and executions, etc. His conclusion was that Germans are just not good conspirators.

Treschkow

Feldgiebel

8. The end of the evening came soon with regrets on all sides that the mutual acquaintance came so late in [] tour. Frau Heusinger embraced [] warmly when she said goodbye and General Heusinger sent warm regards to [], whom he still has not forgiven for not having returned to Bonn last year for a visit.

Orig - File
1 - SOI
2 - EE (UPSWING Desk)
1 - COS