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MIS 208596, MID, October 11, 1945 (AL-116)

Preamble of the Interrogation Report of Dr. Gustav Hilger, Former Counselor of the German Embassy in Moscow, where he was chief of the economic desk from 1923 to 1941.

Gustav HILGER has probably more right than any other German today to speak with authority on German-Russian affairs during the last 25 years. To distort a famous word of Stalin: "German heads of State and German Ambassadors to Moscow came and went - but Gustav Hilger remained". "Gustav Ottonovich" as Kremlin officialdom called him, remained in the German Embassy in Moscow in charge of the economic desk and took part - a living encyclopaedia on Russia and Russians - in all German-Russian conferences in Moscow and Berlin - as the indispensable adviser of and interpreter to German Ministers and Ambassadors. Hilger has thus had a unique opportunity of looking behind the scenes of German-Soviet relations during a decisive period of history ending with total defeat for Germany and with total victory for Soviet Russia. Hilger's account and interpretation of the events that led to this situation as well as his views on the possible future trend of developments seem, therefore, to deserve close attention.

Gustav Hilger was born in Moscow in 1886. He has spend 46 years in Russia, 17 of them as a child and schoolboy, 4 as an engineer, 4 as a civilian internee, 3 as a relief and repatriation official and 18 as a member of the German Embassy staff in Moscow. The last post, that of 2nd Embassy Counselor, Hilger held from November 1939 up to the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. All through his long stay in Russia, Hilger was a close and shrewd observer of the fundamental changes that took place in Russian political and economic life as well as in the Russian national character during the fateful years of transition between the two world wars.

The fact that Hilger has been neither a soldier nor a member of the National Socialist Party adds to the soundness of his views. He looks at developments that led to Germany's downfall with the sad resignation of a man whose constant advice to his superiors: "Do not under-estimate Russian strength" was not heeded, who has lost his only son during Hitler's invasion of Russia and who, after passionate protests to his Foreign Office against the treatment reserved for Russian prisoners of war and civilians alike knows his wife, daughter and grandchildren in Russian hands. Hilger now recites Pushkin's verses in order to remind himself of a happier past!

Section II of the report is Hilger's account of German-Russian Affairs from Hitler's advent to power till Hitler's invasion of Russia.

Section III - Conclusion

Section IV-

Hilger's domain within the German Embassy in Moscow was exclusively economic, political and diplomatic. Apart from the fact that he always tried to steer clear of any activities that did not appear to be above board, there was, in view of unceasing Russian watchfulness, very little opportunity for men devoid of Hilger's inhibitions to indulge in doubtful pastimes.

As expert of the German Foreign Office for Russian Affairs after the outbreak of the German-Russian war, Hilger received copies of both "Wannsee Institut" and "Forschungsamt" reports as far as they concerned Russian questions. He also interviewed important prisoners of war such as GPU officials. Hilger's impressions of these contacts seem, however, to be of a more personal nature and add nothing to the general picture.

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LIFE HISTORY OF DR. GUSTAV HILGER

- ✓ Sept. 10, 1886 - Born in Moscow, the son of German parents (father born in Remscheid, Rhineland).
- ✓ 1896-1903 Oberrealschule of the German Lutheran St. Michaelis Church in Moscow.
1903-1904 Worked in machine factories as preparation for technical studies.
✓ 1904-1908 Polytechnic Institute, Darmstadt (Machine Construction); graduated in 1908 as Dipl. Ing.
- 1908-1909 Worked as construction engineer for the Donnersmarck Huette A.G. at Zabrze (later named Hindenburg), Upper Silesia.
- 1909 Offered a job in Moscow with F. Hachenthal & Co. after studying steam, water, and gas fitting construction in Germany.
- 1910 Employed as volunteer in a factory in Remscheid, January-July.
- ✓ 1910-1914 Leading position with F. Hachenthal & Co., in Moscow.
- ✓ 1914-1918 Interned as a civilian internee in Totma (Russian Gouvernement Wologda); spokesman for the internees.
- 1918 Employed by the Swedish consulate in Moscow (protecting power of German prisoners of war and civilian internees), January-April; After signing of the Brest Litovsk treaty, employed with the German commission for prisoners of war and civilian internees in Moscow; this agency was directed by the Prussian War Ministry (housing department) and the German Red Cross, April-November; After severance of German-Russian diplomatic relations, returned to Germany, November.
- ✓ 1919-1920 Worked in Berlin at the Reich Central Office for prisoners of war and civilian internees.
- ✓ 1920 Sent by the Reich Central Office and the Foreign Office as representative for prisoners of war and internee matters to Moscow, where he opened a relief agency, June; Received consular status from the Foreign Office; appointed representative of Fridtjof Nansen, High Commissioner of the League of Nations on Prisoner of War Matters, in Russia, September.
- 1921 Named representative of the German Red Cross in Russia and assigned the administrative and political leadership of the relief expedition of the German Red Cross for the starving people of Russia; also named member of the Nansen Relief, an international organization to give relief to the starving population of Russia, September.
- 1922 Inspection tour through Russia to visit local organizations of the Nansen Relief and the German Red Cross, October.
- ✓ 1923-1941 Asked to join the newly opened embassy (under the Rapallo Treaty) under the German Ambassador, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau; January; Appointed Counselor of Legation and later assigned as chief of the Economic Section of the Embassy, a position which he held until June 1941;
- 1923-1928 Under Ambassador Count Brackdorff-Rantzau;
1928-1933 Under Ambassador Dr. Herbert von Dirksen;
1933-1934 Under Ambassador Rudolf Nadolny;
1934-1941 Under Ambassador Count von der Schulenburg.
- ✓ 1923-1939 During these years, work consisted mostly of following economic conditions in the Soviet Union; in giving economic counsel to German economists and engineers who came to Russia; participated in trade negotiations which resulted in the trade agreement of October 12, 1925, and subsequent economic and political agreements; was also consulted by the Ambassador on political matters due to his extensive knowledge of the country and his practical experience.
- 1932 In addition to various inspections of Russian industrial plants over a period of time, went on a study trip in the autumn of 1932 to gain knowledge of the new industrial developments at Magnitogorsk, Tschelyabinsk, Kusnezsk, and Sverdlovsk.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF DR. GUSTAV HILGER (continued)

- ✓ 1939 Employed as interpreter at meetings between Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Stalin and Molotov, August-September.
- 1939-1941 Participated in all conferences between the Ambassador, von der Schulenburg and Molotov.
- 1939 Named second Counselor of Embassy, November.
- 1939-1940 Participated in the Moscow conferences which resulted in the trade pact with Russia, October 1939-February 1940.
- 1940 Employed as interpreter in Berlin at the conferences between Molotov, Hitler and Ribbentrop, November.
- 1940-1941 Participated in conferences resulting in further trade agreements, October 1940-January 1941.
- ✓ 1941 Accompanied Ambassador von der Schulenburg on his last visit to the Kremlin, June;
After the outbreak of the war, returned to Germany, July.
- ✓ 1941-1945 Attached to the Ministerial Bureau for special employment; Chief adviser to Ribbentrop on all Russian matters (he states that Ribbentrop seldom, if ever, paid any attention to his advice, which led to considerable friction); read Russian newspapers (generally 4-5 weeks old) and also interrogation reports on Russian PW's, as far as such were placed at the disposal of the Foreign Office by the Military authorities. Also had personal personal talks with PW's. Did not deal with matters pertaining to Eastern occupied territories, as these were dealt with by the Ministry for that purpose, under Rosenberg.

✓ Hilger was never a party member. He has spent a total of 46 years in Russia and is believed to be the foremost German expert on Russian economy.

✓ Appendix of MIS 208596, MID, October 11, 1945 (AI-116)