

Thomas

Translation by Miss Knuth

Interrogation of General Georg R. Thomas

by Captain Nordon

at Reservelazarett Falkenhaus i. Taunus

9 November 1945.

General Georg R. Thomas, General of Infantry, retired, made the following statement:

I was born in Forst, Lausitz, on 20 February 1890.

In 1908 I entered the German Army as Fahnenjunker.

In 1910, in World War I, I was promoted to the officer rank.

With the rank of Captain, I was a member of the Interallied Committee on the Plebiscite in East Prussia, in 1922.

In 1923 I was promoted Chief of Company: from 1924 to 1927 I served as Captain in the Wehrkreiskommando (District Command of Army Corps??)

From 1928 to 1934 I served in Heereswaffenamt (Ordnance Dept.), last as local Chief of Staff. Highest position held at that time: Colonel.

1934 - Chief of the Institution of Economics (Wirtschaftsstab), Headquarters Staff, of the Wehrmacht: that same position I held until January 31, 1942 - General of Infantry.

At the beginning of the war it was converted into War Economics and Armaments Institute (Wehrwirtschafts- und Ruestungsamt).

In 1942 - ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ after several months' service, simultaneously, as Chief of Office in Armaments Office (Ruestungsamt) I had a clash with Speer and, in October, 1942, I withdrew again from that position.

From February 1, 1942 until October 10, 1942, the day of my arrest, I was to hold myself ready to execute orders of OKW, but I was not on active duty. 10 October, 1944, following an order given by Hitler, I was arrested by the Gestapo. Reason for being arrested - suspicion of complicity in the high treason attempt and alleged sabotage of armament. In the beginning - until 17 February 1945, Gestapo held me in a cellar; until 9 April I was kept in concentration camp Flossenbürg and from thence was moved to Dachau. From there I was moved away to the Dolomite mountains and late in April, 1945, I was freed by the American General Girod.

The Fritzsche affair occurred in February, 1938. Shortly thereafter a group of opposition, directed against Hitler, began to form - involved were Witzleben, Beck, Oester, Canaris, Dohnay, Olbricht, Count Brockdorf, Stuelpnagel, Wagner, Fellgiebel and I - as members of the Army. As civilians were involved: Goerdeler, Popitz, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Ambassador Hassel, Dr. Joseph Mueller, State Secy. Plank, Gisevius, - at a later date members of trade union organizations joined the movement through Goerdeler.

Diehls played a dubious part. I am of the opinion that Diehls too soon joined the camp of Hitler's enemies and my group never had complete

confidence in him. I believe Diehl is a very able man, but as far as his character is concerned, he is not entirely unobjectionable. He had married Goering's half-sister - later divorcing her.

Schacht : Until late in 1936 Schacht represented the elements who believed Hitler qualified to lead Germany back again to prosperity: at the same time he always declined to join the Party. Schacht's ~~position of~~ opposition to Goering, ~~was very pronounced~~ Feder (Hitler's adviser in financial matters) in the beginning, Himmler, Goebbels, Ley, was very pronounced.

Until 1936 Schacht objected to the extremely heavy strain placed on the Reich's finances through armament expenditures. Beginning 1937, Schacht's attitude changed and then saw in Hitler's politics the greatest menace. Early in 1937, until the end of 1938, Schacht revised his position and offered opposition to:

- a) Hitler's Nuremberg laws (Jews).
- b) ~~the manner of~~ Manner of dealing with Churches.
- c) Education of youth.
- d) Hitler's financial manipulations.
- e) Muzzling of the law ~~in the~~ inside of the country, through Hitler.
- f) Hitler's breaches of agreements with foreign countries.

Since the end of 1938 Schacht maintained loose contact with our group of opposition. According to my knowledge, Schacht did not take part in July 20 plot. In the years 1938-39 Schacht came out into the open with his opposition to the war.

Hitler, Keitel, Jodl, Ribbentrop, Goering, Frick, and I - as well as the Commanders in Chief of the three categories of the armed services, Brauchitsch, Raeder and Goering, - that this was the small circle of elements which planned and discussed the war. My opinion was never sought; since 1936 I never had any more occasion to see Hitler for reporting and in the course of the war I had but once occasion to speak to Hitler. That was in 1940 when ~~the armament inspectors were introduced to Hitler through Todt~~ the armament inspectors were introduced to Hitler through Todt.

I know that Schacht had no knowledge of the march into Austria. As far as I know, neither Schacht nor any other Minister - except for the small circle referred to above - participated in any of the secret meetings held for discussion of the war.

Falkenhausen: In the winter 1939/1940 F. came to see me in my apartment and sought ~~my~~ my advice and that of Popitz on the question of the situation in its entirety and the possibility of an opposition to Hitler. Early in 1940 F. told me that if ~~the government could be forced out~~ the government could be forced out, he would be ready to march in at the head of his troops from Belgium, with a view to overwhelming any possible resistance offered by SS. Stuepnagel made a declaration along the same line.

Falkenhausen's reputation in Hitler's head quarters was bad, he was said to have been too lenient with the Belgians. Through Ribbentrop, Hitler's order reached Falkenhausen to return from China where he collaborated with the Chinese Army ~~xxxx~~ fighting against Japan, to Germany. At the same time the menace was made that should he fail to heed the order, he would be deprived of his pension and all other personal rights.

Blomberg: I blame B. along the following lines:

- 1) On 30 June 1934, B. permitted the assassination of Schleicher and the other officers, without offering any opposition.
- 2) At the time of Hindenburg's death, B. accepted without opposition that the Wehrmacht took the oath of allegiance on Hitler and not on the constitution.
- 3) It is B. who planted the seed of national socialism in the Army and, as a result of his personal weakness, toward Hitler, his contribution to national socialism's taking root quickly in the Wehrmacht is considerable.

Keitel: In a very pronounced manner K. continued to ^{follow} ~~know~~ the line established by B. as regards nazification of the Wehrmacht. Special assistance in that respect was given Keitel by General Reinicke, at a later date Chief of the National Socialist Staff of Leaders. K. was a very weak character ~~xxx~~ and his servitude to Hitler grew from month to month, with the result that at last he completely belonged to him. Before the war K. was never disposed to give ear to the warnings which came to him from his subordinates on the subject of Hitler's terror methods regarding the Jews, the Churches and the Law: nor to offer opposition. He was not willing to stand ~~up~~ before Hitler for ~~my~~ very serious ~~concerns~~ misgivings which I uttered ~~at that time~~, before the war against a beginning of the war, and in the course of the war against its continuation.

(1938 - November - when I attended an OKW meeting with Goering in the capacity of a spectator.)

Jodl: My blame against Jodl is that notwithstanding his full training and experience as an officer of the General Staff, he approved of type of warfare according to Hitler's pattern and that until the end of the war he executed all measures ordered by Hitler for the carrying through of the war. I believe that Jodl was a nazi by conviction.

Brauchitsch: 1) My reproach against him is ~~that during the time~~ at the time the Fritsch affair took place, he assumed his new position without making any attempt to reestablish Fritsch's honor. 2) The manner of financing the divorce, 3) B. was not a member of the circle of opposition. When I communicated to him - through Halder - /the possibility of obviation of the war, ~~was~~ the Vatikán report on he refused his support to any kind of forceful measure against the Hitler regime. This happened at the time after financing the divorce. B. had contracted a ^{person} pact with Hitler and, evidently endorsed the conviction that under prevailing conditions a change of government would be impossible. More than that, after Halder, Brauchitsch even contemplated my arrest at that time.

Halder prevented that. B. deserves the blame that he failed to offer opposition or that he resigned from his position, at the outbreak of the war, ~~and~~ and ~~at the outbreak of the war~~ when hostilities against Russia started, unless it be that he took the same attitude as Hitler's was. As far as I know B. began to oppose Hitler's plan at the time the reverses ~~of~~ at Moscow. I do not believe that B. was a Nazi according to his conviction.

Halder: H has at all times been a foe of the Nazi Regime. At the time of the outbreak of the war he was too weak to enforce his ideas against those of Brauchitsch. ~~After the outbreak of the war he was in sympathy with the aspirations to bring about the downfall of Hitler's government~~ After the outbreak of the war he was in sympathy with aspirations to bring about the downfall of Hitler's government. Through me and through his connection with Beck Halder had contact with the opposition circle, and in a letter addressed to Goerdeler he stated that in case of emergency the Army would be loyal to its duty also against the Hitler regime. I believe it is out of the question that H. was bribed in any manner.

Warlimont: Before the war he made the personal admission that he is an adherent of Hitler. He did not join the opposition circle. In the beginning W. was my subordinate, - a very intelligent and clear thinking person, with ample experience in Europe, America, and socially ^{especially} well-qualified. Many foreign contacts. As long as he worked under my orders he shared my attitude of opposition to National Socialism. Keitel sent W. to Franco in Spain. With his return ~~regime~~ began his political reorientation to be apparent. I consider W. to be very ambitious. Before the war clearly endorsed Hitler's ideas: in the course of the war he made the statement on various occasions that he does not approve of Hitler's measures, but that in view of his conception of the sense of duty he must continue to maintain ~~his~~ his position and activity. As a result of a mistake made by one of Hitler's subordinates, W. was relieved of his position in the course of the Africa campaign: 24 hours later, however, he was reestablished. I hold against W. that incidental to this occurrence he did not withdraw from his position.

La Rommels told me that - upon order from Hitler - General Burgdorf, at that time Chief of the Personnel Office, poisoned Rommel.

Mannstein: I am of the opinion that M. at no time was a Nazi. His wife was one and endeavored to exert her influence along that line. M. did not belong to the circle of opposition, but I do know that General Beck repeatedly wrote M. on that subject. At the time he was in the siege of Leningrad he sent word to me (i.e. Mannstein) that the time for liquidation of Headquarters had not come yet, but that it would come.

Miss Schwarte: she was the daughter of General Schwarte, living in Berlin West. Gisevius knows her address; likewise Mrs. Struenk - in Frankfurt, Ahornstrasse 4.

I believe that Canari's diary, which the Gestapo found in Dohnaye's garden can only be a copy.