

*Rechberg - Impressions*

28.04

TRANSLATION SUMMARY

*also 6.03*

In the interview which ARNOLD RECHBERG gave American journalists, date not given, he concerns himself principally with the Bolshevist danger to which he ascribes the outbreak of the war, and practically everything that has happened in Europe in recent years. Briefly, these are the developments as he sees them:

General Hoffmann, one of the most brilliant generals of World War I, and I wanted to achieve an alliance between Germany, Great Britain, and France - directed principally against Soviet Russia. Negotiations were conducted with representatives of these nations, but there were not sufficiently aware of the Bolshevist danger to undertake anything decisive. Certain interviews of Hoffmann, which had been published in the press, came to the attention of the Kremlin which thereupon realized the trend of developments in Germany, and changed its tactics. The Bolshevists, seeing that the German democratic government had no influence over the Reichswehr, sought contact with the Reichswehr itself. Col. Nikolai turned out to be an intelligent intermediary. Nikolai, who had been something of an ally of the Bolsheviks during the first World War, familiarized them with the mentality of the German generals. The Soviets succeeded in convincing the generals that only they, the Soviets, would be able to help Germany regain her former position. Generals of the Red Army furthermore decoared that they were going to overthrow the Bolshevist regime, and that a reborn Russian National Army and Germany would make their two countries the most powerful in the world. Actually an agreement was concluded between the German Reichswehr and the Red Army. German heavy industry induced by the Reichswehr, helped Russia to build up a powerful war industry. In 1926 the first German-French industrial agreements were concluded. English firms soon joined.

Negotiations were conducted between Marshal Foch and me with the aim of concluding a French-German military alliance which was to prevent any future wars between these two countries. Stresemann agreed with the plan. However, the alliance between Reichswehr and Red Army was already too close. Nothing could be done against the political will of the Reichswehr.

In 1927 General Hoffmann died, probably poisoned by a Bolshevist agent.

Ludendorff tried, from 1919 to 1922, to arrive at agreements with the French, British, and United States governments, and only when he proved to be unsuccessful, did he turn to the extreme nationalist side. When the Kremlin realized that I had been quite effective in concluding industrial agreements with England and France, and that there were good prospects for a military alliance as well, they decided to undertake steps against me - they spent about 50 million gold marks among the German nationalists, many of whom had lost everything in the inflation and could be bought. Moscow also bought several German diplomats and newspapermen.

I wrote several articles about the manner in which the Bolsheviks were trying to incite us to war against the Western Powers.

Stalin wanted to find a man who would run Germany as a dictator and who would start the war in which Russia was interested.

When Hitler was able to send 107 deputies to the Reichstag, Schleicher

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told me that he had made this possible since he had given Hitler 40 million Reichsmarks in order to use him for the rebuilding of a strong German Army. He added that he was doing this on the advice of Stalin who believed that the time for a strong active Russo-German policy had come, now that England and France were neglecting their armaments. I was unable to convince Schleicher of Stalin's true intentions, or of the fact that Hitler would soon become much stronger than he himself, and that eventually he would liquidate Schleicher. This turned out to be true.

I know that Stalin was very happy when Hitler began his persecutions of the Jews. Col. Nikolai, who had been an ally of Stalin's for years, became head of the German anti-Jewish office. When Hitler in 1939 hesitated to declare war, Stalin provoked him by concluding the German-Russian agreement.

I do not know what Ribbentrop's exact relations to the Kremlin were, but I do know that he stood under the influence of Col. Nikolai, who had a secret political office in Berlin, and who was completely subservient to Stalin.

Stalin had the theory that a strong Germany might become dangerous to Soviet Russia. On the other hand, he calculated correctly in believing that Hitler would finally become embroiled in a war against England, France, and finally the U.S., and that then Germany would no longer be able to defeat the Red Army which had been so well trained and organized by the German General Staff.

After the defeat of France, I was in favor of concluding a magnanimous peace with France, an alliance with Petain and finally of offering peace to Great Britain on the basis of the British status quo. When Ribbentrop and Nikolai heard of these proposals which would have been against their own interests, and against those of Stalin, they succeeded in having me arrested for several weeks. I was forbidden to have anything further to do with foreign affairs.

In 1943, when the military situation had become worse, Himmler asked me, through Dr. Ploetz, whether I would be willing to help in arriving at a understanding with the Anglo-Saxons. Again Ribbentrop, Nikolai, and Martin Bormann, who had become a very influential man, proved to be more powerful than Himmler. I was arrested and taken to Dachau, from where Himmler effected my release after two weeks. I learned that Himmler was in a very difficult position since, although head of the Gestapo, he had to follow the orders of Ribbentrop and Bormann in anything pertaining to foreign affairs or the occupied territories. There was also the suspicion that members of the Gestapo were being paid by Moscow in order to perpetrate cruelties against their victims, since Moscow knew very well that such atrocities would unfavorably influence world opinion against Germany.

In May 1944, Himmler sent Dr. Mayer to me to tell me that now he was going to carry out my suggestions. Again Ribbentrop, Bormann and Nikolai proved to be the stronger. I was arrested for the third time and taken to Godesberg, where I was interned with a number of French generals and with the sister of General de Gaulle. When the American Army approached, I was taken to Munich and liberated shortly before the final collapse.

Russian Bolshevism has made tremendous strides as a result of the outcome of the European war:

1. Poland is completely in the Russian orbit. Stalin had succeeded in getting Hitler to attack Poland first, and thereby put the war guilt on him.
2. During the last negotiations in Berlin between Molotov and Hitler, the Soviet dictator, by his excessive demands, forced Germany to attack Russia. I believe Hitler was right in his conviction that Stalin would soon attack Germany. Stalin would never have permitted Germany to win the war against Great Britain after she had already defeated France.
3. The German Army which would perhaps have been the only instrument - capable of defeating Bolshevism is destroyed.
4. New hatred has been sown between Germany on the one hand, and the United States and the Western Powers on the other. An alliance between them against Bolshevism has thereby been made much worse difficult.
5. Germany and other European nations have been either wholly or partly ruined by the war. Hunger and want will make these nations very receptive to Bolshevist propaganda.
6. The fact that Russian armies are in Austria and Central Europe, gives Stalin an excellent strategic base for a further offensive against the West.

Stalin is not interested in a quick victory of the United States and Great Britain over Japan. Once the war is over, and the United States and England will leave in Germany an army of only a few hundred thousand men, he will be able to set several million against these.

The German Red Army under General von Seidlitz is said to be about one million strong. The generals of the German Hitler Army could do nothing against the Gestapo. The generals of the German Red Army will be able to do nothing against the G.P.U. The United States and England want to dissolve the German Army.

As a consequence the German officers will become poor and therefore receptive to serving in the Red Army if they get good pay. There is a possibility that eventually the Russians will attack France and it is doubtful whether the French army will be able successfully to defend itself.

The result of the great mistake committed by Seeckt and Hitler was the destruction of Germany. I believe that the Anglo-Saxon leaders will be more prudent than were the German leaders.