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SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DIVISION
INTELLIGENCE SECTION

14 March 1945

SUBJECT: Consolidated report on the interrogation of 13 leaders of the Volkssturm

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(This report was prepared by PWD - SHAEF Interrogators.)

1. General data: On 11 March 45 this team has interrogated 13 leaders of the Volkssturm, all of whom were captured between 26 February and 1 March.

a. Ranks:
   3 En Commanders
   2 Adjutants
   7 Co Commanders
   2 Platoon leaders

b. Age:
   40 to 50 yrs - 5 men
   51 to 60 yrs - 6 men
   61 to 65 yrs - 2 men

c. Civilian Occupations:
   School principals and teachers 5
   Judges 1
   Manufacturers, executives 2
   Arbeitsfront officials 1
   Retired Civil Servants 1
   Independent architects 1
   Merchants 1
   Blacksmiths 1

d. Educational Background:
   Volksschule 4
   Higher education (seminaries, Einjahrigrigo, etc) 7
   University graduates 2

e. Region of origin: All the Fs/J are from the area between Neuss, Krefeld, Muenchen-Gladbach and Cologne.

f. Military background: With the exception of 2, all were World War I veterans; 7 of them were officers during the last war, 3 were non-coms, 1 was a private; 4 out of the 13 have also served with the Wehrmacht in this war, 3 of them having been dismissed because of wounds or sickness, and 1 because of war essential occupation.
g. Party affiliation: With only one exception all of those PS/N were party members however not one of them was a party member prior to 1933. 6 of them joined the party in 1933, the rest at some later date. 6 of them were party functionaries. 5 of them joined the party out of ideological conviction, the rest appeared to have joined for reasons of opportunism or because they were civil servants.

2. Selection of Volkssturmbann leaders: The Wahrbezirks Kommando recommended qualified Ba Condor to the Kreisleitung, who appointed those after having secured the approval of the Gaulleitung. The Co Comirs were all appointed by the Kreisleitung upon recommendation by the Ortsgruppenleiter (local party head), with one exception where the Ba Condor himself had to select his own Co Condors and platoon leaders. The 2 platoon leaders were selected by the Ortsgruppenleiter. It appears that in larger towns prominent party members are given first choice over men with military background or social prominence. In smaller towns, the letter two qualifications seem to be given more consideration. Thus, the only man out of the 13 who was not a party member, was selected as Co Condor because he was the head of the local voluntary fire brigade and at the same time the only former non-com in the community. One of the leaders, from Kreis Erkelenz, reports that there was resentment in the community over the fact that prominent party members were given preference over men with more qualified military background. The case of Co Condor Spiecks, 59, from Kirschbrandoft Kreis Bergheim, is worth mentioning. He was selected to lead an "Einsatz" Go, which his wife complained about to the Ortsgruppenleiter (local party head). Declining the old age of her husband and pointing out that there were younger men around with the same military qualifications, the Ortsgruppenleiter interrupted briefly: "Ich habe trotz der Fahnengestalten meine Ehre nicht. Dies ist der Stab des Kreisleiters bekomm."

3. Explanation of the 4 Aufgaben: Aufgabe 1 consists of men who were or less physically fit, of military age or above, and who are not working in war essential plants. Aufgabe 2 comprises the men of the military qualifications, only who are working in war essential plants. Aufgabe 3 are the boys of pre-military age. Aufgabe 4 are the physically unfit. Several of the Ps/N mentioned that there was a regular rush ("Fuchtwurst") to be classified in the 2nd and 4th Aufgaben. From the 1st Aufgabe men were detached for Instruction En's (Lehrbataillen), eventually to be returned to their own units. Other men were transferred to Einsatz Kompanien (Reinforcement Co's) and definitely dropped from their original units. The Einsatz Kompanien live in barracks and the transfer depends on the degree of their need in civilian occupations.

4. Leader's attitude to the Volkssturmbann: Out of the 13 only 4 only supported the Volkssturmbann, advocating that it was quite natural that Germany, in its present plight, should call on every man. The opponents of the Volkssturmbann made remarks such as, "Besserartige Standenmassen, schwedingsseige Aufgabe, ich versuchte zur Verwaltung zu kommen", [Malicious fellows, a dirty task, I tried to join the administration]. Fuehrer Krueger from Kirchbandoft Kreis Erkelenz, "Das war bloß tarn-tarn, die Kolonnenollen sich dick tun und melden, dass alles berichtet", [Just a lot of noise, the gentlemen wanted to feel important and to report that everything is ready]. Kommp Fuehrer Spiecks from Kirschbrandoft Kreis Bergheim, "Ein Blasdiinnen, jeder will noch die Kommandanturen", [Shoo Folly, everybody wanted to give orders only]. Kommp Fuehrer Nagel from Erkelenz, "Die Aufstellung des Volkssturms ist unverantwortlich. Menschen, die der Qualitat nach nicht Soldaten sind, werden den Feind als
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Soldaten ausgeliefert. "(The deployment of the Volkssturn was
done irresponsibly; Men, who are not soldiers, are sent as such
against the enemy.) En Führer Gemann from Viborg. "Das
hat der einen wie ein Abdruk gekostet, dass man solch einen
Haufen von Kruppspul und Großenfuchsen solle. Ich war glück-
lieh als das En aufgelöst wurde."
It affected me like a night-
mare that I should lead such a group of cripples and old men.
I was glad when the En was dissolved), En Führer und Mayor der
Reserve (Kerna) from Viborg.

5. Training and Equipment: Wherever there was a Wehrmacht
unit stationed, there was some amount of regular and organized
training, since the Wehrmacht provided both instructors and
weapons. Most of the locals complained about the high degree
of absenteeism at the Sunday meetings; however, none of the 13
locally-issued penalties on any of their men for not attending
training classes. Kom. Führer Heigel from Elgjo summed
the situation up as "Alle meine Leute waren meine Kunden als
Beurten und ich wurde mir schliesslich meine Kundenschaft nicht
verdorben wegen der Volkssturngeschichte und dem Sonntagsdienst.
Ausscheiden haben die Leute schon sowieso genug zu tun." (All the
men were customers of mine and I shall certainly not destroy my
business because of the Volkssturn affair and Sunday duty.
Besides, the men had enough to do already). Kom. Führer
Pelztor from Kevern said, "Mit dem Sonntagsdienst war das so
he Steho. Meistens trieb uns das Lutter oder die Sabos gleich
wieder nach Hause". (That Sunday duty was a half-hearted affair.
Usually the weather or the attack bombers forced us to return
home). Kom. Führer Grundner from Valdaii stated, "Es waren
besser gegangen wenn man wenigstens die Leute heutse kassierren
dürften. An Sonnag konn man in ihren Sonntagsgeschulen und
nach Moelligkeit sagere in schwarzen Freck an."
(I would have
worked better if we had billed the men in barracks.
Sunday the men appeared wearing their Sunday shoes and their
Sunday suits). All leaders complained about the complete lack
of equipment. The 432 En (Erkölz) had 50 Panzerfausts
(each Panzerfaust contains one round, 15 rifles with half a
dacin rounds each, plus 180 Danish rifles without a single round
of ammunition. The 3rd Co., En 209 (Valdaii) was issued the
night before capture between 30 and 40 new Panzerfausts, which
they all gave away to retreating Wehrmacht units, with the per-
nission of Kom. Führer Grundner. One man reported that on the
other hand the Wehrmacht was handing out at the last minute
hand grenades and Panzerfausts, but the men refused to accept
those, because they did not know how to handle them. The following
story is told by En Führer Gemann from Viborg: At the last
minute the Kreisleiter sent an Adjutant to him with the order
to defend the tank barriers with Panzerfausts. He immediately
called a meeting of his 4 Kom. Führers and in the presence of
the Adjutant he asked each one of them how many of their men knew
how to operate the Panzerfaust and would be willing to do it.
After a long silence the 4 Kom. Führer could name 7 men out
total from the Kommandos. When they En Führer Gemann told
the Adjutant that he would not carry out the Kreisleiter's order;
since it was suicide to defend the tank barriers with only 7 men.

6. Volkssturn Missions: The two main missions of the Volks-

sturn units covered in this report were to close the tank barriers
and to guard them (to see that small bands of retreating Landers
would not leave them open). After that they were supposed to
retire ("sehr chastez")!, but when or exactly when, most of
them did not know. Other missions included two weeks of roofing
of bomb-damaged houses; trench digging; general assistance to the
local population; defense against broken through armored spear-
heads; defense against airborne landings; defense against up-
risings of foreign workers and Pa/; political security missions
in case of general revolt; to fight as regular soldiers if and when
split up into small groups and attached to Wehrmacht units.
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7. Status of the Volkssturm: Several men report that their
men refused to accept weapons before they were issued armbands
and Soldbucher, for fear that otherwise the Allies might treat
them as partisans. Part of the En 41, Erkelzum, had not been
issued any armbands or Soldbucher inspite of continued insistance
from the leaders to the Kreisleitung. At the last minute the
Kreisleitung telephoned the Adjutant of the En and told him to
have the men make up their own armbands out of yellow cloth,
with the inscription "Deutsche Wehrmacht" and to have them stamped
with the regular Volkssturmb rubber stamp. Of the Kemp. Konzel
from Grevenbroich only the Korp. Fuehrer, Wilhelm Konzel, himself
had a Soldbuch. In the En 105, Neuss, only the En Cond, a
reserve officer, had a uniform, the Co Condars and squad leaders
had armbands, the men had nothing. The leaders and the men were
generally aware of the fact that if properly identified the
Allies would treat them as regular soldiers, which knowledge had
been chiefly gained from Allied leaflets and Radio broadcasts
(Luxembourg). Yet En Cond Condars reported that there was a
tendency among his men to throw away their armbands, and he con-
stantly warned them against doing so.

8. Relations with the Wehrmacht: The leaders claim that they
and their men all have been treated with respect and courtesy by
members of the Wehrmacht, and that they also know that in the
final stage they were to come under the command of the Wehrmacht.
The only 2 exceptions were, one Co Condar who had strict orders
from the Kreisleitung not to take any orders from the Wehrmacht
to the very end, and Co Condar Spieks, who complained to have been
treated by Wehrmacht officers as a second rate officer and to have
been the only one who was not offered a drink during a meet-
ing at a Rastl Hgs. Co Condar Nogel reports that at one time
a Feldwebel gave him orders to build Penzoparren (Tank barriers),
to which he replied, "Nicht jeder Luxemb wird mich hier ruck-
kommandieren," (Not every lout around here is going to boss me around),
whereupon the furious Feldwebel threatened to report him.
Nogel reported this incident to his En Condar who promised to
cover him.

9. Action and capture: En Condar Germain reports that had
the men known they were being called up for action, 50% would
not have shown up at all, 25% would have shown up for fear of
punishment, and the remainder out of a soldiery attitude. The
same F/J reports that when he received his final orders to assemble
his En, the following number of men showed up:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Showed Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Co</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Co</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Co</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Co</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same Condar later received an order to also take under his
command a Schenzen En of 500 men, which was given to him as rein-
forcements. These 500 men were armed with a total of 50 Italian
rifles. He asked the leader of this Schenzen En whether his men
had received any military training and having received an answer
from the negative, he said, "Ich verzichte auf Ihre Unterstutzung;
das waere Verrat." (I shall do without your support. It would be
murder). En Fuehrer Krorr reports that the 2 Erkelzum Battalions
had been in existence since late 1944, that by February they had
dwindled down to a single En due to voluntary evacuations. Of
this En 2 Companies were located outside the town and by the time
the situation had become critical, no had lost all contact with
them. Of the 2 Companies in the town, 1 platoon eventually
showed up. These examples are typical else for the rest of the
units. In fact, in each case they all professed that their units
had not fired a single shot, all of the F/J were captured either
individually or with small groups of their men, the 2 others
were picked up in their home several days after entry of US troops.
Practically all of these leaders did not know what had happened
to their men. In one of the two cases where the leaders were
captured in their homes, the leader reports that his Co had been
building tank barriers until 25 February, that the men then were sent home and that nobody bothered them any more until the Americans arrived on the 28th. In the other case, the Co Condr waited until the Americans had reached a neighboring village and then he gave his men the order to disband and return home. Platoon leader Wilfred Vermeun, after learning that the Schn片cht had withdrawn, got very mad about this and decided to assemble his men and have them lay down their arms. Then, when the Schn片cht was gone, 154 (dillich an Krefeld) reports that the entire Bn had disappeared overnight and that except for the Condr he could not find a single Volksturner. One Co Condr seemed greatly perturbed over the fact that the Siegfried Line, which had cost 63 Billion Marks to build, did not prove its worth. He also mentioned with alarm that the anti-tank ditches which had been dug with such great pains since September 1944, had only the effect of providing the American infantry with excellent covered avenues of approach.

10. The fiasco of the "Linksrheinischer Volksturn" (Volkssturn of the left bank of the Rhine). Specifically referring to the "Linksrheinischer Volksturn" all the P/Js agreed that the entire undertaking was a complete flop. The main reasons for this were the lack of organization and equipment and the unwillingness of the people to fight.

11. The Volksturn in the East: Their opinions are divided as to whether the Volksturn is more effective on the Eastern front. While some of the P/Js claimed that they really would have fought in the East and would have never surrendered to the Russians, there are also the following 2 opinions: one P/J had talked to refugees from the East while travelling through Saxony end of January, and these refugees had reported that the Volksturn in the East had deserted in droves. Another P/J dismissed the German reports about large numbers of Russian tanks being destroyed by the Volksturn as ridiculous. His argument is, that although each individual report published in the German papers looked very impressive in itself, an observant reader could not be fooled and that by adding up all these individual reports, the total of Russian tanks destroyed by the Volksturn turned out to be ridiculously small in proportion to the number of Volksturn Companies in action, which he gave as 1000.

12. Outcomes of war:

| Belief in German victory | 1 |
| Belief in compromise | 2 |
| Belief in German defeat | 8 |
| no opinion | 2 |

The war will be continued to its very bitter end and many P/J Fuehrer Germans from Viersen has this to say, "Obereill in Deutschland sieht man die Parella: Sieg oder Tod. Gewiss gibt es Holden, die lieber sterben als dass sie ihr Vaterland unangem schen. Ich habe Achtung fuer solche Holden. Aber dann sollichen daau Freiwillige aufrufen, die den Holdentod sterben wollen, und nicht Sieg oder Tod einem ganzen Volk aufzurufen, man darf doch nicht ein ganzes Volk dazu vorurteilen". (All over Germany the word 'Victory or Death' is apparent. Certainly there are heroes who prefer death to defeat of the fatherland. I respect such heroes. But they should call for volunteers who want to die a hero's death rather than force a nation into 'Victory or Death'. The whole nation should not be thus condemned).

13. Future of Germany: The majority of these P/Js look at the future of Germany as a nation after a defeat with more gloom than the average P/J. Some see the complete end of Germany; such as one P/J who exclaimed with great pathos "Finis Germaniae", but
most of them do not have a clear picture as to what this future is actually going to be like. The usual fear of Russia and the expectations of a clash between the U.S. and Russia were voiced, 5 of the Ps/W spoke of and would welcome an independent Rhine-
land or a Union of the Rhineland with one of the Western countries. There is no fear of mistreatment by the Americans, and news of good treatment has filtered through from the Aachen area.

14. Personal future of the Ps/W: 6 of the Ps/W believed all members of the Volksbund will be sent home before Wehrmacht Ps/W, two of these believed that members of the Volksbund will be sent home even before the end of hostilities. The remaining 7 have no opinion, but they hope that they will be sent home early because of their age and the key positions they hold in civilian life. All 12 party members believe that there will be no discrimination or punishment whatsoever awaiting them personally but they do believe that there will be punishment for the real top leaders. A significant fact also is that all these 12 party members sincerely believe that they will get their old jobs back inspite of their affiliation with the party and their convictions.

The 61 yr old Rektor of a Volksschule in Rheinl, Johannes Hock (he has taught for 41 yrs), an ordent admirer of Hitler and National Socialist, who sees in Hitler a great educator and who believes that Hitler’s ideas such as the “Führergefahrden” and the linking up of Nationalism with Socialism will survive no matter what happens, was completely flabbergasted when the interrogator implied that his convictions would rule him out as a school principal in the future. He felt that he had walked into a trap by giving the interrogator a frank and sincere statement of his convictions. Two school principals among the Ps/W, whose families are inside Germany are afraid to take their jobs up again as long as the war is on, for fear of reprisals against their families.

15. Opinions on Hitler: With only one exception these Ps/W believe in the sincerity of Hitler, look upon him as an idealist who is trying his best for the German people. All excesses and reverses are blamed upon his advisors who influence and misin- form him.

16. Opinions on Himmler: These Ps/W do not differ much from the average Führer in their opinions on Himmler, even though they do not express themselves in terms nearly as violent as the average Führer. The Volksbund is generally blamed on Himmler.

Dor hat uns den Volksbund aufgebaut." (He is responsible for the erection of the Volksbund)

17. Evacuation of families: There was no compulsory evacuation from any towns of this region, excepting only Erkelenz and surroundings. Nevertheless of the 12 Ps/W there were 8 who had their families evacuated. Komp Führer and Antazgerichtsrat (District Court judge) Wilhelm Hempel from Groenbroich got two days leave from the Volksbund in order to take his family across the Rhine and though he denies that it is mostly party members who evacuated their families, he admits, "Jeder der es sich finanziell leisten konnte, hat es natürlich getan." (Whoever could afford it financially, did it). One of the Ps/W had sent his family away already in 1943 in order to avoid the KLV and R.D. for his children. 5 of the Ps/W were forced to evacuate their wives because of the nervous breakdown these had suffered during the bombing raids.
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