

## ZEUGENSCHRIFTTUM

Name: SCHEIDT, Wilhelm Hist.Abt.d.OKW	ZS Nr. 2070	Bd I	Vermerk:
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Scheldt

Exhibit 7

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W Interrogation of CAPT. DR. WILHELM SCHEIDT, Historical Section  
OKM, at Seventh Army Interrogation Center, 29 August 1945.

Scheidt is one of the official German Army historians, intelligent and, at least in his utterances, strongly anti-Hitler. He is very cooperative and can be considered as reliable.

Planning Under the Nazis

Q. What kind of planning did you have in the Armed Forces?

A. The many planning agencies created a great deal of confusion with a resultant lack of planning. This confusion was created by Hitler almost deliberately and artificially. Eventually, the best experts in their fields did not know any longer who was the authority responsible for decisions and policy.

Hitler interfered again and again with all this planning and upset it completely. In August 1941, for instance, he stopped munitions production for the Army because he was so certain of victory. Goering also failed completely in his organization. He had built up a colossal machinery for aerial armament - at one time about 10,8 million workers were employed on armaments for land warfare, 10,2 million for aerial warfare. Even Hitler considered once, whether aerial armament should not be abandoned completely.

Source had his doubts about Speer, too. The many commissars of Speer (the leaders of the Committees and Rings) all came from private industry, and naturally tried to obtain as many advantages as possible for their own firms. But even Speer sometimes stated that Hitler's demands on industry were exaggerated.

Hitler had the craziest ideas. One day he was told about a lack of explosives, because of shortages of nitrogen and especially of sulphur. Thereupon he wanted to reduce the caliber of artillery, without considering that this would necessitate a complete conversion of that industry.

He always thought of himself as an engineer and architect. Sure of his technical knowledge he had new types of weapons and equipment demonstrated to him and chose what he considered to be the best. Sometimes he happened to choose the right one.

He was very impatient to try new types out at the front. But some of the equipment was very obsolete - and they still used horse-power, and the men in the field had to drag guns around with a few horses.



Hitler was not prepared for a long war. Motorization had been a failure, because there was not enough fuel. Industry had no reserve potential, after so much had been committed in munitions production already in 1938/9. It had been different in 1914, when only 10% of the economy was working for the armament industry, which figure was gradually increased to 60% in the course of World War I. (Editor's note: Scheidt's opinion concerning a lack of reserve capacity is not confirmed by any of the armament and production experts. He probably reflects the Army's point of view, which could never get enough of anything, without taking economic possibilities into account).

Q. Was there any planning beyond rearmament?

A. Nothing was done - an inexcusable neglect. Hitler did everything in too much of a hurry. This was the reason that so many generals were against war (Germany was not ready for one.)

Transportation was in poor shape. Hitler had neglected the railroads in favor of the motor highways.

Hitler's exaggerations about economic performance were his outstanding feature. He stated in Sep. 1938 that close to 100 billion RM had been spent on armaments, when hardly more than half of it was true. Everything was done for show, with little behind a glittering facade. The big munition plants were built only during the war.

Q. Then how do you explain the great success of the Polish and French campaigns?

A. These successes were due rather to the spirit of our troops and not to the superiority of our weapons, especially not our tanks. The French and Polish tanks were not bad, ours actually had weaker armor. We were only superior in speed. The French also had more ammunition than we, and had an excellent artillery.

In those campaigns one of the main objectives was to glorify Hitler. Hitler was a big bluff.

Our officers in Russia were told that 20,000 tanks were available. There were no more than 3,000 ready for use. Even generals did not know how poorly we were equipped. High officers were told, in answer to their questions, that we had 7,000 planes. We did not have more than 2,000 which could be committed, including transport and reconnaissance planes. Similar misinformation obtained at the start of the war.



Q. What plans were made to provide for a continuous supply of skilled labor and personnel?

A. I never heard of a plan providing for training of such skilled replacements. Evidently nothing or not enough had been done, since we had to import foreign workers. This was absurd from the racial point of view, since our German soldiers died at the front while these foreigners settled down at home. Treatment of foreign workers was confused. Rumanians and Bulgarians were supposed to be treated and fed especially well for political reasons, but there was not enough to go around. There was molesting by the Gestapo which mistrusted all foreign workers. Besides, the best workers did not come to Germany, but only those who could not get a job at home.

The foreign workers were great black market operators and traded in everything. The Bulgarians with their cigarettes had a black market of their own, and got away with a lot of German merchandise.

Q. Did considerations of population policy influence the decision not to employ women in industry until quite late?

A. They had some influence, but later women were overtaxed with work. In addition to work in factories they had to look after their households and do their marketing. Popular opinion was very much against the employment of women in industry. Besides, certain smart ladies managed to stay away from work, and the resulting social distinctions created a lot of bitterness.

Q. How did General Thomas' Industrial Biolization Plan work out?

A. At first pretty well. But all planning was thrown out of gear by the extent of the war. There had been no planning and no preparations for a world war. E. g., we had 76 U-boats at the beginning of the war, not one more than that. Later there was no more planning at all. Hitler established demands upon industry which had to be complied with. There is no doubt that we had organization and gifted people, which made it possible for industry to satisfy the demands. But the economy on the whole was not geared to war.

Q. Why did Germany declare war on the U.S.A.?

A. Hitler was convinced that the U.S.A. were waging war against him. He was influenced by a reported utterance of Roosevelt in 1934 he had heard of: "That man Hitler must be hanged."



Hitler did not believe that England would enter into the war because of the Polish question, and he was convinced that France would not wage war without England's aid. Therefore, he had not prepared for a major conflict. After England and France declared war, Hitler saw his prestige in danger and could not draw back.

In the war against Russia the idiotic notion that a conflict with Russia was inevitable played an essential part.

Q. Was not the potential of the U.S.A. considered, in view of Hitler's conviction of their inimical attitude?

A. Hitler was not much impressed with the American potential. He compared the speeches of your president with his own and thought that they, too, were an exaggerated bluff.

The irresponsible reports of the Military Attache in Washington, General Boetticher, also contributed to the disregard for the U.S.A. potential. Boetticher always maintained that the United States would not enter the war under any circumstances. The Charge d'Affaires, Thomsen, had different opinions, but was not strong enough. Besides, Hitler did not read his reports.

I once ordered a study of the American legal point of view and came to the conclusion, that according to the opinion of American lawyers about the "duties of neutrality" the U.S.A. were already at war with us.

In the case of Russia the situation was quite different from the Boetticher set-up concerning the U. S. Everybody warned, but Hitler simply refused to read the reports. It can be stated generally that Hitler had absolutely no conception of anything he had not seen himself. He had some notions about France and Belgium, because he knew these countries from the first World War, but he had no conception of English sea power, or of the production capacity of the U. S., or of Russia.

Q. Was the OKW merely concerned with Germany's potential, without worrying about the other side's performance?

A. Yes, that is true of Hitler and his entourage (Keitel and Jodl).

There was no coordination, the various ministries and agencies did as they pleased. Also the Army sometimes went its own way. One thought that industrial capacity could be supplemented with certain tricks. When the Americans, for instance, came with better tanks, Hitler simply ordered that we had to produce better anti-tank weapons.



Our airforce was hopelessly inferior. During the invasion, the ships should have been attacked by the airforce as they approached the coast. You used that preventive method in knocking out our tanks before they could attack. Our planes were obsolete and our losses too great. We did not have enough replacements and did not know where to find people for training.

Q. Why did you call off the air-blitz against London? Why the invasion of England?

A. The air-blitz was continued until 1941, when the airforce was committed in the East. It had been planned to besiege England from the air, as they did it later to us.

The invasion of England had to be abandoned for the following reasons:

- a) The Luftwaffe had not been as successful against the RAF as had been promised.
- b) The Navy could not undertake to protect the crossing.
- c) We only had 3 armored divisions available, and no means of transportation, except old barges.

Q. Was the war against Russia occasioned by the stalemate with Great Britain?

A. Hitler always stared fixedly towards the East. He wanted to prove to England that he had no colonial or other demands against the West.

Q. How far in advance were the Armed Forces informed about the intended war against Russia?

A. Quite early, about the time of Molotov's visit in Berlin (Nov. 1940). Certain precautionary measures had been taken in advance, such as the dispatch of Gen. von Schober with the Eleventh Army to Rumania in February 41 in order to protect the oilfields against a possible Russian attack.

Hitler thought that the war with Russia would be very short - no longer than 2 - 3 months. It was the general opinion (shared by England) that the Russians would desert Stalin in case of war. There was, however, no official view on this matter. People who knew Russia did not believe it. Jodl did.



We were all much surprised by Russia's strength. We had no knowledge of their reserves and of the industrial developments east of the Urals.

In many parts of Russia we were regarded as liberators. I witnessed myself that the people built triumphal arches for us. But instead of making it clear to the people that the war was directed against communism, we created the impression that it was a war against Russia. It would have been surely possible to win the population over. Rosenberg with his ministry for the East was a very unfortunate establishment. He is quite incapable to manage a ministry, and was not highly regarded by Hitler himself.

Had we told the Ukrainians that we wanted their help against communism, they would have joined us certainly. The SD and the Gestapo did not spoil things too much for us in that respect, because people in these territories were used to the GPU, which was as bad, if not worse.

Q. Had the OKW included countries which would fall under German influences in its plans and calculations?

A. There was no prior planning in the case of France and the other Western countries. An attempt to integrate them was made only after the occupation.

Q. Was the booty taken in Czechoslovakia very useful in the Polish campaign?

A. The occupation of Czechoslovakia had strategic rather than war economic reasons. That foreign body in the heart of the Reich had to be eliminated. The Czech equipment was not too useful. Their tanks were too narrow. The Czechs were good workers and collaborated well. Though they had no love for the Germans, they liked the Russians even less. The Czech people consists mostly of small peasants and bourgeois, who naturally are not very fond of communism.

We should have handled the Poles more decently and treated them better. We could have made friends out of them. Blaskowitz was for a better treatment of the Poles, and was promptly recalled.