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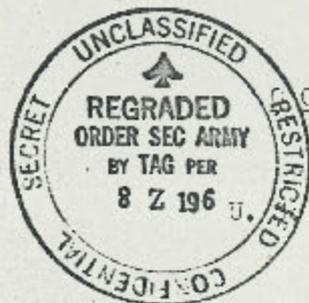
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STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY

APO 413

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USIBS*

*Spate*

Interview No. 42

Subject: Dr. Frank Gerhard  
of Reichministry Speer

Date of Interview: 5 June 1945

Published: 25 June 1945

Interrogated by: Mr. Karl Bode, USIBS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

ORGANIZATION SPEER

5 June 1945

Interrogation of Dr. Frank Gerhard

The Reichsministry is divided in the following offices:

1. Central office
2. Planning office
3. Raw material office
4. Technical office
5. Production office
6. Construction office C.T.
7. Power office

There were also incorporated:

1. Administration and organization
2. Personnel
3. Economic and Finance
4. Legal Department
5. Labor Division
6. Assistance to operation plants
7. Press and news section

The distribution was undertaken exclusively from a functional point of view. Since the ministry was completely changing from time to time according to necessary conditions, the attitude and composition of the single offices were quite different.

For example, til the middle of 1943 the production of necessary civil goods was the task for the ministry for economy. Because of this there were a great number of cases of overlapping with war economy tasks of the Speer ministry. These difficulties could only be settled by placing the total production responsibility in one hand, thereby coordinating production of civilian goods with war goods.

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By shipping personnel from the Ministry of Economy to the Speer Ministry, a department was created within the Speer-ministry to perform the following functions:

The coordination of the various offices among each other, the carrying out of a common policy, the creation of a unit personnel policy, the representation of the ministry in basic questions of all sorts in dealing with other organization reports. In addition to these, the central office had the task of working on all these matters pertaining to all other offices, i.e., the internal administration of the ministry, the employment of labor, economical and financial problems, press questions and information matters of organization Speer etc.

The central office did not deal with special technical questions of armament and war production.

The task of the ministry was the production of goods for the Army and the civilian economy. However, it did not deal with the distribution of goods. The distribution of armament goods was handled only by the competent departments of the Army and the distribution of civil goods by the ministry for economy. The ministry did not directly influence the employment of labor. The plenipotentiary was responsible for employment and distribution of labor. The minister for armament had to request the necessary labor forces from the plenipotentiary much the same as another competing agent. The distribution of forces as well as of scarce raw materials was carried out in the Office for Central Plans.

Under the Chairman Speer, this was composed of the following persons:

The State Secretary Koerner as representative of Goering in his capacity as a commissioner for the 4-years-plan, the Minister of Traffic, the Minister of Food, the plenipotentiary for the employment of labor, the General Commissioner for Chemical Production, the Reichscommissioner for Coal, the Reichminister for Economy and the Reichminister for Merchant Marine. In addition, various personalities from the industrial and economical life were called in to participate in meetings. In this circle the distribution of all elemental and raw materials took place, as well as the distribution of workforces to the various branches of German economy, i.e., food, transport, armament etc.

A decisive encroachment on this work occurred at the time Hitler designated the Reichminister for Enlightenment of Masses and Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, as the Reichscommissioner for the total war effort. On the basis of the given authority, Goebbels interfered more and more with these questions, especially as far as the question of employment of labor. Up to this time the party had interfered in technical problems only and then only on single occasions. This had had disturbing effects. The Party now believed that, they had the right to act together with the Party District Leaders over the head of Goebbels. Goebbels ordered the P.D.L. to supply a certain quota of men in their district. The P.D.L. organized district and sub-district commissions which carried out the drafting of men into the Army without regard to the necessities of armament and transport. Also, a basic difference showed up in this question. While formerly

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Speer demanded more weapons, Goebbels wanted more soldiers. Speer's demand for more weapons was more important because the air attacks of the Allied Air Fleets - increasingly felt on the German armament potential - made themselves more and more evident. Serious difficulties arose between Speer at the one side and the P.D.L. on the other. These quarrels were not new to informed persons. They had long since existed between Speer and the Party Chancery as well as the P.D.L. - as a result of Speer's personal politics.

Since Speer selected his co-workers exclusively, according to their technical and personnel capacities, he had to come into conflict with the Party which demanded exclusive employment of proved Nationalsozialists. Speer did not pay attention to this demand and this led to serious discussions with Hitler. Ever since Speer became Minister for Armaments he had reserved for himself the right to choose his collaborators and the leaders of German industry on the basis decided above. He insisted then on keeping his people, even when some of them were completely unacceptable to the N.S.D.A.P. because of their former Party political background or because of mixed marriages. The struggle between the Party and the P.D.L. was interrupted by two new factors:

1. The Volksturm
2. The "Scorched Earth"

When the fronts came close to the German borders, the so-called Volksturm was called to the colors and the Party and the P.D.L. were put in charge of the draft and formation and training of Volksturm. The P.D.L. again began to call up the fixed quotas and sometimes they offered more, to make an impression on the superior offices. This they did without any regard for the vital necessities of the German armament economic potential. It could have been foreseen that such methods could not be pursued without inflicting heavy damage on the armament program. This arbitrary drafting of men into Volksturm by the P.D.L. without consultation with the armaments office resulted in all reserves being used up. Hence, planning for repairs was made impossible. By this method the effect on the German armament program was very heavy. Above all, it was impossible to keep up the production of the German armament program. Serious difficulties arose in providing the Army with necessary weapons, much less equipping the Volksturm. Again and again Speer had characterized the Volksturm as a crime on the German people and had often repeated this accusation.

The Volksturm was sent into battle with equipment which did not even meet the most simple requirements. However, especially skilled P.D.L., who had armament plants in their districts, knew how to influence the manager of these plants and got some units armed very well. But these encroachments affected only the Army. All these problems, which could be extended in details, led to continual provocations between Speer, as the technical expert, and the Party. At last the quarrel reached its peak with the problems of scorched earth. Decisive circles in the Party, that Hitler and Bormann demanded that all installations and factories, power, water, and gas plants and all dwelling places must be razed to the ground as Allied Forces penetrated into German territory. The strongest enemy of this idea was Reichsminister Speer.

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His first principle was the conservation of the German people after a lost war. He said again and again that the responsible men of the German Government had to make their decisions in such a way that the German people after this war would have the primitive necessities of life.

This clear demand, however, would be impossible if all production and supply facilities were destroyed. Not only would the German man be robbed of possibilities to exist; also the production of civil supply for the people - coal and ready-made goods - would be impossible for many years. The decisive resistance of the German people and the quick advance of the enemy did not permit the Party's policy to materialize.

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