

ZEUGENSCRIFTTUM

ZS-2019-7

Name: LEY, Dr. Robert	ZS Nr. 2019	Bd I	Vermerk:
katalogisiert Seite: Sachkatalog:	Personen:		

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

25-20-19-

U.S. STRATEGIC BOMBING SURVEY
APO 413



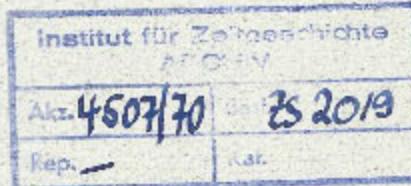
Interview No. 57

Subject: Dr. Robert Ley

Date of Interview: 27 June 1945

Published: 6 July 1945

Interviewed by: Mr. Kenneth Galbraith



2S-2009-2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
INTERVIEW: DR. ROBERT LEY

CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
I. POSITIONS HELD DURING THE WAR BY LEY	1
II. RELATIONS WITH SAUCKEL	1
III. ADEQUACY OF LABOR SUPPLY	2
IV. USE OF FOREIGN LABOR	2
V. EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN	2
VI. UNUSED PLANT CAPACITY	2
VII. ACTIVITIES OF LABOR FRONT IN CONNECTION WITH AIR ATTACKS	3
VIII. LEY'S APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECTS OF AIR ATTACK ON GERMANY	3

I. POSITIONS HELD DURING THE WAR BY LEY.

As chief of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labor Front), Ley said he was responsible for measures to improve the health and working capacity of German industrial labor. Under him the Kraft Durch Freude (Strength through Joy) Program was carried out. He was also responsible for the technical schooling of industrial laborers. It should be noted that employers as well as employees were members of the Arbeitsfront, and Ley prides himself particularly upon his accomplishments in generally improving employer - employee relationships in German industry. In addition to his responsibilities as chief of the Labor Front, Ley also held the positions of Reichswohnungs Kommissar (National Housing Commissioner), Reichorganizationleiter der NSDAP (National Organization Leader of the Nazi Party) and in the last days of the Reich, he was appointed as organizer of the German Freikorps which he claims is already defunct.

II. RELATIONS WITH SAUCKEL.

As Commissioner General for Utilization of Labor, Sauckel was responsible for manpower allocation. According to Ley, there was never serious friction between the Labor Front and Sauckel's office. Any differences of opinion that arose were adjusted amicably at conferences between Ley and Sauckel and later between Ley, Sauckel and Speer.

III. ADEQUACY OF LABOR SUPPLY.

In general, the industrial labor supply was adequate, according to Ley, throughout the war. Occasional difficulties, as in the case of the fighter expansion program in the spring of 1944, were overcome to Ley's satisfaction. The situation with regard to skilled labor was also generally satisfactory, in Ley's opinion, due largely to the success of the technical training programs introduced by Ley at the time of the founding of the Labor Front in 1933, and continuously developed and expanded thereafter.

IV. USE OF FOREIGN LABOR.

Ley stated that he was "in the middle" in the dispute between Speer and Sauckel as to whether foreign labor should be transferred to Germany as Sauckel advocated, or used in the country of origin as desired by Speer. He called the latter's plan "more elegant", and Sauckel's plan "more far-sighted" - if those countries were lost, Germany could still retain the labor force. In Ley's opinion, the foreign laborers were generally much less efficient than German labor. When the Ostarbeiter were first brought in, he estimated their efficiency as generally only 20% of the efficiency of the German workers. The French and the Belgians were the best of the foreign workers; the Italians and Greeks were the worst. Training programs conducted jointly by Ley and Sauckel brought the average efficiency of the Ostarbeiter up to 50% or 60% of that of the Germans and in the case of other foreign workers up to as high as 80 - 100%. In all, there were approximately 7,000,000 foreign workers in Germany by the end of the war.

V. EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

According to Ley there were approximately 4 million women employed in German industry at the beginning of the war in September, 1939. By the end of the war, this figure had grown to approximately 11 million, of which 2 or 3 million were foreign. The Statistisches Reichsamt figures of 14 million at the beginning of the war and 14.3 million in 1943 cannot, in Ley's opinion, be considered reliable, even though these Reichsamt figures include agricultural workers as well. The Arbeitsfront was never opposed to the employment of women in industry. Its only efforts were to improve working conditions for women as well as for men. Both men and women were drafted into industry and moved from place to place as required. There were never any strikes.

VI. UNUSED PLANT CAPACITY.

Ley gave as the reason why so many industries did not operate on multiple shifts in the early stages of the war, the fact that there was always a shortage of supervisory personnel. It was not found possible to remedy this situation. Later on, bombing attacks caused shortages of electric power and raw materials to such an extent that multiple shift operations were generally out of the question in any case.

25-20057

VII. ACTIVITIES OF LABOR FRONT IN CONNECTION WITH AIR ATTACKS.

Immediately after an air attack upon a plant, the Gau representative of the Labor Front would visit the plant and confer with the plant manager on ways and means of getting the laborers to their homes and then back to work as quickly as possible. Even after the heaviest attacks, it was normally possible to get over 90% of the workers back to the plant the next day to help clear up the debris and to carry on production wherever possible. This was done on the basis of voluntary appeals, not orders, to the workers. Complaints by some employers that the Labor Front urged workers to stay home after their plant had been hit were, in Ley's opinion, totally unjustified. However, the Labor Front did succeed in arranging the necessary leaves for workers whose relatives had been killed or whose homes had been badly damaged.

VIII. LEY'S APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECTS OF AIR ATTACK ON GERMANY.

The total civilian deaths from air attack were estimated by Ley at 500,000 to 600,000. He had heard from military sources that the total of German military personnel killed, missing in action, or captured by the Russians up to 1 April 1945 was between 3,500,000 and 4,000,000, including 1,700,000 military dead.

The productive capacity of individual workers was not, in Ley's opinion, seriously impaired by air attack. Overall production increased steadily until February 1945. Individual efficiency might have dropped immediately following an air raid, but then would pick up rapidly and probably even increase.

Ley believes that the most decisive effect of air attack was the disruption of the German transportation system.

Interrogation of Dr. Robert Ley, 19 July 1945, 1600-1800

Oftens described as "Einer der besten Redner der Partei."

2 May 1933 took over the Trade Unions into the DAF. Preferred laymen as new leaders. "Ein Fachmann niemals was gutes Schafft; er hat einen zu engen Blick. Es war gut, dass ich nicht in diesen Gewerkschaftssachen befangen war."

DAF Geschaeftsuehrer Otto Marrenbach helped Ley most, "Ein vertrauter Freund von meiner Heimat", "Tatsaechlich mein Vertreter".

In 1939 12-000 Beamten & hauptamtliche Angestellte in DAF. 24 million "namentliche Mitglieder" (plus several million in affiliated Verbäende) Beiträge averaged 54-56 million marks monthly.

Five million men had belonged to (non-Marxist) Freie, Christliche & Nationale Gewerkschaften. About 216 Verbäende. DHV - Deutsche Nationale Handelsgesellfverband.

Between 2-3 or 7 May 1933 "Meldeten sich ihre Verbäende freiwillig an, sich 'gleichzuschalten.'" Ley was then Praesident des preussischen Herrenhauses and sat there. "Vorsitzenden kamen herein, meldeten sich," schrieben einen Schein, dass alle Rechte des Verbands der neubegründeten Organisation{kamen}."

The old Vorsitzenden were never left in office.**

A number of old Trade Union leaders helped Ley. He cannot remember any very important men of this class. Kaiser, a Zentrumsmann, Roman Catholic, of Christliche Gewerkschaft, never joined the DAF but went to Ghent in July-August 1933 "mit meiner Abordnung, die ich führte." (120)

No Trade Union leaders were arrested. No opposition ever showed itself. When, on 2 May 1933, Ley took over the Zentrale d. der Freien Gewerkschaften, they waited for him, and turned everything over to him. Much of it was left there by Ley.

** "Aus Prinzip keine Vorsitzende uebernommen oder im Amt gelassen worden sind. Alles musste ganz neu aufgebaut werden."

The DAF in its full sense did not exist. Ley took over all the assets and administration of the older Trade Unions. All treasurers and officials were replaced. Many of these later joined the NSDAP.

Severing (früher Ministerpräsident von Preussen) later became a Blockwalter in the Bielefeld NSV. The Nazis paid the (official) pensions to Severing as to other former officials like Loeb, Luppe (Oberbürgermeister of Nürnberg), Adenauer (Köln).

The old Trade Union leaders were not trusted but none of the workers resigned from the DAF and there was never any trouble with them.

Institut für Zeitgeschichte	
ARCHIV	
Akz. 4637/71	Best. 25 2019
Rep.	Kat.

Trade Union administration was taken over by NSBO men. The NSBO was founded in 1930 "als Gegenstufe zu den Gewerkschaften, um in die Betriebe einzudringen." Fights between NSBO Betriebszellen and the Trade Unionists had developed. "Die Gewerkschaften hatten die Männer nicht mehr in der Hand und hatte keine Macht mehr ueber ihre Leute. Als Reichsleiter ich machte Hitler auf die Gefahren aufmerksam. 'Sonst wird's in den Betrieben zu boesen Folgen kommen.'"

Ley had advised Hitler to take NSBO man Schumann for the DAF but Hitler said Schumann was not a big enough figure.

The DAF took over labor and trade newspapers. Not sure about the editors.

Even Communists were taken over into the DAF and until the collapse of Germany (say May 1945) there had been no case of opposition. As individuals many of these Communists were not convinced Nazis but they did nothing about it. There were no organized Communist parties or groups at any time.

No men were lost to the DAF through the Roehm affair.

The Catholics were good members of the DAF.

X FOERSTER: "Junger aktiver Mensch, guter Redner, sehr tapfer, begabter ordentlicher Mann."

As Reichsorganisationsleiter Ley knew all Gauleiters, Goebbels & Ley had been Gauleiters.

X SAUKEL: "Ruhiger, ordentlicher charakter, fleissig, brav, sehr sauber."

X * AT PWE # 32 are 2 Gauleiters, Wegener, Weser-Ems (Oldenburg) & Bohle, Ausland. Here for other reasons and not because Gauleiters.

X STREICHER. Party member since 1921 or 1922. The only men who addressed Hitler with "Du". Ley entered the Party in 1925 and met Hitler in 1926.

X The most efficient Gauleiters: (1) Goebbels, (2) Mutschmann (Sachsen) Saukel, Grohé (Koeln), Sprenger, dead (Frankfurt), Hanke (Breslau). Wagner, Berlin, Eichhorn, Röder, Ulrich, Hildebrand, Klingenberg.

"Streicher war weniger tuechtig als Organisator aber ein seltener Redner, mit einer Gottbegnadigten Gabe Menschen alles glatt klar zu machen." Next to Hitler the best speaker "fuer die breite Masse" Temperamentvoll, hatte Bloedsinne behauptet die sich nicht wahr speeter herausgestellt hatte viele Feinde. Hitler wollte ihn nach dem Kriege wieder in die Partei einsetzen."

ein hohes Amt in der Partei

(What about Lohse (Kiel)? f was he expelled?

Lohse was suspended from his office for half a year, and then reinstated

35

Re STREICHER (ctd)

"Der Fuehrer mochte ihn gerne. Streicher ist ein sehr, vielleicht zu, ehrlicher Mensch, ein Idealist, richtiger Revolutionärer Kämpfer. Er starb für seine Idee." Feinde Streichers waren Oberbürgermeister Liebel of Nuernberg, Polizeipräsident von Nuernberg Martin. "Many small enemies. Details of quarrels not known to Ley. "Streicher ist ein sehr schwieriger Mensch; es ist nicht leicht mit ihm auszukommen. Ich achte ihn aber auch heute. Ein sehr gesetzestreuer Person. Goebbels hat Streicher sehr geschätzt und hat ihn besucht, letztens bei seinem Hofe in der Nähe von Nuernberg. Streicher, in Verbannung zurückgezogen, durfte sich frei bewegen aber nicht reden oder sein Amt führen. Er ist 'beurlaubt' worden."

"Main enemies of Streicher: Hess (Der Hauptgegner), Bormann der mochte Streicher nicht. Hess and Bormann brought Streicher before the Party Court "und wollten ihn damit kaput machen. Ich war nicht dabei aber ich glaube es ist nicht 'fair' gewesen." 6 Gauleiters were empanelled as extra judges. Hess and these 6 spent 5 days in Munich, Hitler "hatte Streicher gewarnt den Antrag auf Verfahren zustellen" "Der Fuehrer hatte keine hohe Meinung des Parteigerichts." Ley said "Vors Gericht gehe ich nicht, weil ich traue mich nicht dazu." Hitler replied, "Ley, ich auch nicht."

Besides the 6 Gauleiters there was a chamber of 3 Party Court judges, presided over probably by Buch. Hess was practically "running the show." Ley never saw the records but heard many accounts of the hearing. ~~Holz~~ himself questioned Holz, Streicher's successor.

Hitler told Ley "Das Verfahren ist nicht so durchgeführt worden, wie es sollte." Hitler wanted to reopen the case after the war. Hess asked Hitler to expel Streicher from the Party. Hitler replied "Hess, ich kann das nicht, sondern ich habe das Gefühl dass hier etwas nicht stimmt. Ich glaube wir müssen die Sache wieder untersuchen, aber jetzt habe ich keine Zeit. Ich will es nach später vertagen. Ich beurlaube ihn aus dem Amt und später wir werden sehen, ob wir ihn oder nicht wieder einsetzen."

Streicher never returned to Nuernberg or made any speeches ~~er und er~~ made any opposition. "Hitler kan immer wieder auf Streicher, immer stärker wurde das Gefühl, dass Streicher Unrecht gemacht worden sei."

Ley visited Streicher and spent three hours with him to see if he was all right and if he had any complaints. Streicher told him, "Ich habe keine Bedingungen. Ich will nicht in mein Amt in Nuernberg zurück. Ich möchte nur eines fragen - ob ich nicht im Kriege reden und arbeiten darf." Streicher said that if anything happened to Hitler he wanted to die with him. Streicher spoke in the same vein to Goebbel when he visited him. ~~Und die Seite füllt~~

Bormann still tried to work against Streicher. Such and Bormann were private enemies. "Buch ist seit Jahren schon vollig ~~ausgestorben~~ herausgegangen oder gedrangt. Schon vor dem Kriege hat das Parteigericht immer mehr an ~~such~~ verloren. Ich hätte das Gericht in der Form in der es war, nicht genommen. Ich hielt es für falsch. Ich hätte es nicht mit Juristen besetzen. Buch hatte Juristen zugezeichnet - unmöglich man muss nicht die Wörter auf die Goldwage abwägen. Die Frage ist: Was haben die Menschen gemacht und geleistet."

(zu viele)

16

has his meetings

or and

Ley 4

can not be right

After all, everyone gets drunk and makes speeches ~~so~~. So carefully revolutionaries are not bourgeoisie.

"~~Es~~ zum Schluss bin ich ohne Polizei oder SS in die Betriebe ~~Tag und Nacht~~ gegangen - ja auch Nachgeschichten - ich war gefiebert. Die Menschen haben mir getraut. Es gab ein maljain netter Ausdruck in einer Berliner Fabrik drei Wochen vor dem Ende als die Russen schon an der Oder standen." Ley spoke to workers and shook hands with them and answered questions, "Nun, Robert, wie ist es denn. Wird der Kuss kommen?" He answered, "Wir sind überzeugt er kommt nicht". 15 minutes later Ley heard one worker say to another, "Du, wenn Stalin kommt, Robert wird ~~tan~~ Wollen, so dass er ihm auftritt." nd

Himmler. "Zu kalt, ein ~~verdorben~~, fleißiger Mann, aber berechnet, wahnsinnig ehrgeizig, verrätherisch. Er hat den Führer täglich verraten und wollte selbst Führer werden."

Himmler never made Ley an Obergruppenfuehrer in the SS like ~~all~~ the other Reichsleiters. Ley thinks he didn't think him "Edelrassisg" enough. As a former SA man, Ley was Ehrenfuehrer der SA, and Gruppenfuehrer (ohne Ant) der SA. That Ley was not an SS leader was a matter of indifference to him, "Darum habe ich mich nie bemüht. Streit mit Himmler habe ich nicht gehabt. Als Reichsorganisationsleiter und DAF-leiter wir hatten natürlich oftens miteinander zu tun. Ich habe nie Hilfe von ihm verlangt. Ich brauchte keine Polizei und habe immer SD aus dem Betriebe abgewehrt und Polizei in die Betriebe einzuschicken abgelehnt. Wenn es zu einem Streik kommt bin ich dafür da."

Ley will seine Stellung sowie Gott hin

About 1934 Ley was before the Party Court. "Ich hatte Wochenende gemacht und ein bisschen getanzt und geliebt und mich amüsiert, und es wurde mir von Hess und Bormann und Buch vorgeworfen - mit Hess und Bormann hatte ich dauernde Auseinandersetzungen."

Ley asked Hitler if such things were forbidden in the Party, because if he had known it he would never have joined it. "Ich bin nicht keusche und auch kein Aostinent." Hitler laughed and slapped him on the back. Ley complained "Ich bin zu alt ~~da~~ dass ich mich ändere. Ich bin vom Rhein und dort sind die Menschen froehlich. Vor dem Parteigericht stelle ich mich nicht." Hitler tore up the "Antrag" and said, "Ley, Bleiben Sie so, wie Sie sind."

Since that time Ley drank no alcohol or wine. Until very few weeks ago he never smoked. Hitler hatte solches menschliche Verständnis. Es gibt keinen Mensch auf der Welt, dem ich meine reinpersoenliche Sachen so vortrug wie den Adolf Hitler." Three to four weeks before the final catastrophe Ley discussed his personal affairs with Hitler ~~in his next of the~~ st

Hitler's HQ for the whole Russian campaign was at Rattenburg in East Prussia. Hitler never came to Berlin. "Hitler hat alle militärischen Dinge persönlich gemacht. Täglich er höerte die Lage, drei mal am Tage, höerte er die Vorträge der Militärs und denkt nach. Er war der gewissenhafteste Mensch, dass es hat je in der Welt gegeben!" These conferences were from 1200-1400 hours, 1600-1900 or 2100 (3 to 5 hour conferences) and at 0200. "Hitler musste jedes Bataillon gekannt haben. Immer die gleichen Menschen trugen ihm die gleichen Sachen vor ~~und~~ die Front war Monat lang mobil." stabil war. (Pedantisch und übertrieben)

"Jahrelang (Jede Woche) ist Hitler zu mir ein mal gekommen. Er mochte meine Frau sehr und auch ich selbst. Wir hatten einen intimen privaten Verkehr. Er war voellig losstaatlicher Staatsmann und war nur Mensch.

"Die zwei verhaengnisvolle Menschen um dem Fuehrer, Bormann und Himmler (Ich nenne ihn den Judas Iscariot). Himmler war der groesster Verbrecher, als Parteimensch und Deutscher (nicht von KZ usw zu reden, -ich weiss nichts davon-)

"BORMANN: ein sturer, großer, ungehobelter Mensch, bauernschlau, er klammerte 'Um den Fuehrer wie das Efeu auf' der Eiche."

Bis
"Zum Schluss hatten Goebbel und ich, die einzige, das restlose Vertrauen vom Fuehrer. Ich habe intime Dinge mit Hitler durchgegangen."

On 20 April 1945 Hitler spoke to Ley and told him he was determined to defend the Alps, Norway and Bohemia-Moravia. But later Hitler felt himself an obstacle to an understanding with England and the U.S. He thought Doenitz, for instance, could make a better agreement. Hitler sacrificed himself. "Sein Tod war ungeheuer tragisch."

This is the ~~Zeitalter der Rassenkampf~~. Der Kampf faengt jetzt wirklich an und geht weiter. Der Kampf der arischen nordischen Rassen. Deutschland hat es begonnen aber England und Amerika und alle Nordischen Voelker werden davon betroffen werden. Bolshevismus ist eine rassische, slavische Sache. Die russische Seele ist anderer ~~#***~~ Spielart. Von Genghis Khan bis Stalin ist die gleiche Linie, sowie Alexander der Große, Ivan der Schreckliche? Das hat Hitler immer wieder betont. England kann die heutige Lage in Europa nicht wollen. USA muss in Ostasien ~~ausweiten~~ In Indien wird der naechste Zugriff des Molochs (Russia) kommen. Russland wird nie USA festen Fuss in China belassen.

Ley planned and built up the Adolf Hitler Schulen and the Ordensburgen. This was his main interest. The DAF was secondary.

"HIMMLER: Kleiner Spiessbuenger, Schulmeister, mit Ehrgeiz und Hinterhaltigkeit, nur was tuß was ihm persoenlich nuetzt." Himmler was originally the Adjutant of Gregor Strasser "Er wuchs im Schatten Strassers und dann Steine auf Strasser warf". Dem Roehm untertaetig, er liess Roehms Leute spaeter erschiessen.

"Himmler wusste vom 20 July 1944. Der SD wusste alles. Salonsunterhaltungen ueber den Anschlag. Undenkbar dass Himmler nicht wusste, voellig unmoeglich."

Fra. R. Ley

18