

Lochner Reveals German Army Conditions; Chiefs Talk to Hitler Unarmed

(Editor's Note: Free and in America after five months' internment in Germany, Louis P. Lochner, famous United States newsman, now is writing for Wide World and The Herald and News, stories on Germany's leaders and conditions within the country. Here he gives you the facts about Hitler's relationship with his generals. Tomorrow he will deal with Hitler's political methods.)

By LOUIS P. LOCHNER

NEW YORK, June 4 (Wide World)—It's revolvers down and belts off for any general or field marshal who wants to see Adolf Hitler at his GHQ in East Prussia, in the Berlin chancellery, or anywhere else.

No matter how well an army, navy, or air force leader may know der fuhrer, no matter how completely in his confidence he may believe himself to be, the German dictator takes no chances.

Hence, before anybody can come into his presence, he must park his pistol, his military belt, or his saber in the anteroom.

The erstwhile corporal of the first World War loves the game of war more than he loves anything else. He wants to out-Napoleon Napoleon.

When in his reichstag speech of April 26 he praised the German troops for having accomplished during the past winter what the forces of the great Corsican could not achieve, he in fact impliedly told the world that he had already outstripped Napoleon.

NO OTHER GOD
Filled as he is with military ambition, he can tolerate no other god beside himself. The late Colonel-General von Fritsch, the father of the present German army, had to resign because he dared criticize Hitler's acquiescence in Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg's me-alliance in 1938.

General Beck, chief of the German general staff, became

"ill" just before the outbreak of the present war. He opposed Hitler's policy of frightfulness.

General Halder, the present chief of general staff, has been promoted only to colonel-general, while a dozen of his colleagues were made field marshals, simply because—so the rumor goes—he is forever warning the dictator that this or that contemplated move involves more risks than the undertaking is worth.

Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, who always gave the impression of being in the pink of condition, "resigned" shortly before Christmas because of heart trouble, now is reported imprisoned. His resignation coincided with the discovery that the army was nowise prepared for the severe winter in Russia. There can be little doubt that he warned Hitler in time.

General Blaskowitz, widely publicized as the hero of Warsaw, has gone into the discard. He objected to the brutal methods of the SS in occupied Poland.

Field Marshal von Rundstedt appears to have been in the doghouse for some months following the autumn offensive in Russia. He seems to have quarreled with Hitler over the degree to which the German army should retreat before going into winter quarters.

Von Rundstedt proved indispensable, however, and suddenly appeared in the news again this spring.

To estimate the relation between Hitler and generals correctly, one must remember the tradition in which the men in the fifties and sixties who now hold the responsible army positions grew up.

They are left-overs from the imperial regime. The German emperor and his family were soldiers from early childhood on. During the present war, grandsons of the late Kaiser Wilhelm II were killed in action.

They rose successively to high

military ranks. They were accepted not only as equals but, by virtue of the strong monarchical tradition ingrained in every German officer, as superiors.

THEY WINCE
Adolf Hitler to them will ever remain as the World War corporal. True to their oath as soldiers they obey der fuhrer as the commander-in-chief of all the nations military forces. But they often wince at his decisions and, when strictly among themselves, criticize both his strategic plans and their moral implications.

Take the keynote speech which Adolf Hitler delivered to the assembled military top leaders in his Berchtesgaden mountain retreat a few days before the invasion of Poland began. It caused no end of shaking of heads and whispers of dismay.

One officer sitting in the rear of the large room where the officers' corps was assembled scribbled the text of this brief but blood-curdling address in shorthand on the cuff of his shirt. Some day that text may be published.

In it, Hitler puts himself on record favoring the total war front in which women and children can be as little exempted as can civilian populations generally if caught between sections of the retreating army. He stated bluntly that he didn't mind being called Ghengis Khan or Attila the Hun; history recorded these names as those of great doers. He urged the generals to be tough.

The Polish campaign proceeded with a fierceness and brutality unequalled hitherto, but Hitler was not satisfied. He wanted the soldiers and their officers not only to fight battles but also to make short shrift of the Polish population.

The army balked at this. So Hitler sent his uncompromising SS men to Poland to "clean up." They did—and countless are the stories told me by German of-

icers themselves of acts of inhumanity committed by the black guards.

General von Blaskowitz, on behalf of the army, protested against these methods. He has been in disgrace ever since.

The brutality of the SS in Poland is not the only objection which the regular army has against this special formation of Hitler bodyguards. The regular forces resent the preferred publicity given the exploits of the SS in the daily communiques; and they resent the break given the SS always to be in the final skirmish of a decisive strategic movement.

I need not quote a general on that—even the buck private feels that way about it. Here's how a German boy who was drafted at the very beginning of the Hitler compulsory service program stated it to me when on furlough after the Polish campaign (the poor fellow fell in France the following spring):

"We'd fight and fight with hell popping 'round about us, until we thought we were ready to take a certain town or other locality. Suddenly there was a halt. At first we couldn't understand the reason—everything seemed to be going favorably. Well, we learned soon enough by experience: The SS troops were due to arrive to take part in the final skirmish and to share in the glory. It certainly made us sore."

Neither this young lad nor anybody else denies that the SS troops fight doggedly, and that casualties among them are great. But the regulars object to the constant hounding in by the SS men on jobs that bring glory or publicity.

There is nothing that the generals can do about it; Hitler's fondness for his SS troops is well known.

Another point of friction between Hitler and the old-line generals has been the Nazi fight on the church. The old Prussian officer was used to going

to church on Sundays and seeing army chaplains about him on the battlefield.

On December 23, 1940, I attended a Christmas celebration in the Berlin garrison. The colonel in charge had the soldiers sing all the traditional Christian Christmas songs like "Stille Nacht" and "Adeste Fideles."

To my somewhat surprised comment that this was rather unusual, he said: "I'm not going to let anybody interfere with our celebrating Christmas in the good old Christian way. Others may decide to revive old pagan German customs for Yuletide; so long as I head this garrison it's a Christian Christmas for us—and I think the soldiers prefer it."

I for one certainly saw and heard them singing with deep emotion and reverence.

In Hitler's entourage there is one officer who wields a tremendous influence. He is General Jodel, the fuhrer's personal aide and liaison officer to the high command. He is one of the youngest generals and has had a phenomenal career so far as advancing by quick steps from rank to rank is concerned.

"Hitler listens to whoever Jodels" is a wisecrack one often hears ("J" is pronounced like "y" in German).

Just wherein Jodel's magic lies, is hard to say. Presumably like Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop he is an ideal yes man who feels intuitively what his master wants to hear and then presents these ideas in such a way that the fuhrer sees his own views reflected but thinks his understudy is so clever as to have arrived at the same conclusions as he himself.

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that the generals' corps is fed up and ready to throw the entire Nazi outfit out.

Such rumors, I believe, are too much the result of wishful thinking. For, however much a general may disagree with der fuhrer, he remembers his oath of allegiance. And he also remembers that in imperial Ger-

many and later in the short-lived republic, too, it was part of the creed of an officer that he must never become mixed up in politics. To remove the Nazis would be a political act of the first magnitude.

Therefore, a general's revolution, for the present at least, represents a myth and should be discounted as such.

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