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The Plot against Hitler

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prices—was almost certainly less than the increase in the resources used for military purposes, and the reduction of investment may be thought of as necessary to cover this as well as to make possible the increase in consumption.

The rough estimates made in the *Bulletin* article of April 15 refer to the year 1943, and are therefore not directly confirmed or disproved by Professor Frankel's figures. The assumed level of pre-war national income—about £400 million at market prices—is, however, in close agreement with his estimates, and the general picture presented in the article concerned does not appear to be inconsistent with them.

A. J. B.

### THE PLOT AGAINST HITLER

*The following is a summary of the information available about the attempt on Hitler's life, as given out by sources in Germany.*

July 20.—Hitler's H.Q. announced that an attempt had been made on his life, and the News Agency later reported that it was made with high explosives, and that Gen. Schmundt, Col. Brandt, and Collaborator Berger had been seriously injured, and Generals Jodl, Korten, Buhl, Bodenschatz, Hensinger, and Scherff, Col. Borgmann, Admirals Voss and von Puttkamer, and Capt. Assman had suffered slighter injuries. "Hitler received slight burns and concussion", it went on, "but no injuries. He at once began to work again. He then received Mussolini for a long meeting. Shortly after the attempt Marshal Göring came to Hitler."

The news reader then said, "There is nobody in Germany who does not learn with a feeling of deep gratitude that the Führer has escaped uninjured. . . . The enemy thought to attain by a murderous attempt what he cannot do by honest arms. As on several occasions before in the course of the last few years, the German nation can thank Providence for preserving the Führer so that he may accomplish his great task with which he has been charged by Fate."

The deputy Press Chief, in a statement later, said "the enemies of Germany want to murder Adolf Hitler, who is a symbol of the German people and who is the centre of the German rising. Once again they have tried to use crime as a means of helping their strategy. Providence, however, has decided differently. The German people must consider the failure of the attempt on Hitler's life as a sign that he will complete his tasks under the protection of a divine power."

July 21.—Hitler broadcast at 1 a.m., and said that he was speaking, first that the people should hear his voice and know that he was unhurt; and secondly, in order that they should know about a crime unparalleled in German history, and he went on "A very small clique of ambitious, irresponsible, and at the same time senseless and criminally stupid officers have formed a plot to eliminate me and the German *Wehrmacht* Command. The bomb was placed by Col. Graf von Stauffenberg. It exploded 2 metres to my right. One of those with me has died . . . I myself sustained only some very minor scratches, bruises, and burns. I regard this as a confirmation of the task imposed on me by Providence

to continue on the road of my life as I have done hitherto. For I may confess to the nation that since the days when I moved into the Wilhelmstrasse I have had only one thought—to dedicate my life ever since I realized that the war could no longer be postponed. I have lived for worry, work, and worry only through days unnumbered and sleepless nights. Suddenly, at a moment when the German Army is engaged in a bitter struggle, a small group emerged in Germany, just as in Italy, in the belief that they could repeat the 1918 stab in the back. But this time they have made a bad mistake.”

The circle of these conspirators was very small, a miniature group of criminal elements which would be ruthlessly exterminated. “I therefore now order”, he went on, “that no military authority, no leader of any unit, no private in the field is to obey any orders emanating from these groups of usurpers. I also order that it is everyone’s duty to arrest, or, if they resist, to kill at sight anyone issuing or handing on such orders. I have, therefore, to create order once and for all, nominated Reich Minister Himmler to be C.-in-C. of the Home Army. I have summoned Gen. Guderian to join my general staff and to replace the chief of the general staff who has been taken to hospital.”

What fate would have been in store for Germany had this attempt succeeded was too horrible to think of and he praised “Providence, and my Creator”, not because it saved his own life, but only because it had allowed him to go on bearing the cares of labouring for his people. He concluded: “It has again been granted to me that I should escape a fate which would have been terrible, not for me, but for the German people. They see in this again the pointing finger of Providence that I must and will carry on with my work.”

Adm. Doenitz broadcast to the Navy, and said a small clique of mad generals, “having nothing in common with our brave army”, had attempted this murder in “cowardly faithlessness”.

Their stupidity was limitless; they believed that by the removal of the Führer they could “bring about an end to our hard but irrevocable struggle of destiny”. He concluded by describing the terrible fate which would have resulted for Germany if their attempt had succeeded, and told the Navy they must take orders only from him and their own leaders—thus all mystifications by fake orders would be prevented.

Göring addressed the *Luftwaffe*, saying that an attempt at murder had been carried out by Col. von Stauffenberg, acting on the orders of a miserable clique of former generals who had to be chased from their posts because of their leadership. They were now trying to spread confusion by issuing false orders, either as a new Government of the Reich or as usurpers, and he therefore gave the order appointing Gen. Stumpf as C.-in-C. of all formations of the *Luftwaffe* inside Reich territory. Himmler was to be given every assistance by all commands of the *Luftwaffe*, and courier planes might leave only by his own or Himmler’s permission. He went on:

“Officers and soldiers, whatever your rank, and also civilians, wherever these criminals appear or approach you and try to draw you into their contemptible plans they are to be arrested at once and to be shot. Where you yourselves are employed for the extermination of these traitors you are to proceed ruthlessly. These are the self-same curs who tried to betray and sabotage the front. All officers who have abetted

these crimes have put themselves outside the pale of the nation, outside the Army, and outside all military honour, outside their oath and loyalty."

Von Kluge issued an Order of the Day announcing the attempt, and saying "The Führer is alive. He spoke to the people and the German soldiers last night . . . Calm and order prevail at home. The war effort at home and the fighting on the fronts go on . . . For us there will be no repetition of 1918, nor of the example set by Italy. . . ."

The Forces radio reported in the evening that Major Remer, commanding a Berlin Guard battalion, had received orders reading, "The Führer has met with a fatal accident. Disorders in the Reich are reported. The executive power has passed into the hands of the *Wehrmacht*", and going on to instruct him to occupy the Government building. "Acting with accustomed soldierly discipline", said the radio, "he carried out these orders", and issued a short statement to his troops saying that his orders only were to be obeyed. He then got into touch with Goebbels, city president of Berlin, who at once summoned Remer to him and told him the Führer was unhurt. Soon afterwards Remer spoke to the Führer on the telephone and received from him orders for his battalion. Goebbels then addressed it, assuring the soldiers that the Führer was well, and indicating the most urgent tasks of the moment.

The Overseas News Agency reported that certain consequences of the attempt were inevitable; in particular, the totalitarian principle of Government would be developed still further. The ruthless extermination of all assassins and defeatists was demanded by national self-preservation.

The News Agency reported that it had been officially announced in Berlin that the plot lasted only 6 hours from the moment of the attempt to the detention of the last conspirator. It was nipped in the bud "without having resort to concentrating formations of forces".

A later statement declared that "the knowledge that the traitors had laid hands on means of communication was undoubtedly the reason for the broadcast by Hitler, Göring, and Doenitz. At the time the addresses and orders-of-the-day were broadcast none of them knew to what extent and for how long the clique would be able to make use of these channels of communication. The object of the broadcasts was to prevent the recipients of these faked orders from taking them as genuine. After the attempt Hitler, with Göring, Himmler, Goebbels, Keitel, and Doenitz, personally or over the telephone, immediately directed every phase of the developments."

The Forces radio issued orders to the editors of Army papers for a special edition with the main headline, "A miracle worked on the Führer", over a 2-column photo of Hitler.

A fuller statement broadcast late at night asserted that the principal instigators of the attempt were some retired generals who included Beck, Chief of the General Staff, who retired in 1938, and "a handful of officers in important positions in the home army", but these generals "had ceased to play any part in the *Wehrmacht* years before the war", and "a certain enemy Power had maintained contact with them for some time past".

Graf von Stauffenberg had made the attempt single-handed by

placing a time bomb near Hitler. He was the instrument of a small, ambitious clique, whose connection with an enemy Power was established a few hours after the attempt, when documents, etc., were discovered. A short interrogation of the principals of the plot shortly before they were shot further corroborated this evidence.

"Certain precautionary measures" in the centre of Berlin were all that could be seen of the revolt by outsiders. No shots were heard, and no barbed wire was to be seen.

Special messages of loyalty to Hitler were published from Kluge, Weichs (Balkans), Christiansen (Holland), and Falkenhorst (Norway).

The Overseas News Agency stated that Keitel was uninjured by the bomb, and "the man who was killed was named Berger, a press stenographer".

According to reports reaching Sweden 2 German divisions in East Prussia revolted on July 19, and 1 regiment refused to go to the front.

*July 22.*—Hitler issued an Order of the Day to the Army announcing the attempt to murder him and the General Staff, and going on, "by immediate vigorous action by loyal officers and men of the Army at home the traitor clique was wiped out or arrested in a matter of a few hours. I expected nothing else. I know that, as hitherto, you will fight with exemplary obedience and loyalty till victory is ours in spite of all."

The political director of the radio, in a home service broadcast, said that "a thing like this *putsch* and attempt on the Führer's life in the 5th year of war cannot have happened without its antecedents and cannot pass without its consequences. The group of assassins . . . are sand in our war machine. This sand is being thoroughly washed away. Himmler's personality affords the best guarantee that the soldiers at the front will get their due".

He reminded all his hearers of the strict bar on their listening to foreign broadcasts.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* said Himmler's appointment guaranteed that "the required task will be mastered". Just as he created the SS. formations "as a political instrument as hard as steel", and later the Waffen SS., so he would wield the Home Army as an instrument which would make sure that there would be no second July 20."

The *D.A.Z.* said that Himmler's purge had already begun, and would "certainly embrace civilian circles, too".

Ley broadcast on the reasons for the plot, saying he had received the details of how the attempt was made. "A mine of the heaviest type, imported from Britain, was hidden. The Jew of Moscow ordered it, England and her lords supplied it, and German counts and noblemen threw it. Swine, blue-blooded swine. Fools and idiots, criminals and murderers, reactionaries, that is what they are. Here you see reaction and Bolshevism arm in arm, Stalin and German counts, all pals. How well the Führer had treated them! He gave them everything they had a right to ask for . . . He gave Germany and them might and splendour, and they thanked him with bombs and murder . . . These criminals are paid by the Jews. They are traitors . . . with international connections . . . To-day we demand that to-day our revolution should do what it has so far failed to do—these creatures must be exterminated."

*July 23.*—Gen. Guderian, the Army Chief of Staff, issued an Order of the Day stating that "a few officers, some of them on the retired list,

had lost courage and, out of cowardice and weakness, preferred the road of disgrace to the only road open to an honest soldier—the road of duty and honour. The Army has purged itself and cut out the dishonest elements . . . People and Army stand closely united behind the Führer . . . I guarantee the Führer and the German people the unity of the generals, of the officers' corps, and of the men of the Army in the single aim of fighting for, and obtaining the victory under the motto drawn up by the venerable Field Marshal von Hindenburg: Loyalty is the essence of honour. Long Live Germany; Long live our Führer, Adolf Hitler; and now, the nation to arms."

Fritsche, political commentator on the Berlin radio, declared that the ringleaders in the plot were "acting on behalf of the enemy", and were ready "to abandon all for which we have fought for 5 years".

July 24.—Hitler's H.Q. announced that the Reichsmarshal of the Greater German Reich, Göring, as senior officer of the Army and in the name of Field Marshal Keitel and Adm. Doenitz, had reported to the Führer that all sections of the Army had asked him to introduce the Nazi salute into the Army as a sign of their unshakable allegiance to the Führer and of the closest unity between the Army and the Party. The Führer had given his consent, and instead of the military salute, the Nazi salute was being introduced immediately.

Berlin radio announced that Gen. Korten, Chief of Staff of the *Luftwaffe*, and Gen. Brandt, of the Army General Staff, had died of wounds received in the bomb explosion.

The forces radio announced that "Without the co-operation of formations of troops the attempt of the small clique of conspirators to seize power and the apparatus of Government could certainly not have been nipped in the bud".

Hitler received a message of unswerving loyalty from Gen. Rendulic, C.-in-C. of the Army in Northern Finland.

The press reported that the danger was now past, and that "competent German quarters" had pointed out that Ley's statement calling out for the "wiping out of the aristocracy should not be taken literally. Ley meant to say that the people shaken by these events will proceed to a greater concentration of forces".

The News Agency announced that Hitler had received a telegram of congratulation on his escape from Gen. Model, C.-in-C. of two Army groups on the Eastern Front.

Ley, in *Der Angriff*, declared that it was not enough to "seize every perpetrator of the plot and mercilessly to settle accounts with him; we must annihilate the whole brood. Every German must know that if he rises against fighting Germany he and his family must die. . . ."

Dittmar, in a broadcast, said the conspirators were killed in the place where the attempt was planned and there were less than a dozen people involved. They were liquidated by loyal soldiers. There was no doubt at all that the conspiracy gravely impaired the effectiveness of the army in the past, and "now we shall have to cleanse our war machine of the sand in it before it can work at full speed again".

July 26.—Goebbels broadcast a "sober and unadorned account" of the bomb plot in which he said that "apocalyptic visions" appeared before his eyes of the historic possibilities which might have arisen had it succeeded. At 4 p.m. the clique of traitors thought the way was

clear for them to act. Col. Stauffenberg had arrived in Berlin in a courier plane bringing a false report that Hitler had been killed. The traitors then carried out the attempt to release the armed forces from their oath of allegiance to the Führer so that they might use them for their plans. They issued orders from the Bendlerstrasse (where the Ministry of War was situated) by means of channels of communication which were at their disposal for a certain time, including an order to the Berlin Guard detachments to occupy the Government buildings. But the Berlin Guard, like all the armed forces, was composed of fanatical National-Socialists, and its commander, Major Remer, immediately got into touch with him (Goebbels). "At that moment", he declared, "the whole conspiracy came to an end after it had lasted about an hour." Remer was put through on the phone to Hitler, who "at once gave him clear and unambiguous orders".

The order therefore went out—"Seize the clique of traitors and smash them at once". He explained the position to the Guards, and "angrily from all sides I was asked that they and no other unit should be given the order to wipe out with blood the traces of treachery with which the Guards detachment had been quite innocently besmeared. Action was swift. Without one shot having to be fired the group of traitors was overcome because all rose against them as one man. By that time they had been disarmed and huddled together in one little room where they had desperately been trying to play the role of a Government".

Three generals, and Graf Stauffenberg—the political wire-puller—and a few other puppets were tried on the spot; the Guards battalion carried out the executions. He went on to say that for months he had noticed in the enemy press hints that they had saved "a special arrow" which they would shoot at a certain moment. That press also spoke of certain circles among the German generals, and named persons who, in fact, had now appeared. Another clue was that the attempt was committed with explosives made in Britain, and that the culprit was entangled with the British aristocracy.

He had seen the room where the attempt took place, and if the Führer's escape was no miracle, then there were no miracles. The assassin gained access to the operation room under the pretext that he had to make a report. He carried the explosive in an attaché case, which he put down and pushed to the very feet of the Führer. Gen. Korten, who was standing immediately behind Hitler, was seriously wounded, and had since died. Everyone else in the room was blown out of the windows and had their uniforms torn to shreds. There was only one spot which remained untouched by the explosion, and that was the very spot where the Führer stood. The desk was thrown across the room, but the Führer remained unharmed apart from slight concussion, burns, and a few scratches on his forehead.

They were faced on all fronts by a world of completely unscrupulous enemies, and "in this struggle the Führer is like a noble knight who fights against Death and the Devil whom Dürer has painted. We must get through this hell of difficulties, burdens, and dangers until we can breathe freely again . . . We must succeed, or else all is lost."

He then referred to Himmler's and his own appointments, and said they meant that total war now became a reality. The Nazi Party would be the moving power behind the whole conversion of their war machine,

to make more men available for the front and for the war industries. Their enemies would discover that they were only now beginning in earnest. The whole aspect of the war would be changed, and the whoop of triumph would be throttled in their enemies' throats.

In view of the temporary technical superiority of their enemies in some respects they must start again, from the beginning, and must not simply catch up with the enemy, but overtake and get ahead of him. The results of the far-reaching developments they had been working on would make themselves felt more and more concretely on all the war fronts. The appearance of V-one was in a way the prelude to this new phase. The prime advantage of this weapon was that the enemy's entire defensive system had been knocked out of joint, and sent topsy-turvy. New weapons, for different, spheres would shortly go into use, and thus they had overtaken the enemy. "I have recently seen weapons", he said, "which made my heart beat faster, and even for a moment made it stop beating."

He ended by appealing to everyone to redouble their efforts. Never again would the Almighty reveal himself to them as he had just done in saving the Führer. His intention was to let them know that it was for them now to work for victory.

July 27.—The News Agency announced that the conspirators referred to by Goebbels were Gen. Olbricht, who was court-martialled and shot; Gen. Beck, who when detained committed suicide; and Gen. Höppner, who would be brought to trial. It was Gen. Olbricht who held all the threads of the conspiracy in his hands; he was the only one who was on active service, being second-in-command of the Home Army. Gen. Höppner had been expelled from the *Wehrmacht* at the end of 1941 for a cowardly retreat on the Eastern Front. All were members of the General Staff.

## OUTLINE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

### WESTERN EUROPE AND ATLANTIC

Early on July 18 the 2nd Army attacked just east of Caen and reached the suburb of Vaucelles, after an air offensive by over 2,200 bombers, which dropped some 7,000 tons in 4 hours. Further west very heavy fighting occurred at Juvigny and Noyers. Next day Vaucelles was cleared of the enemy, and Louvigny and Fleury captured. The battle was officially described as a "sober and steady success"; over 1,500 prisoners had been taken, and Allied losses were "almost negligible". The Germans counter-attacked in considerable strength, however, and now had at least 5 divisions engaged on this part of the front, and by July 20 had succeeded in holding up the British thrust. The Canadians entered Bourguebus that day, but were driven out, and all along the line Bras-Ifs-Bourguebus-Frenouville 4 to 5 miles south of Caen the Germans were found to be holding a very strong line, with large numbers of 88 mm. guns and mortars. They also made many counter-attacks on July 22, retaking Esquay and Maltot, but Hill 112 overlooking Esquay was successfully held and Maltot retaken, with 400 prisoners. Etavaux, east of the Orne, was also cleared, and on