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ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE DIVISION  
INTELLIGENCE SECTION

I.S.280

**DECLASSIFIED**

February  
8 January 1945  
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Consolidated Report on the Interrogation of 29 Ps/W captured during the last week in January 1945.

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(This report was prepared by PWD - SHAEF Interrogators.)

1. Time and places of capture: Twenty-nine Ps/W captured during the last week of January in the vicinity of the German-Luxembourg border were interrogated on 6 February 1945. None of the PoWs interrogated ranked above Stabsgefreiter; they were members of the following units:

9	P	s/W	from the	560th	VGD
5	"	"	"	326th	VGD
3	"	"	"	15th	Panzer Div.
2	"	"	"	18th	VGD
1	"	"	"	79th	VGD
1	"	"	"	5th	Paratroop Div.
1	"	"	"	276th	VGD
1	"	"	"	2nd	VGD
1	"	"	"	9th	VGD
1	"	"	"	9th	Panzer Div.
1	"	"	"	11th	Panzer Div.
1	"	"	"	Panzer Lehr	Div.
1	"	"	"	353rd	VGD
1	"	"	"	326th	VGD

These PoWs came from the following parts of Germany:

10	P	s/W	from	Western	Germany
9	"	"	"	Central	Germany
8	"	"	"	East of the	Oder
1	"	"	"	Northern	Germany
1	"	"	"	Sudetenland	

19 of the PoWs were workers, 5 Artisans, 2 Artists, 2 White Collar Workers, 1 Student.

2. Knowledge of Russian Offensive: 24 of the Ps/W had knowledge of a large-scale Russian offensive before they were captured, but only eight out of these had acquired the knowledge through official German sources, such as the Wehrmachtsbericht, Radio, etc. Through these official channels some of the Ps/W had heard of the capture of Gleiwitz, the encirclement of Breslau, the cutting off of East Prussia, the advance towards Kuestrin, the reaching of a point 120 kms. from Berlin. Rumors which circulated amongst the German soldiers claimed that Koenigsberg and Danzig had fallen, that the Russians stood before Vienna and that Schneidemuehl had been captured.

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3. Outcome of War: With one exception only, a 17 year old boy, all Ps/W were convinced that the situation for Germany was hopeless.

4. Reaction to Russian Offensive: The strongest impression gained from these 29 Ps/W is that although they consider the Russian advances as a catastrophe ("katastrophal"), the apathy amongst the troops is so great that not even the present events in the East have any influence on their battle behavior. It is furthermore interesting to note that there is a contradictory attitude among most of the Ps/W interrogated, viz. that on the one hand mentally they realize that prolonged resistance on the Western Front is against the best interest of Germany, since an Anglo-American occupation is preferable to a Russian one, while on the other hand, personally, they are glad that a Western Front exists which saves them from service on the Eastern Front.

5. Importance of Koenigsberg and Breslau: Generally speaking the Ps/W do not attach any particular significance to the imminent fall of Koenigsberg or Breslau. Some of the Ps/W had heard rumors, that Koenigsberg had fallen already and did not seem affected by that news. Their opinion is best illustrated by the following quotation of one of the Ps/W: "Die Einen sind schon sowieso lange dafuer auf zuhoeren, und die anderen wollen bis zum letzten Blutstropfen weiterkaempfen. Der Fall von Koenigsberg oder Breslau wird dabei keinen Unterschied machen." (One part (of the Germans) has long been of the opinion to quit and the other part wants to continue fighting to the last drop of blood. Therefore the fall of Koenigsberg or Breslau wouldn't make any difference.) Another quotation is: "Die Staedte sind ja doch alle kaput. Ob da eine oder die andere faellt, speilt garkeine Rolle." (The cities are all devastated anyhow. If another one falls it will be of no importance.)

6. Reaction of Ps/W whose homes are East of the Oder: The eight men from East of the Oder were affected in the following ways by the news of the Russian offensive: a) One PoW from Landsberg, Upper Silesia, who has his wife and five children there, does not believe the Russians will behave inhumanly. He and two comrades from Beuthen deserted. b) A man from Hammerstein, East Pomerania, is greatly worried about the fate of his mother. Even though he considers the German propaganda on Russian atrocities exaggerated he believes that the Russian occupation will be very hard on the German people (deportation, forced labor, etc). PoW broke into tears when talking of his mother, but showed no eagerness to fight on the Russian front. c) Another man when told by interrogator that his hometown Beuthen had fallen, exclaimed: "Ach, wo sind da jetzt meine Eltern." (I wonder where my parents are now). But when asked if he would have preferred to fight on the Eastern Front he categorically said: "Nein, die Amerikaner sind mir sympathischer und gegen die Russen koennen wir sowieso nichts machen." (No, to me Americans are more sympathetic and there isn't a thing we can do against the Russians anyhow) d) One man, from Pomerania, vicinity of Stolp, was not much concerned. Believes his parents have gone to Poland, his step-mother being Polish. He himself deserted. e) A man from Lower Silesia stated: "Wenn man im Westen kaempft und jetzt hoert was im Osten geschieht, verliert man natuerlich alle Lust und jegliches Interesse. Aber Interesse am Krieg haben wir schon sowieso lange nicht mehr. Ich Sorge mich natuerlich um meine Eltern, glaube jedoch nicht, dass der Russe so hausen wird, wie die Nazi Propaganda es gesagt hat." (When one has to fight in the West and hears what's happening in the East, everything becomes pointless and one loses all interest. Anyhow, we haven't had a real interest in the war anymore for a long time. Of course, I'm worried about my parents, however, I don't think that the Russians will behave the way Nazi Propaganda has claimed.) f) From Fuerstenberg/Oder, a deserter



states: "Obzwar ich schon lange die Absicht hatte ueberzulaufen, haben die Ereignisse an der Ostfront mir den Entschluss leichter gemacht." (Even though I had long ago planned to desert - the final decision was made easier for me through the happenings on the Eastern front) "Ich hoffe, dass meine Familie rechtzeitig evakuiert wurde. Von der russischen Besatzung erwarte ich alle Brutalitaeten." (I hope my family was evacuated in time. I expect all kinds of atrocities by the Russian occupation troops) g) A man from Kattowitz: "Bin schrecklich um meine Frau und Kinder besorgt. Ich hoffe, dass sie in Kattowitz geblieben sind und sich nicht haben evakuieren lassen. Meine Frau ist Polin; es waere schrecklich fuer sie das Schicksal aller Heimatlosen im gebombten Deutschland mitzuerleben." (Am terribly worried about my wife and children. I hope they stayed in Kattowitz and didn't let themselves be evacuated. My wife is Polish. It would be terrible if they had to share the fate of all the homeless people in bombed-out Germany) "Der Russe ist gutmaetig und nicht brutal." (The Russian is good-natured and not brutal) h) A man from Tilsit: His wife and children were evacuated to Saxony last September when the Russians reached the East Prussian border. He still has other relatives in Tilsit but is completely indifferent to what happens to them or to his home town and region. Another PoW gives the following reaction of his comrades who were from East of the Oder territory: "Mancher der sich frueher sagte: was auch kommt, ich werde immer weiter kaempfen, ist dann uebergelaufen mit den Worten: Jetzt habe ich nichts mehr, wofuer ich kaempfen koennte, weil meine Heimat besetzt ist." (Many a one who formerly said "Come what may, I shall always fight on, later deserted with the words: Now I have nothing left to fight for because my own home-soil has been occupied)

7. Fuehrerbefehl: Six PoWs had knowledge of the Fuehrerbefehl allowing men whose homes were in the Eastern part of Germany to volunteer for service on the Eastern Front ("Heimatsverteidigung"). None of the PoWs know of any volunteers, but one man reports that sometimes in August when the order was read to his Company, several men were selected as "volunteers." According to one man this order which originally concerned only men from East and West Prussia, has now been extended to men of all regions immediately threatened by the Russians.

8. Status of Wehrmacht after an Armistice: Fourteen of the PoWs seem not to have given any thought to what would happen to the Wehrmacht after Armistice. Out of the remaining fifteen, five only believe that the Wehrmacht will be taken prisoner on V-Day, but their opinions differ as to whether those men will be better or worse off. a) For better: Many will have a chance to hide at home than Ps/W taken before the Armistice; even though on PoW status they will be employed on German soil. b) For worse: Those captured on V-Day will be the first to be put to work; PoWs will be released in chronological order of capture. The remaining ten men seemed to believe that the rest of the Wehrmacht will simply be sent home. One reaction to the Wehrmacht going home was: "Die Kerls werden sich unser Hab und Gut und unsere Frauen aneignen." (Those guys will appropriate all our earthly belongings including our wives) Twenty-two PoWs believe that Nazis will be the first to be drafted for reconstruction work and that they will get the hardest assignments. Four thought no difference would be made and three had no opinion.

9. Length of captivity: Seven PoWs believe they will be released within a year. Twenty-two believe their release will be effected within two to four years. It is interesting to note in this respect that amongst this particular group of PoWs the proportion of men desiring to be shipped to the United States, and even staying there for good, is unusually high. This latter feeling is probably in large part due to their expectation of the Russian occupation of Germany.

10. Continuation of fight to save skin of Nazis: Twenty-one of the PoWs actually believe that the main motive behind



the continued resistance of the German leaders is to prolong their own lives as long as possible: "Die werden natuerlich lieber morgen aufgehängt als heute." (They rather be hanged tomorrow than today) "Die Partei kaempft bis jeder Fleck Deutschland's besetzt ist" (The Party will fight on till every spot of Germany has been occupied) "Die oberen Schichten kaempfen um ihr Dasein. Es ist schade um jeden Landser, der so denkt wie ich, und noch sein Leben lassen muss" (The leading elements fight for their very existence. It's too bad for those Landsers, who think the way I do, yet have to give their lives) "Die wollen bis zum letzten kaempfen, weil sie nicht den Juden ausgeliefert werden wollen." (They want to fight till the very last because they don't want to fall into the hands of the Jews) Seven POWs have no opinion on this matter; one still believes the war is not lost.

11. General Remarks: The impression of the interrogators, substantiated by several statements made by POWs, is that the Landser on the Western Front feels the consequences of the Russian Offensive in the following ways: withdrawal of troops and weapons (withdrawal of SS Divisions); increased shortage of food and other supplies; absence of replacements and relief. "Wir waren so lange im Einsatz geblieben ohne abgelöst zu werden, dass wir seelisch und moralisch fertig waren und uns alles egal war." (We were held so long in the line without relief that we were done for spiritually and morally; everything became a matter of indifference to us) "Wir haben seit drei Wochen nichts mehr gekriegt: kein Nachschub, kein Ersatz, keine Abloesung. Unsere schweren Granatwerfer sind nach dem Osten gegangen, und die Bedienungsmannschaft als Infanterie eingesetzt worden." (For three weeks we didn't get anything anymore - no supplies, no replacements, no relief. Our heavy mortars were sent to the East and the crews put in the line here as infantrymen) "Wir sollten von einer SS Division abgelöst werden, die ist aber anstatt dessen nach Osten gegangen." (We were supposed to be relieved by a SS Division, instead of relieving us it was sent to the East front).

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Psychological Warfare Division  
INTELLIGENCE SECTION

I.S.280.

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17 February 1945.

Consolidated Report on the Interrogation of 30 Officers  
captured between 30 January - 4 February 1945.

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Section, with whom the responsibility will then lie.

(This report was prepared by PWD - SHAEF Interrogators).

1. Dates and Place of Capture: This report covers the interrogation of  
30 German officers captured between 30 January - 4 February 1945. They were  
all captured in the vicinity of Germany, Belgium, and the Luxembourg border.

2. Ranks and Units: 11 out of the 30 officers had been commissioned since  
1 November 1944. The ranks of all the officers were as follows :

- 1 Captain
- 1 1st Lt
- 27 2nd Lts
- 1 Zahlmeister.

They were members of the following units :

- 9 officers from the 62nd VGD
- 6 officers from the 3rd Fallschirmjaeger Div.
- 5 officers from the 89th Infantry Div.
- 3 officers from the 277th VGD
- 2 officers from the 246th VGD
- 1 officer from the 12th VGD
- 1 officer from the 18th VGD
- 1 officer from the 271st VGD
- 1 officer from the Panzerabwehr West
- 1 officer from the Div. 406 zBV.

3. Age Groups and Regions of Origin:

- 7 officers were 20 - 21 years old
- 16 officers were 22 - 30 years old
- 7 officers were 31 - 46 years old

- 7 officers were from regions East of the Oder
- 7 officers were from regions between the Oder and the Elbe
- 15 officers were from other parts of Germany
- 1 officer was from Austria.

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4. Educational Levels and Professions:

Elementary	Secondary	University (2 semesters and above)
4	22	4
2 of the Ps/W were Workers		
3 of the Ps/W were Farm owners		
5 of the Ps/W were Civil Servants		
3 of the Ps/W were White Collar Workers		
13 of the Ps/W were Students		
3 of the Ps/W were Professional Officers		
1 of the Ps/W was an Architect.		

5. Circumstances of Capture: 7 of the Ps/W were captured all by themselves, only 2 of these found themselves in hopeless situations, 2 were wounded, the remaining 3 claim to have been surprised. 12 of the Ps/W were captured in groups of 2 to 6 men inclusive. One of these resisted till he was wounded, 5 found themselves with their men in hopeless situations, the remaining 6 judged their situations as hopeless. 11 of the Ps/W were captured in groups of from 7 to 26 men. None of these Ps/W was wounded, 8 of them were the ranking officers and ordered their men to surrender, considering their situations as hopeless. 3 of the Ps/W received orders from their superiors to cease resistance, the situations being hopeless.

6. Morale of the Ps/W: In comparison to previous interrogations this team found that the morale of the 30 officers interrogated was unusually low. The main reasons for this state of morale are: the failure of the Rundstedt offensive, the success of the Russian offensive, the lack of supplies and reinforcements, the low quality of their own manpower.

7. Outcome of War:

Belief in a decisive German victory :	2
Belief in a stalemate or compromise :	11
Belief in German defeat :	17

Those believing in a German victory have no conception as to the means with which it will be brought about, but they do believe it will take a long time. "Wir sind wie ein stark zusammengepresster Stahlring, der platzen muss. Es ist ein militaerisches, nicht ein physikalisches Gesetz, dass er nach aussen und nicht nach innen platzen muss". (We are like a tightly-compressed steel-ring that must burst. It is a military, not physical, law that it (the ring) must burst outwards, not inwards). "Der Fuehrer wird uns zum Siege fuehren". (The Leader (Fuehrer) will lead us to victory). Those who believe in a stalemate or compromise regard such an outcome of the war actually as a German victory. "Wenn es hoffnungslos waere fuer uns haette Hitler schon aufgegeben, denn ins Verderben fuehrt er sein Volk nicht". (Were it hopeless for us, Hitler would already have given up, because he doesn't lead his people to ruin). "Wir werden neue Waffen haben, die Euch solche Verluste beibringen werden, dass der ganze Krieg sich fuer Euch nicht mehr auszahlt und Ihr von Eurem eigenen Volk gezwungen werdet Frieden zu schliessen". (We shall have new weapons, and these shall cost you such losses that for you the entire war will no longer pay and your own people will force you to conclude peace).

The importance of the loss of the Upper Silesian Industrial Basin is realized both by those who believe in German defeat as well as by those who still believe in a stalemate. Lt Josef Miny, 9th Fallschirmjaeger Regt., 3rd Fallschirmjaeger Div. said: "Das Rheinisch Westphaelische Industrie Gebiet war fuer uns durch Eure Bombardierungen schon lange verloren, nur das Oberschlesische Industriegebiet, das Euler Reichweite mehr oder weniger entzogen war, hat uns ueber Wasser gehalten, dies ist nun auch verloren". (The Rhine-Westphalian industrial region had long been lost to us as a result of your bombings, only the Upper-Silesian industrial region, which had more or less been withdrawn from your range, kept our head above water. This also, is now lost to us).



Lt Walter Schlichting, 1055th Regt., 89th ID, said: "Die Wehrkraft des Deutschen Volkes hat durch den Verlust des Oberschlesischen Industriegebietes einen ungeheuren Schlag erlitten". (The defensive strength of the German people has, as a result of the loss of the Upper-Silesian industrial region, suffered an enormous blow). Those who believe in a stalemate do not realize that sources of raw material and food cannot be moved the way they claim that factories can be moved.

#### 8. Knowledge of Russian Offensive:

(a) Extent of Knowledge: With only 2 exceptions, all officers were fully informed about the progress of the Russian offensive up to a day or two prior to their capture, which knowledge they had obtained from the Wehrmachtsberichte.

(b) Effect on Battle Behavior: These interrogations have not produced evidence that knowledge of the Russian offensive had any startling effect on the immediate battle behavior. They are shocked, and particularly those from the East are depressed, but on the whole "Befehl ist Befehl" (An order remains an order) attitude is prevailing, and the already existing apathy is such that nothing that does not concern them in their own immediate situations seems to influence their battle behavior or stir them to direct action. Lt Wilhelm Dreismann, (from Westphalia), 189 Arti. Regt., 89th ID, said: "Ich war schwer erschuettert ueber die Nachrichten von der Ostfront, man fragt sich direkt wozu noch gekaempft wird". (I was terribly shocked by the news from the Eastern front. One bluntly asks oneself why we go on fighting). 2 officers report that soldiers who had their families in Russian threatened territories applied for immediate furloughs, which were refused, and according to the officers these men returned unhesitatingly to their duties.

(c) Fall of KOENIGSBERG, BRESLAU, BERLIN: These interrogations have shown that there is no importance attached to the imminent fall of either BRESLAU or KOENIGSBERG. All the officers agree that the fall of BERLIN will not mean the end of the war. At the same time they all admit that the fall of BERLIN would have repercussions all over the Reich, and some believe that this could be the final test as to how much longer the German people can take it. "Der Verlust der Reichshauptstadt haette eine derartig katastrophale Schockwirkung auf das deutsche Volk, dass unter Umstaenden der Fall zum sofortigen Zusammenbruch fuehren kann". (The loss of the German capital would have such a catastrophic shock-effect on the German people that under certain conditions the loss can lead to an immediate collapse). "Der Fall von Berlin wird eine ungeheure Wirkung haben, es kommt darauf an, wieviel das deutsche Volk noch hinnehmen kann, und ich glaube nicht mehr viel". (The fall of Berlin will have a monstrous effect, depending on how much the German people can 'take', and I believe they can't take much more). "Es wird wahrscheinlich noch weitergekaempft werden, obzwar es sinnlos ist wenn die Hauptstadt gefallen ist". (There will probably be more fighting, although, should the capital fall, it would be senseless). "Man ist ja im Augenblick Offizier und darf nichts sagen, aber ich habe Angst die Fuehrung ist kurzsichtig genug um auch nach Berlin noch weiterzukaempfen". (One is, at the moment, an officer and ought not say anything, but I am afraid our leadership is sufficiently short-sighted to go on fighting even after the fall of Berlin). On the other hand also: "Heute im Kriege spielen Staedte keine Rolle mehr, auch damit ist eine Schlacht noch nicht verloren". (In modern warfare, cities no longer play a part, even thereby (loss of Berlin) a battle is not yet lost). "Berlin ist ja sowieso nur ein Truemerhaufen, es ist ja nur auf Papier noch die Reichshauptstadt". (Berlin, as it is, is just a mass of ruins. Only on paper does it remain the capital).



(d) Reaction of those coming from the East: 4 of the officers are from places already occupied by the Russians and their individual reactions are as follows :

(i) Has no news from his family, is very much worried about their fate, hopes they have been evacuated. He realizes that the Russian occupation will result in expropriation of his farm, and he is a violent objector to collectivization.

(ii) A professional soldier from BEUTHEN, extremely worried about the fate of his family, certain that they have not been evacuated, because it is hardly possible to evacuate all inhabitants of large cities. Has only slight hope of ever seeing his wife and children again. Would have preferred to fight on the Eastern front instead of sitting around in the Westwall. Would never return to his hometown, fears his family deported by Russians.

(iii) From HINDENBURG. Received letter from his wife the day before his capture, she had been evacuated to BERLIN with the last train. She refers in her letter to "ein wuestes durcheinander" (a wild confusion) and writes that Russians were constantly strafing the train and the railroad tracks. His mother had been evacuated four days earlier. His father, 62, was ordered to stay behind, since he is an engineer at the electrical plant, Energie Versorgung Kattowitz. His main worry now is what will happen to his wife if BERLIN too has to be evacuated. Would have preferred to fight in the East and defend his home.

(iv) A Nazi, his father and himself are Party members, from RASTENBURG. Has some concern about his family, but is quite certain that they must have been evacuated in time. Does not consider the cutting off of East Prussia as important, since Germany is going to win the war just the same.

(v) Amongst the men from areas immediately threatened by the Russians, one P/W, who is not particularly afraid of the Russians, is very much worried because he believes the Germans will make BRESLAU a second BUDAPEST. Another P/W from BRESLAU wanted to make use of the Fuehrerbefehl concerning transfer to the Eastern front, but he did not get a chance to do so because of the red tape connected with such a transfer. Another P/W, the son of a farmer from the DANZIG area, expressed the hope that his parents will stay at home. He has seen some atrocities in Russia and is afraid of the Russians to a certain degree, but in spite of this, in typical peasant fashion, he considers the clinging to the homestead as the most important factor.

9. Fuehrerbefehl: 15 of the officers knew about the "Fuehrerbefehl - Heimatverteidigung" (allowing soldiers to transfer to the East to fight in defense of their home communities). An interesting reaction is reported by one of these officers : The divisional commander, 3rd Fallschirmjaeger, decided not to do anything about the Fuehrerbefehl, since he considered it ridiculous to transport individual soldiers clear across the Reich for purely personal reasons. Another P/W from an immediately threatened area said : "Davon, dass ich da ankomme aendert sich auch nichts". (The fact that I should arrive there will change nothing any way). It does seem that amongst the officers there is a somewhat larger degree of fear of the Russians as compared to the Landsers, because they as officers consider themselves as members of a social class which the Russians must have vowed to exterminate. Furthermore, there is a distinct preference for fighting on the Western front, where according to German opinion the fight is still a fair (anstaendig) one.

10. Hope of German Success in the East: Those of the Ps/W who believe in German victory or a stalemate are of the opinion that the Russians will be stopped by German counter-measures. Some of them believe that this was the



last Russian effort in trying to bring about a decision. Many of them do not believe that they will be able to throw the Russians back to their original positions, but they believe that they will be able to hand the Russians a decisive defeat somewhere near the present battle-lines. Those of the Ps/W who see no hope for a German victory are of the opinion that it would have been wiser to have saved the forces involved in the ARDENNES push for the expected Russian offensive.

11. Fate of remaining Wehrmacht on V-Day: Generally speaking, the Ps/W have not given much thought to this matter, and 15 of them when confronted with this question said they believed that the Wehrmacht will simply be disarmed, disbanded and permitted to return to their civilian occupations. Some believe that at a later date the Allies may draft German manpower for reconstruction work. One of the Ps/W believes that the rest of the Wehrmacht will be used for reconstruction inside Germany, while the P/W will be used for reconstruction in other countries, which he considers a logical solution in order to avoid transportation problems. 8 of the Ps/W believe that the entire Wehrmacht will be considered Ps/W. Out of these 8, 1 believed that officers will be sent home last, 2 believe that the Ps/W will be released in order of their capture, 3 believe that all Ps/W will be released approximately at the same time, the remaining 2 have no opinion. 3 of the Ps/W believe that officers will be kept in captivity for an especially long time, so as to curb the development in Germany of any organized resistance.

12. Discrimination against Nazis: 23 out of the 30 Ps/W believe that special measures will be taken concerning the treatment of Nazis, that for instance they will be the first to be called upon for reconstruction work and the last to be sent home. The opinion is also prevailing that efforts will be made to re-educate such people.

13. Is War being continued to save Nazi Lives: 10 of the officers believe that the fight is being continued in order to prolong the lives of the leaders. Lt Jakob Krumneck of the 271st Pionier Bn., 271st VGD, says that there is a difference of opinion between the Wehrmacht and the Party concerning the war and that the Party is the more powerful one at the moment. "Wer die Macht hat, hat das Recht". ((Might makes Right)). 16 of the officers believe that the Fuehrung continues the fight in the interest of the German people. Most all of them believe that especially Hitler himself would not sacrifice the German nation uselessly.

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