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Franz Riedweg

(Physician; Former SS Leader)

Franz Riedweg was born in Lucerne on 10 April 1907, and he comes from a family which can be traced back to the 15th century in the original Swiss cantons. After attending school in Lucerne, Riedweg studied medicine in Bern, Rostock and Berlin. At the same time, he busied himself extensively with political questions, and he broadened his education by studying in France and Italy. He completed his education in 1934, obtaining the degree of doctor of medicine and passing the state examination.

Beginning in 1930, Riedweg was active politically as a resolute opponent of communism and an advocate of young-conservative unification ideas. He saw Germany as the backbone of such a development. While still a student, he was the leader of the Pan-Europa group at the University of Bern, and in 1936 he was one of the founders of a Swiss program against communism. From this attitude sprang his special interest in developments in Germany after 1933. It also caused him to overlook the darker aspects of the regime. In 1933, after moving to Germany, he obtained German citizenship.

During the war, Riedweg - who in the meantime had become a member of the overall Reich command of the SS - was the head of the central office for the European anti-Bolshevik volunteers from 1941 to 1943. He was one of the first to attempt to set aside Himmler's thesis of "Asiatic sub-humanity" in practice by advocating equality for the subjugated nations but, under the pressure of circumstances, still sought

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to bring about the realization of his ideas through a European anti-communist collective. Thus, with his help, there came into being the so-called "SS Legions", made up of volunteers from almost all the European countries and, later, also of members of the various races in the Soviet Union. However, the mistakes of the first years of the war could no longer be undone. The entire experiment failed because of the internal falseness of the system itself. Riedweg himself was a military doctor at the front, beginning with 1943, and finally he was the IIC of an Army Corps, with the rank of an SS Obersturmbannfuhrer (Lieutenant Colonel in the Waffen-SS).

Riedweg tried to give validity to his ideas during the war by publishing the "Soldier and Statesman" series and a number of front newspapers for the volunteer formations.

After the collapse of Germany, Riedweg was arrested and interned. He was deprived of his civil rights by Switzerland and was sentenced in absentia in 1947 to 16 years imprisonment. In a denazification proceeding in Bielefeld, Riedweg was sentenced to pay a fine of 2,000 DM. In the verdict, it was stated that Riedweg had been ruled by idealistic trains of thought.

Since then, Riedweg has been living in Munich as a physician.

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