

NEWSWEEK - May 6, 1946

**The Informer**

Both Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg and Col. Gen. Werner von Fritsch looked as if a Nordic god had created them as the very incarnations of the Potsdam tradition in the Prussian Army. Their ramrod backs bespoke the goose-stepping discipline of the Kaiser's Army. Their set features and thin lips reflected the almost monastic devotion of the *generalstab* officer. Fritsch even sported a monocle which gave him an Eric von Stroheim appearance.

Both shared the faults and virtues of the professional officer. A contempt for politicians and adventurers was one of their faults—or virtues. In any case, they underestimated Hermann Göring. In 1938 Göring resolved to get rid of them both. And the methods he used had a buccaneering renaissance quality in keeping with Göring's own nature.

At that time Blomberg was German War Minister. Göring apparently arranged to provide him with a pretty 28-year-old secretary named Erika Gruhn. Erika was skilled in the ways of love. Blomberg decided to marry her and asked Göring's help, since he knew Erika was the daughter of a carpenter and a "lady with a past," a circumstance which under the officers' code would prevent him from marrying her.

Göring helped Blomberg, and then went straight to Adolf Hitler and told him that the new Frau von Blomberg had been registered as a prostitute in seven German cities and convicted for distributing pornographic literature. Hitler dismissed Blomberg.

Fritsch was slated to succeed him. Göring thereupon dug up a three-year-old charge of homosexuality against a

\*At Bad Wiessee this week Frau von Blomberg denied the charges.

Captain von Frisch and threatened to kill a witness unless he testified in Hitler's presence that the real culprit was General von Fritsch. The charge shocked Hitler, the ex-corporal—although among German officers the tradition of homosexuality goes back to their idol, that princely pervert, Frederick the Great. Fritsch was later exonerated, but not before an indignant Führer had dismissed him.

**The Friendly Contact:** This fantastic tale came out at the Nuremberg trials last week, told by a witness called by the defense—Hans Bernd Gisevius.

Gisevius had been summoned on behalf of Wilhelm Frick, for whom he once worked in the Ministry of the Interior. Only the prosecution was not surprised at the turn of his testimony. A triumphant prosecution officer said: "If the defense hadn't called him we certainly would have." Suspicion dawned on the defense attorneys. "During the war were you ever active in the intelligence service of a foreign power?" Gisevius was asked. "No," he replied, "I was in the service of a good clean German power."

"Do you know what the letters OSS mean?" the defense counsel persisted. "During the war I was in friendly and political contact with members of this organization."

Gisevius, ostensibly working for the Gestapo, actually had contacted the American Office of Strategic Services in Switzerland in 1942. He became one of its most valuable sources of information from Germany, traveling frequently to Switzerland. One of the few survivors of the 1944 bomb plot against Hitler, he tipped off American officers to the assassination attempt a week before it happened. Gisevius took no money for his services to the Allies. His reward: entry into the United States, where he plans to live when he is no longer needed at Nuremberg.