

Films

13 September 1945

MEMORANDUM TO MR. JUSTICE JACKSON

SUBJECT: Karl Haushofer as a Major War Criminal



1. I am handing you herewith Father Walsh's Memorandum on the Role of Haushofer and Geopolitics, with his Annex I, his review in the American Journal of International Law, October 1944, of Gyorgy's Geopolitics, The New German Science, and his Annex II, being pages 130 to 155 of German Strategy of World Conquest, by Derwent Whittlesey.

2. I cabled General Weir to deliver to you in Washington a copy of Dr. Leskin's study on Haushofer and cabled you expressing the hope that you might read it on your trip back, since I deemed it too important to overlook.

3. You have in your office a copy of my Memorandum of 7 September to Mr. Shea and Colonel Taylor. However, for convenience I am attaching a copy of that memorandum herewith so that you may have all these papers together. You will see that my Memorandum of 7 September had wide distribution and circulation in our Staff.

4. As shown by my Memorandum of 7 September, I was impressed by the Leskin study on Haushofer. The weakest part of the study, I think, is the purported parallelism between quotations from Mein Kampf and quotations from Haushofer. The parallelism is by no means striking and often is virtually non-existent. However, I still retain the general impression of the study expressed in my Memorandum of 7 September.

5. Father Walsh's Memorandum is extremely well done and strongly supports the general conclusions of the Leskin study, that Haushofer is an arch-war criminal, whose influence not only had no geographical localization but obviously covered Europe and Asia.

6. Regardless of all this, I feel complete frustration in any effort to interest any practical man in Haushofer as a prospective defendant. Mr. Shea and Colonel Taylor have both expressed interest in the question but great doubt whether as a practical matter Haushofer can be shown to have been an actual instigator of aggression and war crimes as distinguished from a weaver of geopolitical theories. Aside from these, the only favorable reaction I have had from our Staff was from Dr.

Hazard, who noted on my Memorandum, "I agree that this is a question well worth considering. Ideas are vitally important in the new movements in the world." Dr. Neuner commented to me on the weakness of the parallelism in the quotations from Hitler and from Haushofer and expressed his view that Haushofer "is an old fool," indicating his view that we would be wasting our time considering him as a major war criminal. Such other expressions as I have had from the Staff range all the way from mild interest to skepticism and the view that Haushofer's undoubted intellectual or pseudo-scientific contribution to pan-Germanism, Hitler, Nazism, aggressive war, war crimes and crimes against humanity is too intangible a thing with which to deal in our trial.

7. If these interesting and well-done studies make no more impression on our Staff than indicated above (I should, however, observe that Father Walsh's study has not been circulated to the Staff), then I fear that the whole subject will make no impression on our practical British cousins or on the even more practical Russians. It might appeal more to the raisonneur of the French. The British reaction is suggested by my minutes of the meeting of Committee 4 on Monday, 10 September, when Mr. Fassant was commenting on the necessity of finding early Nazi documents stressing ideas of pan-German expansionism and I asked him if he had given any thought to the geo-politics school and to Haushofer's contribution to Hitler, the Nazis and aggression and he replied, "Yes, but I think it would be very difficult to make anything definite out of it." If the four delegations would be only mildly impressed then obviously the Tribunal would not be impressed.

8. I did not wish to pass up this whole subject without careful consideration or idly throw it into the waste basket. I tried it on the Staff, with the above negative results. In the last analysis I think it depends on how it impresses you, who are used to passing on important matters judicially. If you are sufficiently impressed, it might be well to present the Haushofer question to the other Chief Prosecutors. Otherwise we had better forget the whole matter and wait to see if Hitler turns up alive. Maybe Haushofer is just "an old fool."

SIDNEY S. ALDERMAN



Attachment

cc: Mr. Shea
Colonel Taylor
Father Walsh
Dr. Lemkin
Comdr. Kaplan
Colonel Kaplan
Colonel Wheeler