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Women Blamed For Nazism By Allied Appointee In Reich

By Cpl. KLAUS MANN
Staff Correspondent

WUERZBURG, Franconia, June 5 (Delayed)—"The German women are mainly responsible for National Socialism."

The man who made this statement was Adam Stegerwald, former prime minister (minister-president) of Prussia, recently appointed by Allied authorities as provisional chief of administration of Main-Franconia.

Herr Stegerwald, in an exclusive interview stressed the responsibility of German womanhood for the disaster of Nazism.

"It was to the women that Hitler owed most of his initial successes," the old political and prominent representative of the Catholic Center party insisted.

"The women's vote was instrumental in bringing the Fuehrer to power. Women are easily fooled: They believed in Hitler's fantastic promises. Women are romantic: The heroic phrases of Nazi propaganda appealed to them. Women don't react in a rational way: They are essentially emotional, even in their political views and predilections. It seems that the Fuehrer was not without fascination for our good German housewives on these three points," he observed.

Another reason for Hitler's coming to power, in Herr Stegerwald's opinion, was the unfortunate coalition between the powerful Catholic group in Bavaria, the Bavarian People's party, on one hand, and the extreme Nationalists on the other.

MISSED THE BOAT

"Under the influence of their ultraconservative allies," he said, "my friends of the Bavarian People's party missed the right moment when it would still have been easy to get rid of Hitler. Mind you, he was not yet a German citizen at the time!"

"The Bavarian government, whose hospitality he abused, could have deported him as an undesirable foreigner. But they allowed him to stay and to undermine their own democratic regime. I am sure that they regretted their fatal mistake—when it was too late to do anything about it."

At the age of 70, Herr Stegerwald is in charge of territory with a population of 800,000. This means a comparatively minor position for a man who was minister-president of Prussia in 1921 and who served as Reich minister in the cabinet of Dr. Heinrich Bruening from 1929 to 1932.

But he accepted the proposition of the American authorities "to show my good will," as he emphasized, and because he feels that Germany, at this point, needs more urgently than ever the constructive collaboration of all her honest, well-meaning citizens.

The administrator of Main-Franconia feels that the German people can be and must be led back to the community of peace-loving and law-abiding nations.

MOST ANTI-HITLER

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"I sincerely believe that the majority of my countrymen has always been opposed to the Hitler regime," he declared solemnly. "Even if they didn't dare to come out against it. Nazism was a virulent disease from which Germany suffered; it is not an incurable disposition inherent in German character."

During the 12 years in which this "virulent disease" lasted, Stegerwald was watched by the Gestapo "like a criminal," to use his own words. After the attempt on Hitler's life in 1944, he was put in jail for a couple of months.

"Yet I was not actually involved in the conspiracy," he said. "Not that I disapproved of it—quite the contrary! But I did not believe that it had a chance to succeed. Rather than to risk my life in an almost hopeless adventure, I wanted to survive and be ready for the great task of reconstruction and rehabilitation."