

DOENITZ GAINING IN PUBLIC PRESTIGE

Hitler's Grand Admiral Now
in the Role of a Benign
Naval Ghost

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BONN, Germany, Aug. 23—Twenty-two months after his release from the Spandau war crimes prison, former Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz has emerged as a nostalgic public figure in West Germany.

The 66-year-old submarine expert, who succeeded Hitler just long enough to preside over the collapse of the Third Reich, appears today as the benign ghost of Germany's old spartan naval tradition.

This role, modestly played, has restored Doenitz' prestige in German naval circles and in maritime communities on the shore of the North Sea.

His influence among West Germany's landlubbers is considered to be negligible. The Social Democratic party, which keeps a sharp eye on activities of former Nazi leaders, describes Doenitz as "of no political significance."

Tried With 18 Others

Hitler's U-boat expert was tried with eighteen other top Nazis at Nuremberg in 1946. He received the lightest sentence of all—ten years' imprisonment—on conviction of having waged aggressive war and committed crimes against the rules of war and of humanity. The international tribunal cited against him the waging of unrestricted submarine warfare and execution of uniformed war prisoners.

The stern, spare career officer served his full term at Spandau prison in Berlin. Released in October, 1956, he retired to his family home in the village of Aumuehle, near Hamburg.

He and Frau Doenitz, who refused to associate with wives of Nazi politicians during the Nuremberg process, live there in unassuming fashion. They are understood to be fairly well off financially. Their income from properties is reported to be supplemented by a pension of \$400 a month paid by the West German Government to a retired rear admiral.

Doenitz has shown himself to be no less retiring in his responses to opportunities to mount the public stage. He has declined to accept membership in veterans' and professional organizations. He does not welcome visits by strangers.

Attends Few Public Events

Acquaintances say he accepts few invitations to public events. An exception was his speech at a reunion of veterans of the submarine service in Hamburg this month. There he criticized the Nazi High Command for having skimmed on the support of the undersea war effort and told the former submariners they could be proud of their record.

He recommended to his former subordinates—80 per cent of whose wartime comrades went down with their ships—that they instill into their children "the honorable, selfless and courageous U-boat spirit." The speech was warmly applauded by the 1,500 veterans at the reunion.

But it stirred sharp criticism in the West German press, which has shown no enthusiasm for Doenitz as a political thinker or moralizer. Reviewers jeered at the three chapters of his forthcoming memoirs published in an illustrated magazine this summer.

The excerpts dealt with Doenitz's twenty-three days in April and May, 1945, as chief of the Nazi state. During this time he ordered German armies to continue fighting in the East while seeking to arrange a surrender in the West. The memoirs included sharp criticism of the Western Allies for having failed to keep the Red Army out of Berlin.

The weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* said apropos of the Doenitz recollections that "his swollen sentimentality, his supposedly 'manly' awkwardness and, above all, his sloppy grammar reveal him to be even today a typical representative of the [Nazi] time."



Keystone
NOSTALGIC FIGURE:
Karl Doenitz, Nazi Grand
Admiral, who has been out
of prison for 22 months.