

Pathfinder

FEBRUARY 26, 1947

p. 25

The War Trials Drag On

Before courts at both ends of the once-powerful Berlin-Tokyo Axis, Germans and Japanese still were being brought to justice. In Germany, denazification courts were attempting to weed out the lesser lights of the Nazi hierarchy. At Nuremberg, where he had been acquitted earlier as a war criminal by an international tribunal, Franz von Papen, grey fox of German diplomacy, was on trial again. This time he faced a court of fellow countrymen. Broken in spirit, von Papen sobbed on the witness stand that he had acted only "out of love for my country."

But evidence against him was damaging. A trusted lieutenant disputed von Papen's defense—that as Vice Chancellor under Hitler he had worked for a more moderate form of nazism.

Forged to Fit. Oscar von Hindenburg, son of Hitler's predecessor as Reich president, Paul von Hindenburg, made an even more serious charge: He accused von Papen of inserting into his late father's will a paragraph giving Hindenburg's blessing to Hitler. This, he said, gave Hitler new stature in the eyes of Germans. Von Papen blamed the paragraph on other top-ranking Nazis, most of them hung at the Nuremberg trials.

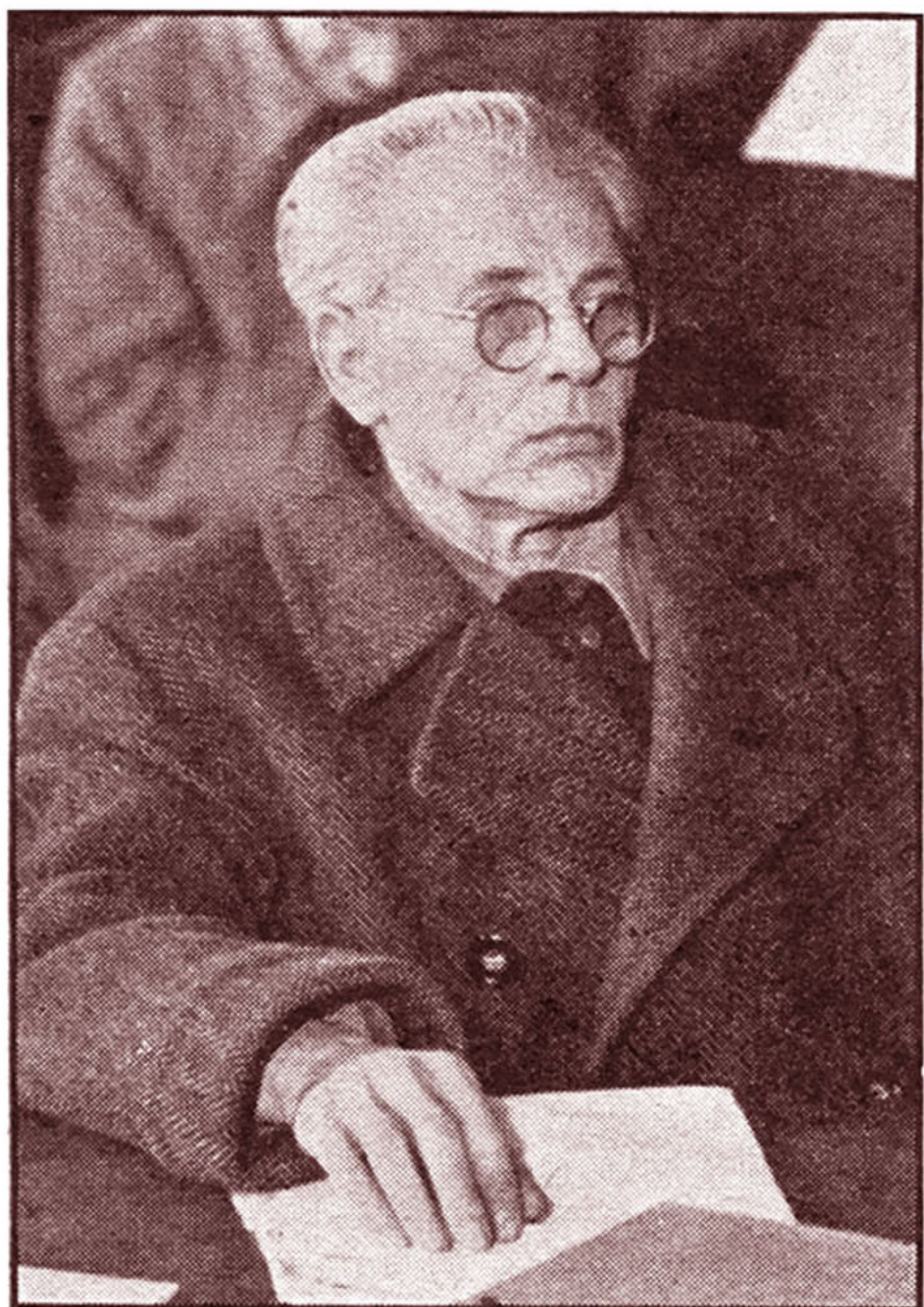
At last, it seemed, von Papen might be punished. For other denazification courts were harsh in their treatment of guilty Nazis. Hans Fritzsche, another Nazi acquitted with von Papen at Nuremberg, learned just how harsh.

Fritzsche, former assistant to Propaganda Minister Goebbels, was sentenced to nine years hard labor by a Bavarian court. He was also barred from ever teaching, preaching or writing—or even owning an automobile. And in Munich, Heinrich Hoffman, who made more than \$800,000 as official photographer to Hitler, was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor.

Century of Justice. There still remained many more such trials. They would come from the processing of 11 million questionnaires sent out to persons over

von Papen

18—so many, some said, that they would go on until 2047. Out of 6 million processed so far, 250,000 people were marked for trial.



GUILTY. For Hitler's photographer, 10 years.

In Tokyo, former wartime Premier Hideki Tojo and 25 other defendants were still engaged in the legal marathon (now in its 9th month) that will decide their fates. Like their counterparts at Nuremberg, Tojo and his co-defendants were being tried as war criminals.

But the wheels of justice moved slowly. Started in June of 1946, the trial still has a good six or seven months left. The defense must still be heard. Already the court has heard 4 million words of testimony from more than 100 witnesses.

Languages are a major problem at Tokyo. The judges represent seven countries, and translators had to put testimony into English, Japanese, Chinese, Dutch, Russian, French and Tagalog.