

HANS FRANK

LIQUIDATION OF THE JEWS

CMG Archives
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(2012)

(This material was compiled from various unverified sources)

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Introduction

On the outbreak of the Second World War Frank was appointed as governor general of Poland. Heinrich Himmler was responsible for the extermination camps but Frank said he did not become aware of the mass killings until late in the war, and on 7 February 1944 he raised the issue with Holocaust, who denied knowledge of what was taking place.

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HANS FRANK

SPEECH ON THE JEWS

18 November 1941

Speech at Berlin University, Work Diary of Hans Frank,
Yad Vashem Archives, JM/21.

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...A problem that occupies us in particular is the Jews. This merry little people (Voelklein), which wallows in dirt, and filth, has been gathered together by us in ghettos and [special] quarters and will probably not remain in the Government-General for very long.

(Vigorous applause)

We will get these Jews marching and cause them – as they have already covered the distance from Jerusalem to Poland – to move eastward a few thousand kilometers. But these Jews are not that parasite gang alone, from our point of view, but strangely enough – we only realized it over there [in Poland] – there is another category of Jews, something one would never have thought possible. There are laboring Jews over there who work in transport, in building, in factories, and others are skilled workers such as tailors, shoemakers, etc. We have put together Jewish workshops with the help of these skilled Jewish workers, in which goods will be made which will greatly ease the position of German production, in exchange for the supply of foodstuffs and whatever else the Jews need urgently for their existence. These Jews may well be left to work in this way; in the way in which we are now using them it is something of an achievement for the work-Jews themselves; but for the other Jews we must provide suitable arrangements. It is always dangerous, after all, to leave one's native land. Since the Jews moved away from Jerusalem there has been nothing for them except an existence as parasites: that has now come to an end. If one looks at the Warsaw ghetto today in which 480,000 Jews – well, let us say – live, then one must realize that only the determination of the National-Socialist revolution was capable of successfully confronting even this problem. In 1919, at our first meetings in Munich, we proclaimed the motto: An end must be put to the rule of the Jews in Europe....

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HANS FRANK

LIQUIDATION OF THE JEWS

Cabinet session

Tuesday, 16 December 1941

Government Building at Cracow

This document was retrieved from Nizkor. Diary of Hans Frank, then Governor General of Occupied Poland. In a cabinet session on Tuesday, 16 December 1941 in the Government Building at Cracow, Frank made a closing address, as follows:

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"As far as the Jews are concerned, I want to tell you quite frankly that they must be done away with in one way or another. The Fuhrer said once: 'Should united Jewry again succeed in provoking a world-war, the blood of not only the nations which have been forced into the war by them, will be shed, but the Jew will have found his end in Europe'. I know that many of the measures carried out against the Jews in the Reich at present are being criticized. It is being tried intentionally, as is obvious from the reports on the morale, to talk about cruelty, harshness, etc. Before I continue, I want to beg you to agree with me on the following formula: We will principally have pity on the German people only, and nobody else in the whole world. The others, too, had no pity on us. As an old National-Socialist, I must say: This war would only be a partial success if the whole lot of Jewry would survive it, while we would have shed our best blood in order to save Europe. My attitude towards the Jews will, therefore, be based only on the expectation that they must disappear. They must be done away with. I have entered negotiations to have them deported to the East. A great discussion concerning that question will take place in Berlin in January, to which I am going to delegate the State Secretary Dr. Buehler. That discussion is to take place in the Reich Security Main Office with SS-Lt. General Heydrich. A great Jewish migration will begin, in any case.

"But what should be done with the Jews? Do you think they will be settled down in the 'Ostland', in villages? This is what we were told in Berlin: Why all this bother? We can do nothing with them either in the 'Ostland' nor in the 'Reich kommissariat'. So liquidate them yourself.

"Gentlemen, I must ask you to rid yourself of all feeling of pity. We must annihilate the Jews, wherever we find them and wherever it is possible, in order to maintain there the structure of the Reich as a whole. This will, naturally, be achieved by other methods than those pointed out by Bureau Chief Dr. Hummel. Nor can the judges of the Special Courts be made responsible for it, because of the limitations of the framework of the legal procedure. Such outdated views cannot be applied to such gigantic and unique events. We must find at any rate a way which leads to the goal, and my thoughts are working in that direction.

"The Jews represent for us-also extraordinarily malignant gluttons. We have now approximately 2,500,000 of them in the General Government, perhaps with the Jewish mixtures and everything that goes with it, 3,500,000 Jews. We cannot shoot or poison those 3,500,000 Jews, but we shall nevertheless be able to take measures, which will lead, somehow, to their annihilation, and this in connection with the gigantic measures to be determined in discussions from the Reich. The General Government must become free of Jews, the same as the Reich. Where and how this is to be achieved is a matter for the offices which we must appoint and create here. Their activities will be brought to your attention in due course."

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Postscript

At his trial Hans Frank was asked by Alfred Seidal when he first heard of the Maidanek Concentration Camp (18th April, 1946)

I heard the name Maidanek for the first time in 1944 from foreign reports. But for years there had been contradictory rumours about the camp near Lublin, or in the Lublin District, if I may express myself in such a general way. Governor Z`rner once told me, I believe already in 1941, that the SS intended to build a large concentration camp near Lublin and had applied for large quantities of building materials, etc. At that time I instructed State Secretary Bähler to investigate the matter immediately, and I was told, and I also received a report in writing from Reidisfährer SS Himmler, that he had to build a large camp required by the Waffen-SS to manufacture clothes, footwear, and underwear in large SS owned workshops. This camp went under the name of "SS Works," or something similar.

Now, I have to say I was in a position to get information, whereas the witnesses who have testified so far have said under oath that in the circles around the Fährer nothing was known about all these things. We out there were more independent, and I heard quite a lot through enemy broadcasts and enemy and neutral papers. In answer to my repeated questions as to what happened to the Jews who were deported, I was always told they were to be sent to the East, to be assembled, and put to work there. But, the stench seemed to penetrate the walls, and therefore I persisted in my investigations as to what was going on. Once a report came to me that there was something going on near Belcec. I went to Belcec the next day. Globocznik showed me an enormous ditch which he was having made as a protective wall and on which many thousands of workers, apparently Jews, were engaged. I spoke to some of them, asked them where they came from, how long they had been there, and he told me, that is, Globocznik, "They are working here now, and when they are through - they come from the Reich, or somewhere from France - they will be sent further east." I did not make any further inquiries in that same area.

The rumor, however, that the Jews were being killed in the manner which is now known to the entire world would not be silenced. When I expressed the wish to visit the SS workshop near Lublin, in order to get some idea of the value of the work that was being done, I was told that special permission from Heinrich Himmler was required.

I asked Heinrich Himmler for this special permission. He said that he would urge me not to go to the camp. Again some time passed. On 7 February 1944 I succeeded in being received by Adolf Hitler personally - I might add that throughout the war he received me three times only. In the presence of Bormann I put the question to him: "My Fuhrer, rumours about the extermination of the Jews will not be silenced. They are heard everywhere. No one is allowed in anywhere. Once I paid a surprise visit to Auschwitz in order to see the camp, but I was told that there was an epidemic in the camp and my car was diverted before I got there. Tell me, My Fuhrer, is there anything in it?" The Fuhrer said, "You can very well imagine that there are executions going on of insurgents. Apart from that I do not know anything. Why don't you speak to Heinrich Himmler about it?" And I said, "Well, Himmler made a speech to us in Krakow and declared in front of all the people whom I had officially called to the meeting that these rumours about the systematic extermination of the Jews were false; the Jews were merely being brought to the East." Thereupon the Fuhrer said, ""Then you must believe that."

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Endings

Frank was captured in May 1945 and was accused of crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial. He said at his trial he admitted his guilt for the Holocaust: "I myself have never installed an extermination camp for Jews, or promoted the existence of such camps; but if Adolf Hitler personally has laid that dreadful responsibility on his people, then it is mine too, for we have fought against Jewry for years; and we have indulged in the most horrible utterances." Hans Frank was found guilty and executed on 1st October, 1946.

At his execution, he was the only one of the condemned to enter the chamber with a smile on his countenance. Although nervous and swallowing frequently, this man, who was converted to Roman

Catholicism after his arrest, gave the appearance of being relieved at the prospect of atoning for his evil deeds.

He answered to his name quietly and when asked for any last statement, he replied in a low voice that was almost a whisper, "I am thankful for the kind treatment during my captivity and I ask God to accept me with mercy."

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07052012