

TESTIMONY
OF
RUDOLF HOESS

(Commandant of Auschwitz)

Monday, April 15, 1946
Morning Session
Nuremberg

Edited by

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DR. KAUFFMANN: With the agreement of the Tribunal, I now call the witness Hoess.

[Rudolf Hoess took the stand.]

PRESIDENT: Stand up. Will you state your name?

RUDOLF FRANZ FERDINAND HOESS: Rudolf Franz Ferdinand Hoess.

P: Will you repeat this oath after me: "I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth, and will withhold and add nothing.

[RH repeated the oath in German]

P: Will you sit down?

DK: Witness, your statements will have far-reaching significance. You are perhaps the only one who can throw some light upon certain hidden aspects, and who can tell which people gave the orders for the destruction of European Jewry, and can further state how this order was carried out and to what degree the execution was kept a secret.

P: Dr. Kauffmann, will you kindly put questions to the witness.

DK: Yes. [Turning to RH] From 1940 to 1943, you were the Commander of the camp at Auschwitz. Is that true?

RH: Yes.

DK: And during that time, hundreds of thousands of human beings were sent to their death there. Is that correct?

RH: Yes.

DK: Is it true that you, yourself, have made no exact notes regarding the figures of the number of those victims because you were forbidden to make them?

RH: Yes, that is correct.

DK: Is it furthermore correct that exclusively one man by the name of Eichmann had notes about this, the man who had the task of organizing and assembling these people?

RH: Yes.

DK: Is it furthermore true that Eichmann stated to you that in Auschwitz a total sum of more than 2 million Jews had been destroyed?

RH: Yes.

DK: Men, women, and children?

RH: Yes.

DK: You were a participant in the World War?

RH: Yes.

DK: And then in 1922, you entered the Party?

RH: Yes.

DK: Were you a member of the SS?

RH: Since 1934.

DK: Is it true that you, in the year 1924, were sentenced to a lengthy term of hard labor because you participated in a so-called political murder?

RH: Yes.

DK: And then at the end of 1934, you went to the concentration camp of Dachau?

RH: Yes.

DK: What task did you receive?

RH: At first, I was the leader of a block of prisoners and then I became clerk and finally, the administrator of the property of prisoners.

DK: And how long did you stay there?

RH: Until 1938.

DK: What job did you have from 1938 on and where were you then?

RH: In 1938 I went to the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen where, to begin with, I was adjutant to the commander and later on I became the head of the protective custody camp.

DK: When were you commander at Auschwitz?

RH: I was commander at Auschwitz from May 1940 until December 1943.

DK: What was the highest number of human beings, prisoners, ever held at one time at Auschwitz?

RH: The highest number of internees held at one time at Auschwitz, was about 140,000 men and women.

DK: Is it true that in 1941 you were ordered to Berlin to see Himmler? Please state briefly what was discussed.

RH: Yes. In the summer of 1941 I was summoned to Berlin to Reichsführer SS Himmler to receive personal orders. He told me something to the effect--I do not remember the exact words--that the Führer had given the order for a final solution of the Jewish question. We, the SS, must carry out that order. If it is not carried out now then the Jews will later on destroy the German people. He had chosen Auschwitz on account of its easy access by rail and also because the extensive site offered space for measures ensuring isolation.

DK: During that conference did Himmler tell you that this planned action had to be treated as a secret Reich matter?

RH: Yes. He stressed that point. He told me that I was not even allowed to say anything about it to my immediate superior Gruppenführer Glücks. This conference concerned the two of us only and I was to observe the strictest secrecy.

DK: What was the position held by Glücks whom you have just mentioned?

RH: Gruppenführer Glücks was, so to speak, the inspector of concentration camps at that time and he was immediately subordinate to the Reichsführer.

DK: Does the expression "secret Reich matter" mean that no one was permitted to make even the slightest allusion to outsiders without endangering his own life?

RH: Yes, "secret Reich matter" means that no one was allowed to speak about these matters with any person and that everyone promised upon his life to keep the utmost secrecy.

DK: Did you happen to break that promise?

RH: No, not until the end of 1942.

DK: Why do you mention that date? Did you talk to outsiders after that date?

RH: At the end of 1942 my wife's curiosity was aroused by remarks made by the then Gauleiter of Upper Silesia, regarding happenings in my camp. She asked me whether this was the truth and I admitted that it was. That was my only breach of the promise I had given to the Reichsführer. Otherwise I have never talked about it to anyone else.

DK: When did you meet Eichmann?

RH: I met Eichmann about 4 weeks after having received that order from the Reichsführer. He came to Auschwitz to discuss the details with me on the carrying out of the given order. As the Reichsführer had told me during our discussion, he had instructed Eichmann to discuss the carrying out of the order with me and I was to receive all further instructions from him.

DK: Will you briefly tell whether it is correct that the camp of Auschwitz was completely isolated, describing the measures taken to insure as far as possible the secrecy of carrying out of the task given to you.

RH: The Auschwitz camp as such was about 3 kilometers away from the town. About 20,000 acres of the surrounding country had been cleared of all former inhabitants, and the entire area could be entered only by SS men or civilian employees who had special passes. The actual compound called "Birkenau," where later on the extermination camp was constructed, was situated 2 kilometers from the Auschwitz camp. The camp installations themselves, that is to say, the provisional installations used at first were deep in the woods and could from nowhere be detected by the eye. In addition to that, this area had been declared a prohibited area and even members of the SS who did not have a special pass could not enter it. Thus, as far as one could judge, it was impossible for anyone except authorized persons to enter that area.

DK: And then the railway transports arrived. During what period did these transports arrive and about how many people, roughly, were in such a transport?

RH: During the whole period up until 1944 certain operations were carried out at irregular intervals in the different countries, so that one cannot speak of a continuous flow of incoming transports. It was always a matter of 4 to 6 weeks. During those 4 to 6 weeks two to three trains, containing about 2,000 persons each, arrived daily. These trains were first of all shunted to a siding in the Birkenau region and the locomotives then went back. The guards who had accompanied the transport had to leave the area at once and the persons who had been brought in were taken over by guards belonging to the camp.

They were there examined by two SS medical officers as to their fitness for work. The internees capable of work at once marched to Auschwitz or to the camp at Birkenau and those incapable of work were at first taken to the provisional installations, then later to the newly constructed crematoria.

DK: During an interrogation I had with you the other day you told me that about 60 men were designated to receive these transports, and that these 60 persons, too, had been bound to the same secrecy described before. Do you still maintain that today?

RH: Yes, these 60 men were always on hand to take the internees not capable of work to these provisional installations and later on to the other ones. This group, consisting of about ten leaders and sub-leaders, as well as doctors and medical personnel, had repeatedly been told, both in writing and verbally, that they were bound to the strictest secrecy as to all that went on in the camps.

DK: Were there any signs that might show an outsider who saw these transports arrive, that they would be destroyed or was that possibility so small because there was in Auschwitz an unusually large number of incoming transports, shipments of goods and so forth?

RH: Yes, an observer who did not make special notes for that purpose could obtain no idea about that because to begin with not only transports arrived which were destined to be destroyed but also other transports. arrived continuously, containing new internees who were needed in the camp. Furthermore, transports likewise left the camp in sufficiently large numbers with internees fit for work or exchanged prisoners.

The trains themselves were closed, that is to say, the doors of the freight cars were closed so that it was not possible, from the outside, to get a glimpse of the people inside. In addition to that, up to 100 cars of materials, rations, et cetera, were daily rolled into the camp or continuously left the workshops of the camp in which war material was being made.

DK: And after the arrival of the transports were the victims stripped of everything they had? Did they have to undress completely; did they have to surrender their valuables? Is that true?

RH: Yes.

DK: And then they immediately went to their death?

RH: Yes.

DK: I ask you, according to your knowledge, did these people know what was in store for them?

RH: The majority of them did not, for steps were taken to keep them in doubt about it and suspicion would not arise that they were to go to their death. For instance, all doors and all walls bore inscriptions to the effect that they were going to undergo a delousing operation or take a shower. This was made known in several languages to the internees by other internees who had come in with earlier transports and who were being used as auxiliary crews during the whole action.

DK: And then, you told me the other day, that death by gassing set in within a period of 3 to 15 minutes. Is that correct?

RH: Yes.

DK: You also told me that even before death finally set in, the victims fell into a state of unconsciousness?

RH: Yes. From what I was able to find out myself or from what was told me by medical officers, the time necessary for reaching unconsciousness or death varied according to the temperature and the number of people present in the chambers. Loss of consciousness took place within a few seconds or a few minutes.

DK: Did you yourself ever feel pity with the victims, thinking of your own family and children?

RH: Yes.

DK: How was it possible for you to carry out these actions in spite of this?

RH: In view of all these doubts which I had, the only one and decisive argument was the strict order and the reason given for it by the Reichsführer Himmler.

DK: I ask you whether Himmler inspected the camp and convinced himself, too, of the process of annihilation?

RH: Yes. Himmler visited the camp in 1942 and he watched in detail one processing from beginning to end.

DR. KAUFMANN: Does the same apply to Eichmann?

RH: Eichmann came repeatedly to Auschwitz and was intimately acquainted with the proceedings.

DK: Did the Defendant Kaltenbrunner ever inspect the camp?

RH: No.

DK: Did you ever talk with Kaltenbrunner with reference to your task?

RH: No, never. I was with Obergruppenführer Kaltenbrunner on only one single occasion.

DK: When was that?

RH: That was one day after his birthday in the year 1944.

DK: And what was the subject of that conference which you have just mentioned?

RH: It concerned a report from the camp at Mauthausen on the so-called nameless internees and their engagement in armament industry. Obergruppenführer Kaltenbrunner was to make a decision on the matter. For that reason I came to him with the report from the commander at Mauthausen but he did not make a decision telling me he would do so later.

DK: Regarding the location of Mauthausen, will you please state in which district Mauthausen is situated. Is that Upper Silesia or is it the Government General?

RH: Mauthausen...

DK: Auschwitz, I beg your pardon, I made a mistake. I mean Auschwitz.

RH: Auschwitz is situated in the former state of Poland. Later, after 1939, it was incorporated in the province of Upper Silesia.

DK: Is it right for me to assume that administration and feeding of concentration camps were exclusively under the control of the Main Economic and Administrative Office?

RH: Yes.

DK: A department which is completely separated from the RSHA?

RH: Quite correct.

DK: And then from 1943 until the end of the war, you were one of the chiefs in the Inspectorate of the Main Economic and Administrative Office?

RH: Yes, that is correctly stated.

DK: Do you mean by that, that you are particularly well informed on everything occurring in concentration camps regarding the treatment and the methods applied?

RH: Yes.

DK: I ask you, therefore, first of all, whether you have any knowledge regarding the treatment of internees, whether certain methods became known to you according to which they were tortured and cruelly treated? Please formulate your statement according to periods, up to 1939 and after 1939.

RH: Until the outbreak of war in 1939, the situation in the camps regarding feeding, accommodations, and treatment of internees, was the same as in any other prison or penitentiary in the Reich. The internees were treated severely, but methodical beatings or ill-treatments were out of the question. The Reichsführer gave frequent orders that every SS man who laid violent hands on an internee would be punished; and several times SS men who did ill-treat internees were punished.

Feeding and billeting at that time were on the same basis as those of other prisoners under legal administration.

The accommodations in the camps during those years were still normal because the mass influxes at the outbreak of the war and during the war had not yet taken place. When the war started and when mass deliveries of political internees arrived, and, later on, when prisoners who were members of the resistance movements arrived from the occupied territories, the construction of buildings and the extensions of the camps could no longer keep pace with the number of incoming internees. During the first years of the war this problem could still be overcome by improvising measures; but later, due to the exigencies of the war, this was no longer possible ' since there were practically no building materials any more at our disposal. And, furthermore, rations for the internees were again and again severely curtailed by the provincial economic administration offices.

This then led to a situation where internees in the camps no longer had the staying power to resist the now gradually growing epidemics.

The main reason why the prisoners were in such bad condition towards the end of the war, why so many thousands of them were found sick and emaciated in the camps, was that every internee had to be employed in the armament industry to the extreme limit of his forces. The Reichsführer constantly and on every occasion kept this goal before our eyes, and also proclaimed it through the Chief of the Main Economic and Administrative Office, Obergruppenführer Pohl, to the concentration camp commanders and administrative leaders during the so-called commanders' meetings.

Every commander was told to make every effort to achieve this. The aim was not to have as many dead as possible or to destroy as many internees as possible; the Reichsführer was constantly concerned with being able to engage all forces available in the armament industry.

DK: There is no doubt that the longer the war lasted, the larger became the number of the ill-treated and tortured inmates. Whenever you inspected the concentration camps did you not learn something of this state of affairs through complaints, et cetera, or do you consider that the conditions which have been described are more or less due to excesses?

RH: These so-called ill-treatments and this torturing in concentration camps, stories of which were spread everywhere among the people, and later by the prisoners that were liberated by the occupying armies, were not, as assumed, inflicted methodically, but were excesses committed by individual leaders, sub-leaders, and men who laid violent hands on internees.

DK: Do you mean you never took cognizance of these matters?

RH: If in any way such a case came to be known, then the perpetrator was, of course, immediately relieved of his post or transferred somewhere else. So that, even if he were not punished for lack of evidence to prove his guilt, even then, he was taken away from the internees and given another position.

DK: To what do you attribute the particularly bad and shameful conditions, which were ascertained by the entering Allied troops, and which to a certain extent were photographed and filmed?

RH: The catastrophic situation at the end of the war was due to the fact that, as a result of the destruction of the railway network and of the continuous bombing of the industrial plants, care for these masses--I am thinking of Auschwitz with its 140,000 internees--could no longer be assured. Improvised measures, truck columns, and everything else tried by the commanders to improve the situation were of little or no avail; it was no longer possible. The number of the sick became immense. There were next to no medical supplies; epidemics raged everywhere. Internees who were capable of work were used over and over again. By order of the Reichsführer, even half-sick people had to be used wherever possible in industry. As a result every bit of space in the concentration camps which could possibly be used for lodging was overcrowded with sick and dying prisoners.

DK: I am now asking you to look at the map which is mounted behind you. The red dots represent concentration camps. I will first ask you how many concentration camps as such existed at the end of the war?

RH: At the end of the war there were still 13 concentration camps. All the other points which are marked here on the map mean so-called labor camps attached to the armament industry situated there. The concentration camps, of which there are 13 as I have already said, were the center and the central point of some district, such as the camp at Dachau in Bavaria, or the camp of Mauthausen in Austria; and all the labor camps in that district were under the control of the concentration camp. That camp had then to supply these outside camps, that is to say, they had to supply them with workers, exchange the sick inmates and furnish clothing; the guards, too, were supplied by the concentration camp.

From 1944 on, the supplying of food was almost exclusively a matter of the individual armament industries in order to give the prisoners the benefit of the wartime supplementary rations.

DK: What became known to you about so-called medical experiments on living internees?

RH: Medical experiments were carried out in several camps. For instance, in Auschwitz there were experiments on sterilization carried out by Professor Klaubert and Dr. Schumann; also experiments on twins by SS medical officer Dr. Mengele.

DK: Do you know the medical officer Dr. Rascher?

RH: In Dachau he was a medical officer of the Luftwaffe who carried out experiments, on internees who had been sentenced to death, about the resistance of the human body to cold and in high pressure chambers.

DK: Can you tell whether such experiments carried out within the camp were known to a large circle?

RH: Such experiments, just like all other matters, were, of course, called "secret Reich matters." However, it could not be avoided that the experiments became known since they were carried out in a large camp and must have been seen in some way by the inmates. I cannot say, however, to what extent the outside world learned about these experiments.

DK: You explained to me that orders for executions were received in the camp at Auschwitz, and you told me that until the outbreak of war such orders were few, but that later on they became more numerous. Is that correct?

RH: Yes. There were hardly any executions until the beginning of the war--only in particularly serious cases. I remember one case in Buchenwald where an SS man had been attacked and beaten to death by internees, and the internees were later hanged.

DK: But during the war--and that you will admit--the number of executions increased, and not inconsiderably.

RH: That had already started with the beginning of the war.

DK: Was the basis for these execution orders in many cases a legal sentence of German courts?

RH: No. Orders for the executions carried out in the camps came from the RSHA.

DK: Who signed the orders for executions which you received? Is it correct that occasionally you received orders for executions which bore the signature "Kaltenbrunner," and that these were not the originals but were teleprints; which therefore had the signature in typewritten letters?

RH: It is correct. The originals of execution orders never came to the camps. The original of these orders either arrived at the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps, from where they were transmitted by teletype to the camps concerned, or, in urgent cases, the RSHA sent the orders directly to the camps concerned, and the Inspectorate was then only informed, so that the signatures in the camps were always only in teletype.

DK: So as to again determine the signatures, will you tell the Tribunal whether the overwhelming majority of all execution orders either bore the signature of Himmler or that of Maller in the years before the war and until the end of the war.

RH: Only very few teletypes which I have ever seen came from the Reichsfuhrer and still fewer from the Defendant Kaltenbrunner. Most of them, I could say practically all, were signed "Signed Maller."

DK: Is that the Maller with whom you repeatedly talked about such matters as you stated earlier?

RH: Gruppenfuhrer Maller was the Chief of Department IV in the RSHA. He had to negotiate with the Inspectorate about all matters connected with concentration camps.

DK: Would you say that you went to see the Gestapo Chief Maller because you, on the strength of your experience, were of the opinion that this man because of his years of activities was acting almost independently?

RH: That is quite right. I had to negotiate all matters regarding concentration camps with Gruppenfuhrer Maller. He was informed on all these matters, and in most cases he would make an immediate decision.

DK: Well, so as to have a clear picture, did you ever negotiate these matters with the defendant?

RH: No.

DK: Did you learn that towards the end of the war concentration camps were evacuated? And, if so, who gave the orders?

RH: Let me explain. Originally there was an order from the Reichsführer, according to which camps, in the event of the approach of the enemy or in case of air attacks, were to be surrendered to the enemy. Later on, due to the case of Buchenwald, which had been reported to the Führer, there was--no, at the beginning of 1945, when various camps came within the operational sphere of the enemy, this order was withdrawn. The Reichsführer ordered the Higher SS and Police Leaders, who in an emergency case were responsible for the security and safety of the camps, to decide themselves whether an evacuation or a surrender was appropriate.

Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen were evacuated. Buchenwald was also to be evacuated, but then the order from the Reichsführer came through to the effect that on principle no more camps were to be evacuated. Only prominent inmates and inmates who were not to fall into Allied hands under any circumstances were to be taken away to other camps. This also happened in the case of Buchenwald. After Buchenwald had been occupied, it was reported to the Führer that internees had armed themselves and were carrying out plunderings in the town of Weimar. This caused the Führer to give the strictest order to Himmler to the effect that in the future no more camps were to fall into the hands of the enemy, and that no internees capable of marching would be left behind in any camp.

This was shortly before the end of the war, and shortly before northern and southern Germany were cut. I shall speak about the Sachsenhausen camp. The Gestapo chief, Gruppenführer Maller, called me in the evening and told me that the Reichsführer had ordered that the camp at Sachsenhausen was to be evacuated at once. I pointed out to Gruppenführer Maller what that would mean. Sachsenhausen could no longer fall back on any other camp except perhaps on a few labor camps attached to the armament works that were almost filled up anyway. Most of the internees would have to be sheltered in the woods somewhere. This would mean countless thousands of deaths and, above all it would be impossible to feed these masses of people. He promised me that he would again discuss these measures with the Reichsführer. He called me back and told me that the Reichsführer had refused and was demanding that the commanders carry out his orders immediately.

At the same time Ravensbrück was also to be evacuated in the same manner but it could no longer be done. I do not know to what extent camps in southern Germany were cleared, since we, the Inspectorate, no longer had any connections with Southern Germany.

DK: It has been maintained here--and this is my last question--that the Defendant Kaltenbrunner gave the order that Dachau and two auxiliary camps were to be destroyed by bombing or with poison. I ask you, did you hear anything about this; if not, would you consider such an order possible?

RH: I have never heard anything about this, and I do not know anything either about an order to evacuate any camps in southern Germany, as I have already mentioned. Apart from that, I consider it quite impossible that a camp could be destroyed by this method.

DK: I have no further questions.

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P: Do any of the defendants' counsel want to ask any questions?

DR MERKEL: Witness, did the State Police, as an authority of the Reich, have anything to do with the destruction of Jews in Auschwitz?

RH: Yes, insofar as I received all my orders as to the carrying out of that action from the Obersturmführer Eichmann.

DM: Was the administration of concentration camps under the control of the Main Economic and Administrative Office?

RH: Yes.

DM: You said already that you had nothing to do with the RSHA.

RH: No.

DM: Please, will you emphasize, therefore, that the Gestapo as such had nothing to do with the administration of the camps or the accommodation, feeding, and treatment of the internees, but that this was exclusively a matter for the Main Economic and Administrative Office?

RH: Yes, that is quite correct.

DM: How do you explain it then that you, nevertheless, discussed different questions concerning concentration camps with Máller?

RH: The RSHA, or rather Amt IV, had the executive power for the directing of all internees into camps, classification into the camp grades 1, 2, 3, and furthermore, the punishments which were to be carried out on the part of the RSHA. Executions, the accommodation, of special internees, and all question which might ensue therefrom were also taken care of by the RSHA or Amt IV.

DM: When was this Main Economic and Administrative Office created?

RH: The Main Economic and Administrative Office existed since 1933 under various names. The Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was, however, subordinated only to this Main Economic and Administrative Office since the year 1941.

DM: Then these concentration camps were from the very beginning under the control of this Main Economic and Administrative Office, that is to say the SS and not the State Police.

RH: Yes.

DM: You mentioned the name of Dr. Rascher a while ago. Do you know this doctor personally?

RH: Yes.

DM: Do you know that Dr. Rascher before beginning his work at Dachau had become a member of the SS?

RH: No, I know nothing about that. I only know that later he--I still saw him in the uniform of an Air Force medical officer. Later he was supposed to have been taken over into the SS, but I did not see him again.

DM: I have no further questions. Thank you very much.

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HERR LUDWIG BABEL (Counsel for SS): Witness, at the beginning of your examination you stated that when you were ordered to the Reichsführer SS Himmler, he told you that the carrying out of this order of the Führer was to be left to the SS and that the SS had been ordered to do it. What is to be understood under this general title SS?

RH: According to the explanations of the Reichsführer, this could only mean the men guarding the concentration camps. According to the nature of the order only concentration camp crews and not the Waffen-SS could be concerned with the carrying out of this task.

HLB: How many members of the SS were assigned to concentration camps, and which units did they belong to?

RH: Toward the end of the war there were approximately 35,000 SS men and in my estimation approximately 10,000 men from the Army, Air Force, and the Navy detailed to the labor camps for guard duties.

HLB: What were the tasks of these guards? As far as I know, the duties varied. First, there was the actual guarding and then there was a certain amount of administrative work within the camp.

RH: Yes, that is correct.

HLB: How many guards were there within the camps for, let us say, 1,000 internees?

RH: You cannot estimate it in that way. According to my observations about 10 percent of the total number of guarding personnel were used for internal duties, that is to say, administration and supervision of internees within the camp, including the medical personnel of the camp.

HLB: So that 90 percent were therefore used for the exterior guarding, that is to say, for watching the camp from watch towers and for escorting the internees on work assignments.

RH: Yes.

HLB: Did you make any observations as to whether there was any ill-treatment of prisoners to a greater or lesser degree on the part of those guards, or whether the ill-treatment was mainly to be traced back to the so-called Kapos?

RH: If any ill-treatment of prisoners by guards occurred--I myself have never observed any--then this was possible only to a very small degree since all offices in charge of the camps took care that as few SS men as possible had direct contact with the inmates, because in the course of the years the guard personnel had deteriorated to such an extent that the standards formerly demanded could no longer be maintained.

We had thousands of guards who could hardly speak German, who came from all lands as volunteers and joined these units, or we had older men, between 50 and 60, who lacked all interest in their work, so that a camp commander had to watch constantly that these men fulfilled even the lowest requirements of their duties. It is obvious that there were elements among them who would ill-treat internees, but this ill-treatment was never tolerated.

Besides, it was impossible to have these masses of people directed at work or when in the camp by SS men only; therefore, inmates had to be assigned everywhere to direct the other prisoners and set them to work. The internal administration of the camp was almost completely in their hands. Of course a great deal of ill-treatment occurred which could not be avoided because at night there were hardly any members of the SS in the camps. Only in specific cases were SS men allowed to enter the camp, so that the internees were more or less exposed to these Kapos.

HLB: You have already mentioned regulations which existed for the guards, but there was also a standing order in each camp. In this camp order certainly punishment was provided for internees who violated the camp rules. What punishment was provided?

RH: First of all, transfer to a penal company (Strafkompanie), that is to say, harder work and restricted accommodations; next, detention in the cell block, detention in a dark cell; and in very serious cases, chaining or strapping. Punishment by strapping was prohibited in the year 1942 or 1943--I cannot say exactly when--by the Reichsführer. Then there was the punishment of standing at the camp gate over a rather long period, and finally corporal punishment.

However, no commander could decree this corporal punishment on his own authority. He could only apply for it. In the case of men, the decision came from the Inspector of Concentration Camps Gruppenführer Schmidt, and where women were concerned, the Reichsführer reserved the decision exclusively for himself.

HLB: It may also be known to you that for members of the SS, too, there were two penal camps which sometimes were called concentration camps, namely, Dachau and Danzig-Matzkau.

RH: That is right.

HLB: Were the existing camp regulations and the treatment of members of the SS who were put in such camps different from the regulations applying to the other concentration camps?

RH: Yes, these two detention camps were not under the Inspectorate for Concentration Camps, but they were under an SS and Police court. I myself have neither inspected nor seen these two camps.

HLB: So that you know nothing about the standing orders relating to those camps?

RH: I know nothing about them.

HLB: I have no further questions to the witness.

P: The Tribunal will adjourn for 10 minutes.

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[A recess was taken]

DR. HAENSEL: I have a question that I would like to ask the High Tribunal. A second defense counsel has been requested for the SS. Is it permitted that several questions be put for the second defense counsel?

P: The Tribunal ruled a long time ago that only one counsel could be heard.

DH: Yes.

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FLOTTENRICHTER OTTO KRANZBÄHLER (Counsel for Defendant D`nitz): Witness, you just mentioned that members of the Navy were detailed to guard concentration camps.

RH: Yes.

FOK: Were these concentration camps, or were they labor camps?

RH: They were labor camps.

FOK: Are labor camps barracks camps of the armament industries?

RH: Yes, if they were not accommodated in the actual factories themselves.

FOK: I have been informed that soldiers who were to be assigned for guard duty at labor camps were given over to the SS.

RH: That is only partially correct. A part of these men-I do not recall the figures--was taken over into the SS. A part was returned to the original unit, or exchanged. Exchanges were continually taking place.

FOK: Thank you.

COL. AMEN: If the Tribunal please, first I would like to submit, on behalf of our British Allies, a series of exhibits pertaining to the Waffen-SS, without reading them. It is merely statistical information with respect to the number of Waffen-SS guards used at the concentration camps.

I ask that the witness be shown Documents D-745 (a-b), D-746 (a-b), D-747, D-748, D-749 (b), and D-750, one of them being a statement of this witness.

[The documents were submitted to the witness.]

Witness, you made the statement, D-749 (b), which has been handed to you?

RH: Yes.

CA: And you are familiar with the content of the others?

RH: Yes.

CA: And you testify that those figures are true and correct?

RH: Yes.

CA: Very good. Those will become Exhibit Number USA-810.

Witness, from time to time did any high Nazi officials or functionaries visit the camp at Mauthausen or Dachau while you were there?

RH: Yes.

CA: Will you state the names of such persons to the Tribunal please?

RH: I remember that in 1935 all the Gauleiter inspected Dachau guided by Reichsführer Himmler. I do not remember them individually.

CA: Do you recall any of the ministers having visited either of those camps while you were there?

RH: Do you mean by this the inspection tour of 1935?

CA: At any time while you were at either of those concentration camps.

RH: In 1938 Minister Frick was at Sachsenhausen.

CA: Do you recall any other ministers who were there at any time?

RH: Not at Sachsenhausen, but at Auschwitz, the Minister of Justice.

CA: Who was he?

RH: Thierack.

CA: And who else? Do you recall any others?

RH: Yes, but, I do not remember the name for the moment.

CA: Well, who?

RH: I have already stated that in the record, but at the moment I cannot recall the name.

CA: All right. You have testified that many of the execution orders were signed by Málller. Is that correct?

RH: Yes.

CA: Is it not a fact that all of those execution orders to which you testified were signed by...

DR. STEINBAUER: Pardon me, Mr. President, documents have been submitted and the witness is being questioned about the contents. The Defense is not in a position to follow the Prosecution because we do not know the contents of these documents. I request that we receive copies of them.

P: Haven't copies of these documents been handed to the defendants?

CA: Yes, so I understood. We have copies here. However, five German copies have been distributed.

P: Well, the matter can be looked into.

CA: Witness, I was asking you about these execution orders which you testify were signed by Máller. Do you understand?

RH: Yes.

CA: Is it not a fact that all of these execution orders which you testify were signed by Máller were also signed by order of, or as representative of, the Chief of the RSHA, Kaltenbrunner?.

RH: Yes. That was on the copies that I had in the originals. Afterwards, when I was employed at Oranienburg, it said underneath, "I. V. Máller "in Vertretung Máller" (as representative, Máller).

CA: In other words Máller was merely signing as the representative of the Chief of the RSHA, Kaltenbrunner? Is that not correct?

RH: I must assume so.

CA: And, of course, you know that Máller was a subordinate of the Chief of the RSHA, Kaltenbrunner.

RH: Yes.

CA: Witness, you made an affidavit, did you not, at the request of the Prosecution?

RH: Yes.

CA: I ask that the witness be shown Document 3868-PS, which will become Exhibit USA-819.

[The document was submitted to the witness]

CA: You signed that affidavit voluntarily, Witness?

RH: Yes.

CA: And the affidavit is true in all respects?

RH: Yes.

CA: This, if the Tribunal please, we have in four languages.

[Turning to the witness] Some of the matters covered in this affidavit you have already told us about in part, so I will omit some parts of the affidavit. If you will follow along with me as I read, please. Do you have a copy of the affidavit before you?

RH: Yes.

CA: I will omit the first paragraph and start with Paragraph 2:

"I have been constantly associated with the administration of concentration camps since 1934, serving at Dachau until 1938; then as Adjutant in Sachsenhausen from 1938 to 1 May 1940, when I was appointed Commandant of Auschwitz. I commanded Auschwitz until 1 December 1943, and estimate that at least 2,500,000 victims were executed and exterminated there by gassing and burning, and at least another half million succumbed to starvation and disease making a total dead of about 3,000,000. This figure represents about 70 or 80 percent of all persons sent to Auschwitz as prisoners, the remainder having been selected and used for slave labor in the concentration camp

industries; included among the executed and burned were approximately 20,000 Russian prisoners of war (previously screened out of prisoner-of-war cages by the Gestapo) who were delivered at Auschwitz in Wehrmacht transports operated by regular Wehrmacht officers and men. The remainder of the total number of victims included about 100,000 German Jews, and great numbers of citizens, mostly Jewish, from Holland, France, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Greece, or other countries. We executed about 400,000 Hungarian Jews alone at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944."

That is all true, Witness?

RH: Yes, it is.

CA: Now I omit the first few lines of Paragraph 3 and start in the middle of Paragraph 3:

"... prior to establishment of the RSHA, the Secret State Police Office (Gestapo) and the Reich Office of Criminal Police were responsible for arrests, commitments to concentration camps, punishments and executions therein. After organization of the RSHA all of these functions were carried on as before, but pursuant to orders signed by Heydrich as Chief of the RSHA. While Kaltenbrunner was Chief of RSHA orders for protective custody, commitments, punishment, and individual executions were signed by Kaltenbrunner or by Maller, Chief of the Gestapo, as Kaltenbrunner's deputy."

P: Just for the sake of accuracy, the last date in Paragraph 2, is that 1943 or 1944?

CA: 1944, I believe. Is that date correct, Witness, at the close of Paragraph 2, namely, that the 400,000 Hungarian Jews alone at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944 were executed? Is that 1944 or 1943?

RH: 1944. Part of that figure also goes back to 1943; only a part. I cannot give the exact figure; the end was 1944, autumn of 1944.

CA: Right.

"4. Mass executions by gassing commenced during the summer of 1941 and continued until fall 1944. I personally supervised executions at Auschwitz until first of December 1943 and know by reason of my continued duties in the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, WVHA, that these mass executions continued as stated above. All mass executions by gassing took place under the direct order, supervision, and responsibility of RSHA. I received all orders for carrying out these mass executions directly from RSHA." Are those statements true and correct, Witness?

RH: Yes, they are.

CA: "5. On 1 December 1943 I became Chief of Amt 1 in Amt Group D of the WVHA, and in that office was responsible for co-ordinating all matters arising between RSHA and concentration camps under the administration of WVHA. I held this position until the end of the war. Pohl, as Chief of WVHA, and Kaltenbrunner, as Chief of RSHA, often conferred personally and frequently communicated orally and in writing concerning concentration camps. . . ."

You have already told us about the lengthy report which you took to Kaltenbrunner in Berlin, so I will omit the remainder of Paragraph 5.

"6. The 'final solution' of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time, there were already in the General Government three other extermination camps: Belzek, Treblinka, and Wolzek. These camps were under the Einsatzkommando of the Security Police and SD. I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their exterminations. The camp commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was principally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas, and I did not think that his methods were very efficient. So when I set up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Cyklon B, which was a crystallized prussic acid which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening. It took from 3 to 15 minutes to kill the people in the death chamber, depending upon climatic conditions. We knew when the people were dead because their screaming stopped. We usually waited about one-half hour

before we opened the doors and removed the bodies. After the bodies were removed our special Kommandos took off the rings and extracted the gold from the teeth of the corpses."

Is that all true and correct, Witness?

RH: Yes.

CA: Incidentally, what was done with the gold which was taken from the teeth of the corpses, do you know?

RH: Yes.

CA: Will you tell the Tribunal?

RH: This gold was melted down and brought to the Chief Medical Office of the SS at Berlin.

CA:

"7 Another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chamber to accommodate 2,000 people at one time whereas at Treblinka their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each. The way we selected our victims was as follows: We had two SS doctors on duty at Auschwitz to examine the incoming transports of prisoners. The prisoners would be marched by one of the doctors who would make spot decisions as they walked by. Those who were fit for work were sent into the camp. Others were sent immediately to the extermination plants. Children of tender years were invariably exterminated since by reason of their youth they were unable to work. Still another improvement we made over Treblinka was that at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated and at Auschwitz we endeavored to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process. Of course, frequently they realized our true intentions and we sometimes had riots and difficulties due to that fact. Very frequently women would hide their children under the clothes, but of course when we found them we would send the children in to be exterminated. We were required to carry out these exterminations in secrecy but of course the foul and nauseating stench from the continuous burning of bodies permeated the entire area and all of the people living in the surrounding communities knew that exterminations were going on at Auschwitz."

Is that all true and correct, Witness?

RH: Yes.

CA: Now, I will omit Paragraphs 8 and 9, which have to do with the medical experiments as to which you have already testified.

"10. Rudolf Mildner was the chief of the Gestapo at Katowice . . . from approximately March 1941 until September 1943. As such, he frequently sent prisoners to Auschwitz for incarceration or execution. He visited Auschwitz on several occasions. The Gestapo court, the SS Standgericht, which tried persons accused of various crimes, such as escaping prisoners of war, et cetera, frequently met within Auschwitz, and Mildner often attended the trial of such persons, who usually were executed in Auschwitz following their sentence. I showed Mildner through the extermination plant at Auschwitz and he was directly interested in it since he had to send the Jews from his territory for execution at Auschwitz.

"I understand English as it is written above. The above statements are true; this declaration is made by me voluntarily and without compulsion; after reading over the statement I have signed and executed the same at Nuremberg, Germany, on the fifth day of April 1946."

Now I ask you, Witness, is everything which I have read to you true to your own knowledge?

RH: Yes.

CA: That concludes my cross-examination, except for one exhibit that our British allies would like to have in, which is a summary sheet of the exhibits which I introduced at the commencement of the cross-examination. That will be Exhibit Number USA-810. It is a summary of the earlier exhibits that I put in with respect to the Waffen-SS at the commencement of my cross-examination.

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GENERAL RUDENKO: Now, I understand, Your Lordship, that both the Soviet and the French delegations have one or two questions which they consider peculiar to their country which they would like to put to this witness.

P: General Rudenko, you will remember that the Tribunal was assured by Counsel for the Prosecution that, so far as witnesses were concerned, with the exception of one or two particular defendants, the Prosecution would have only one cross-examination and now, since that assurance was given, this is the second instance when the Prosecution have desired to have more than one cross-examination.

GR: This is correct, Mr. President, that the Prosecution did make that statement; however, the Prosecution reserved the right to do otherwise on certain occasions when deemed necessary. Since, in this case, the Prosecution represent four different states, occasions do arise when each of the prosecutors feels that he has the right to ask the defendant or witnesses individual questions particularly interesting to his own country.

P: Will you indicate the nature of the questions which the Soviet Prosecution desire to put? I mean the subjects upon which they are. I don't mean the exact questions but the subject.

GR: Yes, I understand. Colonel Pokrovsky, who intends to ask the questions, will report on the subject to the Tribunal.

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COL. POKROVSKY: May I report to you, Mr. President, that the questions of interest to the Soviet Prosecution are those dealing specifically with the annihilation of millions of Soviet citizens and some details connected with that annihilation. At the request of the French Prosecution, and in order to clarify the contents I would also like to ask two or three questions connected with the documents which in due course were submitted as Document F-709(a) to the Tribunal by the French Prosecution. This is really all there is; however, these questions do have great importance for us.

P: Colonel Pokrovsky, the Tribunal, as has just been stated, made the rule, with the assent of the Prosecutors, that in the case of the witnesses there should be one cross-examination. There is nothing in the Charter which expressly gives to the Prosecution the right for each prosecutor to cross-examine and there is, on the other hand, Article 18 which directs the Tribunal to take strict measures to prevent any action which will cause unreasonable delay, and, in the opinion of the Tribunal in the present case, the subject has been fully covered and the Tribunal therefore think it right to adhere to the rules which they have laid down in this case. They will therefore not hear any further cross-examination.

Do you wish to re-examine, Dr. Kauffmann?

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DR. KAUFFMANN: I will be very brief.

Witness, in the affidavit which was just read, you said under Point 2 that "at least an additional half million died through starvation and disease." I ask you, when did this take place? Was it towards the end of the war or was this fact observed by you already at an earlier period?

RH: No, it all goes back to the last years of the war, that is beginning with the end of 1942.

DK: Under Point 3, do you still have the affidavit before you?

RH: No.

DK: May I ask that it be given to the witness again?

[The document was returned to the witness]

Under Point 3, at the end you state that orders for protective custody, commitments, punishments, and special executions were signed by Kaltenbrunner or Máller, Chief of the Gestapo, as Kaltenbrunner's deputy. Thus, do you wish to contradict what you stated previously?

RH: No, this only completes what I said over and over again. I read only a few decrees signed by Kaltenbrunner; most of them were signed by Máller.

DK: Under Point 4, at the end, you state:

"All mass executions through gassing took place under the direct order, supervision, and responsibility of RSHA. I received all orders for carrying out these mass executions directly from RSHA."

According to the statements which you previously made to the Tribunal, this entire action came to you directly from Himmler through Eichmann, who had been personally delegated. Do you maintain that now as before?

RH: Yes.

DK: With this last sentence under Point 4, do you wish to contradict what you testified before?

RH: No. I always, mean regarding mass executions, Obersturmbannführer Eichmann in connection with the RSHA.

DK: Under Point 7, at the end, you state--I am not going to read it--you were saying that even though exterminations took place secretly, the population in the surrounding area noticed something of the extermination of people. Did not, at an earlier period of time--that is, before the beginning of this special extermination action--something of this nature take place to remove people who had died in a normal manner in Auschwitz?

RH: Yes, when the crematoria had not yet been built we burned in large pits a large part of those who had died and who could not be cremated in the provisional crematoria of the camp; a large number--I do not recall the figure anymore--were placed in mass graves and later also cremated in these graves. That was before the mass executions of Jews began.

DK: Would you agree with me if I were to say that from the described facts alone, one could not conclusively 'prove that this was concerned with the extermination of Jews?

RH: No, this could in no way be concluded from that. The population . . .

P: What was your question about?

DK: My question was whether one could assume from the established facts - at the end of Paragraph 7 - that this concerned the so-called extermination of Jews. I tied this question to the previous answer of the witness. It is my last question.

P: The last sentence of Paragraph 7 is with reference to the foul and nauseating stench. What is your question about that?

DK: Whether the population could gather from these things that an extermination of Jews was taking place.

P: That really is too obvious a question, isn't it? They could not possibly know who it was being exterminated.

DK: That is enough for me. I have no further questions.

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DR. PANNENBECKER: I ask the Tribunal's permission to ask a few supplementary questions, for during cross-examination the witness stated that the Defendant Frick had visited the concentration camps Sachsenhausen and Oranienburg in 1938.

Witness, when an inspection of the concentration camp of Oranienburg took place at that time, 1937-38, was there any evidence at all of atrocities?

RH: No.

DP: Why not?

RH: Because there was no question of atrocities at that time.

DP: Is it correct that at that period of time the concentration camp at Oranienburg was still a model of order and that agricultural labor was the main occupation?

RH: Yes, that is right. However, work was mainly done in workshops, in wood-finishing workshops.

DP: Can you give me any details as to what was shown at that time at such an official visit?

RH: Yes. The visiting party was shown through the prisoners' camp proper, inspected the quarters, the kitchen, the hospital, and then all the administrative buildings; above all the workshops, where the inmates were employed.

DP: At that time were the quarters and the hospitals already overcrowded?

RH: No, at that time they were normally filled.

DP: How did these quarters look?

RH: At that period of time, living quarters looked the same as the barracks of a training ground. The internees still had bed-clothing and all necessary hygienic facilities. Everything was yet in the best of order.

DP: That is all. I have no further questions.

THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Francis Biddle, Member for the United States): Witness, what was the greatest number of labor camps existing at any one time?

RH: I cannot give the exact figure but in my estimation there were approximately 900.

THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Biddle): What was the population of these 900?

RH: I am not able to say that either; the population varied. There were camps with 100 internees and camps with 10,000 internees. Therefore, I cannot give any figure of the total number of people who were in these labor camps.

THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Biddle): Under whose administration were the labor camps? under what offices?

RH: These labor camps, as far as the guarding, direction, and clothing were concerned, were under the control of the Economic and Administration Main Office. All matters dealing with labor output and the supplying of food were attended to by the armament industries which employed these internees.

THE TRIBUNAL (Mr. Biddle): And at the end of the war were the conditions in those labor camps similar to those existing in the concentration camps as you described them before?

RH: Yes. Since there no longer was any possibility of bringing ill internees to the main camps, there was much overcrowding in these labor camps and the death rate very high.

P: The witness can retire.

[RH left the stand]

End

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