

Kellermann/fes/61401

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

21 November 1945

TO: Major General William J. Donovan

FROM: Dr. Kellermann *JK*

SUBJECT: Concerning Schacht's Statement

I am herewith returning Schacht's Statement that you kindly lent me this afternoon for my information. I have gone through it in great haste and do not feel quite competent to judge the full impact of the data contained therein. In principle I fully concur with you in that the defendant, if he can make a valid statement to prove his non-conformist attitude toward the Nazi regime, should be given a full chance to vindicate himself.

My off-hand impression upon reading his statement is, however, that the arguments produced do not invalidate, nor even weaken, the charges or the statements made in the ^{trial} brief. My impression is that most of the statements made by the defendant in support of his opposition to the Nazi regime, even in the light of his own description, remain in the realm of motivations. There is no denying of the fact that he, despite numerous alleged attempts to break away from the Nazi regime, retained his official position as Reich Minister until 1943. On page 5 he stresses the fact that early in May, 1935, he had handed a memorandum to Hitler, protesting against attacks on the Church, the Jews, and demanding liquidation of the Gestapo. Nevertheless, it was on May 21, 1935 that the defendant accepted the highly confidential, in fact, secret, position of Plenipotentiary for War Economy, a position created to prepare for war already in times of peace.

All this does not exclude the fact that at some time in his career the defendant realized that he or the Nazi regime were on the wrong road and tried to extricate himself. It is even possible that he took personal risks to establish his moral or political alibi. The question still remains to be answered whether late ^{career} remorse can possibly acquit him with respect to his ^{career} commitments. As to the latter, there is sufficient evidence that the defendant's association with the Nazi Party was not of a purely "strategic" nature. He has stated frequently, and beyond the limits of expediency, ~~always~~ his interest and ideological identity with all or at least parts of the Nazi program. He may have done so with his tongue in his cheek; I even believe that he was too intelligent to accept some of the Nazi objectives and doctrines at face value, but we have still to consider that he is an extremely ambitious man and that he may have been willing to ^{make} a "sacrificio del intelletto" and by so compromising, secure his own career.