

Testimony of Hermann Goering, taken at Nuremberg, Germany, on 8 October 1945, from 4:30 PM to 5 PM, by Colonel John H. Amen, IGD, OUSCC. Also present: Pfc Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, Interpreter; WOJG Jack Rund, Reporter.

COL. AMEN TO THE INTERPRETER:

Q State your full name, rank, and position.

A Pfc Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, interpreter for the OUSCC.

Q Do you solemnly swear that you will truly and faithfully interpret from English into German and from German into English, the questions put to this witness and his answers thereto, so help you God?

A I do.

COL. AMEN to the witness, through interpreter, in German:

Q These are some questions which G-2, Operations Branch, desires to have answered. One of your offices was that of Reichsforstmeister, was it not?

A Yes. That was the same as the Minister for Forestry.

Q For how long a time did that office function?

A It functioned until the end. As far as I remember, it was founded in 1935.

Q Under what superior agency did the Reichsforstverwaltung operate?

A I was the Minister, and at the end Alpers was the State Secretary in the Ministry.

Q What was its internal organization?

A There were different departments there. There was one for the administration of all forests of the Reich. There was one branch that was concerned with legislation in connection with the forests.

There was one division for planting in the forests; one for the safety of the forests, and one for the safety of the raw material, wood; and also one for the protection of nature, and also one department responsible for the legislation about hunting.

Q Who were its leading personalities?

A I remember there was State Secretary Alpers and then there was Oberlandesforstmeister Abers. I don't know just what he was responsible for because I was not interested what happened below the plane of State Secretary, and I left his administration to himself. Then there was Oberackermeister Schurping, also in the ministry. The other names have slipped my memory.

Q What were its exact connections with the RSHA, especially the SIPO and SD?

A There was a normal connection, such as existed between every Ministry and the Police. There was no special connection there.

Q To what extent was liaison between the Reichsforstverwaltung and the SIPO and SD maintained at lower local levels?

A Only in cases of extensive poaching, or where extensive thefts in the forests occurred, then the criminal police were informed. In general, though, the officials of the Ministry of the Forests had police jurisdiction in the forests.

Q Were appreciable numbers of SIPO and SD personnel transferred at any time to the Reichsforstverwaltung and, if so, for what purpose?

A As I said before, only the criminal police were notified in cases of extensive poaching or damages, and then it may have happened that they appeared in the uniform of the foresters. They were detailed from their regular service, but what really happened at the lower levels,

I don't know.

Q What is the role of the Reichsforstverwaltung in postwar resistance against the Allies?

A No role at all. I don't know just what the administration of the forests could have done about it. I don't know just what they could have done with my trees.

Q In what way did they assist the SD in providing cover for SD agents?

A Well, it is possible if some official of the SD was well-acquainted with a forest official, he may have hidden him somewhere in the woods. That is quite possible, but I have no knowledge of that.

Q In what way did it assist the SD in establishing weapons caches?

A Maybe now I can remember something that will help. At least I think I know what is meant by this question. When we were retreating so fast in the East, it was Himmler's intention to establish a partisan movement in the forested areas, and I remember that his deputy for this affair made an inquiry at one time, asking how far the local officers of the Forstverwaltung would be able to put their knowledge of the localities at their disposal. That is, for the establishment of caches for food and ammunition, but this only happened during the last three or four months of the war. It is quite possible that the same thing occurred in the West.

Q In what other ways, if any, did it assist the SD?

A I must suppose from all these questions that this interrogation is referring to the intention to establish hideouts in the forest, and that only happened during the last three or four months, as I said. Nothing was ever done before. Outside of that, there was no connection

between the Reichsforstverwaltung, or the RSHA, or the police, other than the normal connection which was established between any other Ministry and the police. But it is true that such conferences were held in the last month.

Q Who were the persons responsible for, and having knowledge of, these activities?

A They were local people. It only could be local people, and they were the local representatives of the agencies.

Q This is another series of questions, the answers to which are desired by G-2, Operations Branch. What was said, and what decisions were reached at the meeting of Hitler, Himmler, Keitel and yourself in March 1944, following the escape of fifty prisoners of war from Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan?

A Are you referring to those prisoners that were executed and that were shot? I don't know just what all this is referring to, but I don't remember any such conference. There never were any conferences about that. It is true, however, escapes were effected frequently, and I remember one case where the Fuehrer had some of them shot, and he turned over part of the escaped prisoners to Himmler, and that was those who were found in civilian clothes. It created a lot of bad feeling at the time, but I didn't know all the aspects of this situation until I talked to Marshal Keitel at Mondorf. I don't even know just from which camp those came.

Q Did this occur in March 1944?

A I don't remember the date, but if this is referring to just what I have in mind, then it is the escape of the prisoners which

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OKW and Himmler. However, I do remember at a certain time, maybe it was in August 1944 or even in July 1944, the entire prisoner of war department came under the control of Himmler. Whether or not there was any such general order that any recaptured prisoners of war were to be handed over to Himmler, or not, I don't know. I just cited a case to you which was a special case where they were handed over, which was the extent of my knowledge.

Q We have a copy of the order.

A Yes. That may be, but I don't know this order. Maybe this is concerned with the prisoners of the Army only, and not with those of the Air Forces. In this connection, that is, in regard to prisoners of the Luftwaffe, and orders connected with Himmler, there are only two orders I have ever received from Hitler. The first one was that representatives of the police were to be present at interrogations in the transient prison camp at Oberursel; that was to give them the possibility to put political questions to the prisoners, and discuss those with them. The second order was concerning the many escapes that were effected by English aviators from camps guarded by the Air Forces. This was due to the inability of the camp guard details to prevent this. They were mostly older people, and the criminal police were then empowered to make investigations if conditions should warrant, in order to find out whether any possibilities for escape existed in that particular camp. They were then to make corresponding recommendations to the administration of the camp.

Q You know what was meant by "Kugelaktion," do you not?

A No. I don't know, but I am bringing it into connection with this particular action which we just mentioned, that is, those forty aviators.

Q This was a particular method of killing off prisoners of war, that was employed by Himmler and others.

A Well, I can only say again, and under oath, that this thing is the only one I know about, and it was most unpleasant for us. It is quite possible that there were some cases of prisoners being shot, that were apprehended while escaping, but I know nothing of it. I told the Fuehrer that it was the duty of each English aviator to make at least one attempt to escape, and they had to prove that when they returned and I told him it would be more to the purpose to give us better guards than those old Santa Clauses that we had guarding these camps. You see, those prisoners received a great number of Red Cross parcels, and they were always well supplied with cigarettes and chocolate and food, and they were very successful in corrupting the guards with that and thus many escapes were possible and I remember one time where eighty of them walked out in broad daylight.

Q What is the meaning of "Stufe Roem 3"?

A Roem 3 is referring to Roman numeral III. I hear the word "Stufe" (Step), for the first time. The Luftwaffe, as such, had nothing to do with the prisoner of war camps. The directions were issued by the OKW. However, we always tried to keep enemy aviators under our own surveillance. Of course, I would be informed of complaints whenever they happened to be made.

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APPROVED:

Interrogator

W. Lawrence Kelly

Interpreter

Reporter

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(GOERING)(END)