

Testimony of Hermann Goering, taken at Nuremberg, Germany, on 8 October 1945, from 11 AM to 12:30 PM, by Col. 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 occupation.

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 What were the names of your principal agents for the purchase of art objects?

A If I may, I would like to explain to you how this whole matter was handled. Since it had been known for a long time that I was very interested in art objects, I used to get offers from several countries. For instance, partly these offers came from art dealers say in Switzerland, Italy, or other countries near there, and they would inform me an auction would be held, and they would actually send me the auction list. Also, it happened very many times that private people would contact me if they had art objects that they wished to place on sale. Moreover, there were several men that were interested in the subject generally, and I told them just what my wishes and interests were. In the main, it was Hofer who was in charge of the administration of my art collection. He was an art dealer by profession, and in addition to administering my collection, he remained in that profession. Being a well-known art dealer he knew all the art dealers, I might say, in

all the countries, and kept in contact with them. Especially in France there was a Dr. Bunjes, who would inform me any time that he heard of some art objects that were for sale or on auction. He would inform me of the fact. However, this was not his main occupation, and he just did it, so to speak, as a sideline. Also, there was another art historian, Dr. Lohse, who worked in about the same capacity as Bunjes. Then there was also Dr. Muehlmann.

Q And Angerer?

A Yes, he too, but only in a few cases.

Q And Bornheim?

A Bornheim was an art dealer like so many others.

Q Miedl?

A Miedl, again, is an art dealer.

Q Reber?

A No, I don't know him, but it is quite possible that he was in some connection with Hofer. The name is not known to me.

Q Bunjes?

A Yes. I mentioned him before.

Q Von Behr?

A You have to look at Von Behr in another connection. He was not directly an agent of mine, so to speak, but he was responsible for Rosenberg's collection of art and art research.

Q What were your financial arrangements with Hofer and Lohse and the rest of them?

A There was no financial arrangement made with Lohse and Bunjes. They worked in such a way that people who were interested in art sales

or art auctions would contact them and they, in turn, would inform me. With Hofer too, there was no direct arrangement as such. Being an art dealer he would make a certain commission any time that he sold me portraits, or enabled me to buy them at an auction sale. In addition to that, his wife was in charge of the restoration of all portraits, and thus she got some monetary advantages out of that. Otherwise, he had the advantage he lived without paying any rent, and as I said before, he could earn a commission any time that he enabled me to buy a portrait. It was my intention to give him a position of director of my collection after the war, when things came to such a stage, but at the time he worked for me, this had never materialized.

Q How much of a commission did he get?

A I really don't know how much he got. For part of the portraits, he didn't get any. That is, those which he didn't discover himself. For the others, he made the arrangements directly with the dealers.

Q Frequently, you and Rosenberg, and the Government were all trying to get the same objects for yourselves, were you not?

A Yes. It is very unfortunate that this happened. Many times we did not know about it, and thus the prices went very high with the art dealers. Colonel, if I may make the remark, I want to tell you, for instance, that if I went to Holland, or Paris, or Rome, I would always find a huge stack of letters awaiting me. There would be letters from private people, princes and princesses, and anything that you want, and there were many genuine offers, and many fake offers, and the prices were anywhere from good to improbable, and everybody offered me this stuff to buy.

Q Some of the objects which you got were confiscated objects of art, were they not?

A We must differentiate here between two separate cases. Firstly, those objects that were bought in free-trade, so to speak. The second case are those that were collected by the organization of Rosenberg. Those were articles that had been confiscated from people who had left the country. I would like to make a short remark here about this Rosenberg commission. They collected and registered all their art objects, and they were destined to either go to the Fuehrer's gallery in Linz, that was to be built, or to the Hohe Schule that Rosenberg was going to build at the Chiemsee. It was my intention that not all of these art objects should go to southern Germany, and I had the intention to buy some of them for my gallery. I bought those things and they were estimated, not by German art experts, but by French experts, and then it happened very often that after I made all the arrangements, the Fuehrer would see a photo of the objects and I would have to return things to him because he wanted them.

Q What confiscated objects did you get from Poland?

A Personally, I did not get any confiscated objects from Poland. There is one portrait with my collection which, however, was not destined for my gallery. It was the first intention that this should go to the Kaiser Frederick Museum in Berlin. It was merely stored with the objects that belonged to me because the shelter that I had was especially safe and suitable. There are a number of other objects down there which do not belong to me, which were merely stored there because it was considered a safe place for such objects. It was the intention of the Fuehrer that all art treasures that were confiscated in Poland were to be trans-

ferred into a museum that was to be erected in Koenigsberg, with the exception of four or five portraits that were to go to the Kaiser Frederick Museum in Berlin. This collection in Berlin was executed by Dr. Muehlmann. Not for me, however, but for the German Government, officially. As far as those Polish art treasures are concerned, they were first stored at Krakow, under Governor General Frank, and then later, at the request of the Fuehrer, I wrote a letter to Frank that those articles were to be transferred to Koenigsberg, with the exception of the four or five pictures I mentioned before. However, this did not happen, and they were put in a safe place somewhere in Southern Germany.

Q How about the confiscated objects from Monte Cassino?

A As far as those art treasures at Monte Cassino go, at first we didn't even know about them, but it was later evident that they had come from a museum in Naples. It so happened that a parachute division and another division of mine were fighting near there, and when the fighting got so heavy, it was decided that it would be necessary to save those art treasures from destruction. There were several there that belonged to the Monastery, and they were transferred to the Pope in Rome, and the Abbey of the Monastery wrote us a long letter in Latin to thank us for this. The others were transferred to the Fascist Italian Government in Northern Italy, with the exception of fifteen portraits and some statues that were taken to Germany. Then, when my division returned, they brought many of those objects from Italy. However, I did not like that very much and I did not think that it was fitting to the circumstances. I traveled to see the Fuehrer about two days later and asked him what was to be done with these objects. He

said he would like to have them transferred to him. Then they remained in my shelter for a few months, and then later they were transferred to the Reichs Chancellery against receipt. In order to stay on the safe side, I want to say here I only have one object that came from Monte Cassino. This was the statue of a saint that was found in the ruins at Cassino and when the division came back, they gave me this as a souvenir from Cassino. This thing is completely insignificant and at most it is worth between fifty and sixty marks and it is no art object.

Q You had agents operating in France?

A I don't want to say agents - art dealers; I had those. As far as private circles, and purchases from private sources are concerned, they were principally Bunjes and Lohse who met these people socially, and they would hear of possibilities to buy from them. Just in order to give you an example of how this thing works, just before the war with America broke out I got an offer from America, through either Spain, or Portugal, or Switzerland, offering me some art objects from New York. I just want to explain to you that after it was known I collected those things, I did receive offers from all over the world, as all the art dealers in the world naturally had connections with each other.

Q What objects were there in New York?

A They were portraits from the school of Fontainebleau, and they were painted in the 15th century, and it was especially well-known I had particular interest in them.

Q Who had them in New York?

A I don't know. It came through some art dealers, and I don't know just what the connections were.

Q And there were dealers operating on your behalf in Holland?

A Possibly it will be the efficient way for me to answer the question in this way. You are asking me about Holland. Well, I can say that after it had become well-known I was interested in objects of art, there was no art dealer of any repute in either Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, France, or England, before the war, and also Czechoslovakia, who would not make me their offers, because they were interested, naturally, to sell their art objects. However, of course, they did not make these offers to me alone. They would write to all people who were interested - to the Fuehrer, for instance, and other personalities, and they would inform me of any auctions to be held. I, at various times, visited them in order to get the feel of the market and find out just what was happening.

Q The same is true in Belgium and Italy?

A Yes. If I may, I would like to correct myself about the interrogation of Saturday morning. The question was put to me, whether I knelt in front of the altar. I understood the question in such a manner that you meant whether out of respect or reverence I knelt in front of the altar. I remember now that the altar was on a low stool, and the inscription was underneath, and so naturally I knelt down to look at the inscription. There was hardly an art object where I wouldn't get down on my knees and take a magnifying glass and inspect it. In that sense it is true.

Q But the kneeling had no religious connotation?

A No.

Q What about the Sterzing Altarpiece? Is that the same altar that we spoke of Saturday?

A No. It is not. The Sterzing Altar was a present of the Duce, that is, of the Italian Government, to me personally. The Altarpiece of Sterzing, as Sterzing itself, is a purely German thing. Sterzing is a little town in the South Tyrol and belonged to Italy. The altar was made by an old master from ULM, and his name was Gulfi (?), and one day I heard the church in Sterzing was interested in selling this altarpiece because they needed money, and I wrote to them concerning this, and then the Italian Government heard about it, and they bought that altar for me and gave it to me as a surprise present for my birthday.

In addition to the purchases which you made from time to time, and the gifts which you received, there were also a number of exchanges which you worked out.

A Yes. If you intend to build up a gallery, you just have to exchange objects just like you would if you were collecting stamps. Just to give you an example here. If, for instance, you want to have an altar in your gallery, it is very likely that the centerpiece is owned by one museum, the right wing and left wing by some others, and maybe an upper or lower piece from the same altar by yet another agency. If you want to have the whole piece, the only choice you have got is to offer them exchanges and ask them what they want in return for those objects. I mentioned before that with my collection there were many portraits, for instance, which did not belong to me. There were many which were sent to me merely for inspection and for an exchange, and no final agreement was ever reached on them.

Some of these exchanges were consummated by Fischer, were they not?

A In Switzerland?

Q Yes.

A Fischer was an art dealer, and whether he arranged the exchanges in his own way or not, I don't know, but I exchanged directly with him.

Q How about Landland?

A The same applies to him. He is an art dealer, and I don't know him personally. I just know his name.

Q But he was engineering these exchanges on your behalf, was he not?

A I bought portraits and Gobelins from him, and I also exchanged with him, but this was all done by Hofer. I did not know him personally.

Q Gobelins?

A Portraits or Gobelins, or statues, or anything.

Q Ventura?

A He is also an art dealer in Florence.

Q Kroeller-Muller?

A I don't know him.

Q Katz?

A Katz was an art dealer in Holland, and when the laws were applied against the Jews in Holland, I enabled him to immigrate to Switzerland. I did not enter into any exchanges with Katz, but I bought three or four good portraits from him.

Q Haberstock?

A Haberstock was an art dealer in Berlin who worked for the Fuehrer principally. I believe in all this time I only bought four or five portraits from him. I believe that I only once asked him to get a picture from Vienna for me. I did not want to buy from him be-

cause he was too expensive for me.

Q DeBoor?

A He was an art dealer in Holland.

Q Mangoldt-Reiboldt?

A I don't know him.

Q Did you, from time to time, sell some of the confiscated objects which you had obtained?

A Exchanged?

Q No, sold.

A As far as the confiscated objects are concerned, I only exchanged them.

Q But you sold, from time to time, some of the objects which you had purchased in the open market?

A This happened only once, really. I bought a great collection in toto and then I asked Hofer to sell those pictures in which we were not interested, with the instructions to use the money that he received for them, for the purchase of new pictures. I want to say here that there was no money ever used, that came from the sale of art objects, for anything else, except the purchase of other art objects. For instance, we once discovered a very precious picture and, in exchange, we had to give 175 other pictures for it.

Q What was the Kunstfond?

A The Kunstfond was an art fund which I had instituted for the purchase of art objects.

Q Where did the money come from that went into that fund?

A It was partly made up by private contributions which I received to build up my gallery. At one time I also received a large

amount from the Fuehrer, and then I, myself, would give to this fund.

The fund did not contain any money that came from State sources.

Q Who was authorized to deposit and withdraw from that account?

A To deposit or withdraw money in there?

Q Yes.

A That was me.

Q Exclusively?

A Yes. Only me.

Q Were all of your purchases and sales cleared through that account?

A No. This fund was instituted only very much later, by me. Here is something else I want to call to your attention. I inherited a certain amount of art treasures.

Q Did you employ various people to work on this art collecting business?

A Does the Colonel mean in the acquisition of these art treasures, or after the acquisition, to work on them.

Q Both.

A In the case of who I employed before the acquisition of the objects, I think I explained how they were offered to me from all sides, in all countries. After the acquisition, there were two things that were mainly done with them. The first thing was to classify them, and second to conserve them; that is, to prevent them from blistering, or the paint from peeling, or what have you. All those things that are required to keep them in good condition. This was handled at first by my secretariat, and later on by Hofer and his staff.

Q Most of these objects were kept in Berlin, were they not?

A Yes. Almost all of them. Only when the Russians were approaching were they moved.

Q When and how were they moved?

A They were moved from the end of January 1945, through February and March 1945, by rail.

Q Where are they now?

A They were moved to Berchtesgaden.

Q All of them,

A Since I, myself, was arrested by Hitler, I don't know whether all of them ever did get there, but I am sure that the greater amount of them did get there. I would say at least ninety percent. Over ninety percent. I have to say something else here; that I had a number of art objects which were not destined to go into the gallery. They were art objects, but in themselves they were not so precious or good enough to be in a gallery. They were merely something I would like to call glorified furniture, and it is quite possible they were left in Berlin and that they were not treated as carefully, and moved as carefully, as the others.

Q What would you estimate the entire collection to be worth?

A That is almost impossible to determine. That depends very much on the market, and that is why it was never estimated. The only thing that was ever estimated was the value of some certain pieces. Just to give you an idea about that. Once a picture was offered to me in Holland for 3,000 Guilders. In the course of the years it was offered to me a total of seven times, and the last time it was offered to me the price was 45,000 Guilders. That is because other people would offer

prices for the same picture. It is impossible to even estimate the value of some of the pieces I had. For instance, the Sterzing Altar could never have been estimated. It depended very much on who was interested in it, and at what time. Just to give you an example, if I wanted to sell something by Lucas Cranach the first man might offer 50,000 marks; the next man might have Lucas Cranach's particular hobby, and he might offer 100,000 marks. Then somebody else would be interested in the object as such, but not to a greater extent than 10,000 marks, and that is why it is impossible for me to estimate the value of the total collection. I really don't even know the extent of my collection any more. I only remember the most important objects.

Q I think you testified on Saturday that none of these objects were ever in fact turned over to the Government. Is that correct?

A Yes. That is correct. I couldn't hand it over to the Government, because who was there to act as a representative of the Government? According to our Constitution it was quite sufficient if I informed the Fuehrer of the fact that I had certain objects and gave the Minister of Finance notice to the same effect. As it was, the gallery, as such, was never intended to be handed over to the Government after it was built. It was my intention to hand it over to the people, and the way this would have been effected is that at a certain date it would have been said in a communique, "Goering, on such and such a date has decided to hand over this gallery as a gift to the German people." If you look at it this way, I was the Government myself. Just to show you how this works, for instance, there was an exhibition of the work of living artists, each year in Munich, and the Fuehrer had expressed the wish that all the Ministries should purchase some of

those pictures in order to support the artists, and that happened. Then those pictures were taken and put into the ministries, or into the houses that are the official residences of the ministers. Well, now, as such they were Government property. However, they actually were located in the ministries, or houses of the ministers.

Q But in point of fact, none of these objects were ever given to the German people?

A Well, how could this be done. The gallery had never been built yet, and all this was to happen after the war.

Q But, I say, it never happened.

A That is quite clear. That is quite impossible.

Q Do you remember a box of jewels, belonging to a Jewish woman, that was turned over for safekeeping to one of the ministries?

A Yes. These were objects that had been found by the Divisen Fahndungs Stelle. That is an office which does police work, as far as foreign currency is concerned. They had found these objects when a Jewish woman tried to cross the border, and I remember when my train came back from Berlin, those objects were handed over to me. They had been given to the Secret Service man on the train for reasons of safety, and it was merely an accident. They were taken to the Prussian State Ministry and they were opened by an expert under oath, to be estimated. Then a part of them were kept in the State Ministry, and another part were sent to the Central Tax Collector's Office in Berlin.

Q Do you recall the name of the Jewish woman?

A No. I was told that this had come from more sources than one. They had collected this over a period of time.

Q Up to the end of the war, what would you estimate your total

personal income to have been?

A You mean my monthly income?

Q Yes. Monthly, or yearly.

A My income was made up first by my salary; second it stemmed from the especial fund that I received as a Reich National.

Q How much did you receive for each of these?

A The two of them together amounted to about 28,000 marks a month. In addition to this came free residence, and all representative functions and matters were being paid for; and this, of course, was variable. Then, I derived income from books and articles that I had written. Of course, this was variable, but I would estimate the total sum that I had derived in such a manner, throughout the war, as about one million, and maybe one and one half million marks.

Q What other sources of income did you have? Income from securities?

A I had other income derived from interest on my capital and securities.

Q How much would you estimate that to have been?

A I am sorry that I really can't tell you, because I can't check it. Unfortunately I did not take very much interest in the administration of my own finances. They were left to the Secretary, and I don't think that she had enough perspective to do the thing right, and I found out very much later that I had lost a great amount.

Q How about income from industries in which you were financially interested?

A I had no financial interest in industry except shares that I

had bought as a private person, and I only had those in state factories.

Such as?

A For instance, there were the Hydrier works. Any factories that belonged to the State, that is what I am talking about. We were allowed to have shares, that represented a financial interest in it.

Q Then let me ask you again, at what fee you would estimate your total monthly income?

A That is very difficult for me to say, because so many of these things were distributed over so many years. As I mentioned before, I received 28,000 marks in currency, per month, and then I would say possibly five to seven thousand marks would be added to that from interest and annuities, and so on, and I would say that I received a total of 35,000 marks in currency each month. The sum I mentioned before that I had received as an author, of course, was distributed over many years.

Q This income which I mentioned as a million, and a million and a half marks, has been distributed over this period of time.

Q Do you recall the law of April 26, 1933, pertaining to the organization of the Secret State Police? (Being Document L-82)

A Yes.

Q Why was the Secret State Police formed originally?

A This was because police matters, in general, were rather confused, and it was necessary to create such a secret police for the protection of the State. That is, as it was customary in all other countries.

Q How soon after 26 April 1933 was the first concentration camp established?

A After the arrest of the Communist leaders, which we talked about already, because they could not be put into the normal prisons.

Q When was this?

A That was shortly after the Reichstag fire - a few days after.

Q What were the first oppressive actions taken by the Gestapo?

A Their first mission, seen as a whole really, was their fight against Communism. The Communist Party was, next to us, the strongest party in Germany. That is, strongest in numbers, strongest in position, and strongest in every respect. That was so before we acquired power, and even in the first time after we acquired power. It happened that assassinations and all kinds of brawls took place, especially in Berlin, and it was the main task of the Prussian Secret State Police to be in a position of surveillance, so to speak, in the fight against Communism. It is necessary here to differentiate between the Prussian Secret State Police, and the Secret State Police which was founded for the other Federated States of Germany. They were only later coordinated into one single group.

Q Do you recall the law on the Secret State Police of 30 November 1933? (Being also Document L-82)

A I don't know exactly just what was contained in the law, but there were a number of laws that were enacted in that connection.

Q Why did you take the Secret State Police away from the control of the Prussian Minister of Interior, and place it directly under yourself?

A I was both Prussian Minister of the Interior and Prussian Prime Minister at that time. In other words, I merely transferred it

from one of my official functions to another. My idea there was that the Prussian Secret State Police should be directly under a head of State, because as such it had nothing to do with ordinary police matters, and that is why I removed it from the control of the Prussian Ministry of Interior.

Q Do you recall the law on the Secret State Police of 10 February 1936, being also a part of Document L-82?

A I believe that that is the law which coordinated all the different Secret State Police forces in to the Reich Secret Police Force.

Q That contained the statement, "After agreement with the Reich Cabinet, I promulgate, in the name of the Reich, the above law for the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor."

A I am sorry, I don't remember it exactly, but if the law says that, there is no doubt whatever about it.

Q Did this mean that the Secret State Police thereby became nationwide in scope and power?

A As far as I remember, this is the law which unites all the Secret State Police Forces of all the different States, and makes the Secret State Police subordinated to the Chief of the Reich Police.

Q What was the purpose of that law?

A So far the power of police jurisdiction had been founded in the different State Governments of the Federated States, the same as the legal jurisdiction. It was the Fuehrer's wish to place this jurisdiction for the entire Reich into the hands of the Reich Police in the same way as it had happened with the legal jurisdiction, which had been coordinated in the Ministry of Justice. He wanted to take this juris-

diction away from the States.

Q Then there was the decree for the execution of the law on the Secret State Police of 10 February 1936?

A Yes. This was the same for all decrees. There were laws for their execution.

Q That decree referred to "criminal attacks on Party and State."

A Yes.

Q What did that mean?

A Several attacks had taken place upon the leaders of the Party, and the Fuehrer wished that not only attacks upon leaders of the State came within their jurisdiction, but that leaders of the Party would enjoy the same protection.

Q What kind of criminal attacks?

A I don't remember the particulars about this. Anyway, one thing is clear - that it was the decision of the Fuehrer to make the leaders of the Party, that is, the prominent people in the Party, in every way the equals of the leaders or prominent people in the state. He had this idea for everything. For instance, a Reichsleiter of the Party had the assimilated rank of a Reich Minister.

Q Under that decree did the Secret State Police have authority to enact measures valid throughout the Reich?

A Yes.

Q What were the duties and responsibilities of the Secret State Police for administration of the concentration camps?

A It was held fully responsible for that.

Q Exclusively?

A I don't know just how Himmler handled this after he became

Chief of Police. I don't know whether he left the concentration camps solely under the jurisdiction of the Gestapo, or whether or not he founded a special department to take care of these concentration camps. There were all kinds of rumors about that, but you must understand that a veil of secrecy was over all these things.

Q Under the decree of 10 February 1936, what were the duties of the Gestapo for the administration of concentration camps?

A The concentration camps had been solely under the responsibility of the Gestapo until the 10th of February 1936, but this is the law which incorporated the Gestapo into the Reich; and, just what happened then, I don't know, but as far as I remember, in the immediate period of time following this decree, they remained solely responsible for those camps.

Q Did the Gestapo actually set up the concentration camps?

A Well, if they did not build them, at least they determined the shape and form of them.

Q Did Gestapo personnel actually serve as the camp commanders and officials?

A Yes. As far as I know about it, they did. I don't know what happened after 10 February 1936, but there was a story to the effect that some special commandants had been named later.

Q How much later?

A I can't say exactly, but I am pretty sure when I think it was only in the first years of the war. After Himmler took over the Reich Police, then the Reich Police and SS and the General Police, and Criminal Police and Order Police and Security Police and the Security Service,

and the concentration camps and the Gestapo, all came under his jurisdiction - and just how he internally arranged these and distributed jurisdiction and responsibility, nobody ever could learn. I believe, later on, every official of the Criminal Police had to be a member of the SS at the same time, whether he wanted to or not.

Q So that when, if ever, would you say that the responsibility of the Gestapo for administration of the concentration camps changed?

A Well, if it ever happened, it happened very much later. At any rate it is clear that the Gestapo had a very decisive influence on the whole thing. I heard at one time, and this was merely by way of rumor, that a special main department for concentration camps had been founded, but I just don't know whether it is true or not. At any rate it is clear that the Gestapo was the decisive authority for those people that were put into concentration camps.

Q I ask to have this document, I-82, marked for identification as Exhibit A, of today's date, "Goering."

APPROVED:

Interrogator

Interpreter

Reporter

[Signature]

Jack Rind