

53.003

File

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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of: GOTTLIEB BERGER

By: Colonel Brundage, 20 September 1945 A.M. Nuremberg

PERSONS, ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED AND SUBJECTS

1. Hitler
 - a. Relationship with: Bormann (p.7); Fegelein (p.7); General Burgdorf (p.7); Kaltenbrunner (p.3)
2. Kaltenbrunner
 - a. Chief of the RSHA (p.2)
 - b. Police Function
 - (1) Executive Police Power (p.2)
 - (a) Tried to avoid (pp 6-7)
 - c. Concentration Camps
 - (1) Knowledge of (p.10)
 - (2) Responsibility for arrests (p.3)
 - (3) Release of Internees (p.4)
 - (4) Evacuation of Internees during Allied Advance (pp 5-6)
 - d. Criminal Responsibility (p. 7-8)
 - e. Relationship with: Bormann (p.7); Hitler (p.3); Mueller (p.3,4); Nebe (p.3); Schellenberg (p.3).
3. Ribbentrop
 - a. Criminal Responsibility (pp 10-12; 14-15)
4. Gluecks
 - a. Concentration Camps
 - (1) Primary Responsibility (p.4)
5. General Karl Wolff
 - a. Concentration Camps (p.10)

ERNST KALTENBRUNNER

Berger stated Kaltenbrunner was Chief of the whole Security Police. Kaltenbrunner was the man "... who executed orders" with relation to the concentration camps. Pohl (Chief of the concentration camps) did not fit into the chain of command under Kaltenbrunner. (p.2)

Kaltenbrunner had daily conferences with Mueller, Nebe and Schellenberg in Berlin. Starting in the summer of 1944 Kaltenbrunner conferred personally with Hitler without the usual formality of his superior, Himmler, being present. (p.3)

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As Chief of the Security Police Kaltenbrunner was head of the Gestapo, Kripo, SD. "Kaltenbrunner's men" arrested those persons that were put into the concentration camps. (p.3) Kaltenbrunner also had the authority to name the camp into which the individual prisoner would be placed and likewise had authority to issue orders to the camp commandant. (p.3; see also p.4) Kaltenbrunner was not the superior of the Death-Head Guards, nor the civilian employees of the Camps-- that was Gluecks. (pp.3-4) Berger stated, however, that in connection with seeking a "release" from a concentration camp the consent of Mueller was required "...and that also means Kaltenbrunner". (p.4)

When the German troops marched into Austria, the SS was given over to Kaltenbrunner. Berger stated that he had known Kaltenbrunner since that time -- 1938. (p.6) Kaltenbrunner thought of himself as a "great diplomat". In later years he did not like the prospect of taking over the Reich Security Chief Office after Heydrich. At the time Kaltenbrunner stated, "...that he was a lawyer and ... a man for the political service." He would have preferred being assigned as the "German delegate to Budapest". (pp.6-7) After taking Office, Kaltenbrunner formed a very close relationship with Bormann. (p.7)

Kaltenbrunner's Criminal Responsibility: Berger stated that he did not know whether or not Kaltenbrunner was connected with the commission of the atrocities, but "according to the honorable conception of the SS, everybody carries the responsibility of his office". (pp.7-8) Berger stated that if Kaltenbrunner's statement to the effect that he had only visited a concentration camp once in his life is true then it indicates "a great failing of his duty, a very great failure." (p.10)

HITLER'S CIRCLE, 1945

"In the end it was Bormann, Fegelein, General Burgdorf who formed a close circle around Hitler, and it was hardly possible to penetrate the circle by outsiders, especially after the attempt on his (Hitler's) life". (p.7)

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Berger stated that the one primarily responsible was the Commandant of the camp; secondary responsibility lay with Gluecks. (p.4) Berger stated that during the night of the 22nd -23 rd of April 1945 he intercepted certain concentration camp internees and prisoners of war being marched by foot from Dachau to "the Alps". Berger stated that the Camp Commandant had told him that the order had been received from Kaltenbrunner. Berger stated that he then took steps to forbid the clearance of prison camps and concentration camps in the wake of the Allied advance--and established the order that all inmates were to be held in place pending arrival of Allied troops. (pp.5-6)

JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP

Berger stated, "I hate this man... because he was the man who was guilty and he arranged it so that we could not come into any agreement with the West." (p.10) Ribbentrop must have known the trend of events -- the entire foreign press was at his disposal. (pp. 10-11) "Ribbentrop was the biggest criminal in Germany" (p.11). Berger stated that he recalls having burned certain papers

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containing notes made by Himmler regarding discussions he had with Hitler in 1940. From his recollection of these writings of Himmler's Berger stated, "It should have been possible to end the war..." in that year (through diplomatic channels). (p.12) Berger stated that the notes indicated that information was then available that a move towards Poland by Germany would cause a declaration of war by England--that it might have been possible to conclude the issue by recognizing Germany's rights in the corridor but "Ribbentrop avoided this solution by giving false presentations and giving false opinions". Berger concluded, however, by stating that he had no "concrete facts to prove that Ribbentrop is the greatest criminal of them all". (pp.14-15)

GENERAL KARL WOLFF

Berger stated that it would be difficult for him to believe a statement by Wolff that he had only visited three concentration camps during the time that he was with the SS service. Himmler visited the camps very often in the former days--as his adjutant it is to be assumed that Wolff would have been with him. (p.15)