

DEFENDANT JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP

(Neumann rough draft, unedited)

Von Ribbentrop joined the Nazi Party secretly in 1930 and overtly in 1932. He used his position within the old German ruling class and his international connections in France and Great Britain to further the aims of the Nazi Party; and he helped to initiate the negotiations between Hindenburg and Hitler which led to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor.

He was appointed:

1. Special German Delegate for Disarmament Questions, 1934;
2. Ambassador Extraordinary, 31 May 1935;
3. Ambassador in London, 11 August 1936;
4. German Foreign Minister in succession to the defendant von Neurath and member of the Secret Cabinet Council, 2 February 1938.

In the Party, the defendant first held the position of a Aussenpolitischer Mitarbeiter des Fuehrers (Foreign Political Adviser of the Leader) and later also became Beauftragter der NSDAP fuer Aussenpolitische Fragen (Delegate of the NSDAP for Matters of Foreign Policy). He was a member of the Reichstag after 1933, and rose rapidly in the SS hierarchy from Oberfuehrer to Gruppenfuehrer in 1938 and Obergruppenfuehrer in 1943.

Within the Party, he built up the Dienststelle Ribbentrop, a clique of SS and SA diplomats whom he ultimately brought into leading positions in the Foreign Office. The membership of this Dienststelle included such notorious fifth columnists as Abetz

and Neubacher, and such key members of the SS Security Service as Alfred Six.

The defendant's influence on the planning and execution of Nazi foreign policy cannot be measured solely by the positions he held. In his Reichstag speech of 30 January 1939, Hitler stated that, during the historic developments of the previous twelve months, "the carefully gauged yet bold judgments on, and the magnificent handling down to the last detail of, all foreign political problems by Ribbentrop had constituted a more than normally great help" in the execution of his plans.^{1/}

The defendant, together with the defendants von Neurath and von Papen, was responsible for the planning of German foreign policy. In addition, he was responsible for the actual diplomatic preparation of the war, as well as for certain aspects of German control over Occupied Europe.

The defendant was thus instrumental in the attempt to organize the Western World against the USSR. He signed the Anti-Comintern Pacts and the German-English Naval Agreement of 18 June 1935. He appeared in the crucial meetings of the League of Nations of 1936^{2/} and submitted the treacherous German Peace Plan of that year. From 1938 on, he prepared every step in German foreign policy, from the conquest of Austria and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia to the Hungarian coup d'etat of 1943 and the establishment of the Hungarian Nazi regime.

^{1/} Archiv fuer Publizistische Arbeit, p. 6005, according to Ford biography.

^{2/} 1936, see Dokumente IV, pp. 137-145.

In almost every case, the defendant closely cooperated with the SS.

The defendant also played a sizeable role in the economic exploitation of foreign countries. In cooperation with the Ministry of Economics, his Ministry operated the Reich Office for Foreign Trade. His agents, such as Neubacher, Clodius and Wohlthat, were active in blackmailing South Eastern European countries into economic dependance on Germany. His diplomatic agents in German satellite states (Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, etc.) were major instruments in the execution of Nazi policies in these countries. In many cases his diplomatic agents were high SS leaders who thus were in a position to combine diplomatic status and use of the German terror machine.

As a member of the Reich Cabinet after 1938 and as one of Hitler's closest advisers, the defendant is responsible for the bulk of German legislation enacted since 1938.