

THE AMERICAN FORCES NETWORK

Palace of Justice
Nuremberg, Germany
30 November 1945

Good evening. This is Corporal Sy Bernhard in AFN's special booth in the Palace of Justice, Nuremberg.

Today was a day of schemes in the courtroom at Nuremberg... of plots and counterplots within high German army circles that left the tribunal weary trying to untangle an involved yarn narrated by the trial's first witness... and then, of the one-man plot whose effect tomorrow will start endless echoes of "I-told-you-sos." For tonight, Rudolf Hess, the wax-like, balding Hitler deputy who flew his Fuehrer's coop in 1941 for England, stood up in court and defiantly declared he is sane.

From 4:30 until well past six this evening, the prosecuting attorneys of four nations had hurled legalisms and medical poly-syllabics at Hess' defense counsel about his sanity... citing precedent, page numbers and psychiatric reports. Hess... a bent, scare-crow of a figure under the glare of the court's spotlights... sat alone in the prisoner's dock... the other defendants had gone to their cells earlier. Sometimes he nodded ... sometimes from his solitary spot on the prisoner's bench he challenged by notation the statements and medical findings. Then, after attorneys had exploited all avenues of argument, the President of the Tribunal, Lord Justice Jeffrey Lawrence,

peered down his slipping spectacles and asked Hess' counsel whether it would be agreeable to him if the tribunal asked Hess a few questions.

Hardly had the crisply British accent faded when Hess - who understands English - jumped from his seat... searched the inner coat pocket of his single-breasted dull gray suit for a slip of paper... the prepared script of his startling declaration. Then in a rush, heavy with stress and German gutturals, Hess said that he had given his counsel a note at the beginning of the sanity hearing explaining that he could clear up the whole matter in a few minutes.

After that: his pronouncement... that his mind is in order ... that the reason for his simulated loss of memory was purely tactical... that although his capacity for concentration is slightly reduced, his ability to defend himself or answer questions has not been impaired. And then in harsh precision: that he bears full responsibility for the things he has done... and finally, his arrogant statement that although he realizes that the tribunal is completely incompetent to judge him, he recognizes, too, that his views on the subject will have little bearing on his case.

And thus ended the mystery of Rudolf Hess... a mystery

which he used to dupe even his own defense counsel, his own lawyer who had spent two hours trying to convince the court of his client's insanity... insanity which existed only because Rudolf Hess wanted it to exist.

The leading figure of the earlier plot story today was a lean cadaver of a man, Major General Erwin Lahausen, once of the Austrian Army and after the Anschluss, a member of the German Army's intelligence service, one of the anti-Nazi click led by Admiral Canaris. The General's stories of intrigue linked von Ribbentrop in the order given to burn down Polish homes... incriminated Keitel in the deliberate massacre of Polish intelligensia, clergymen, nobles and resistance personnel.

Two of the most interesting items in the diary of the fabulous Admiral Canaris, executed when his last attempt to kill Hitler failed, concerned the aborting of the Nazi plans... Operation Gustav and Operation Hirmler... to kill Generals Giraud and Weygand lest they lead the French in North Africa after the fall of France. Canaris got permission to have the SS do the job, but then never told them about it. When Keitel put the pressure on, Canaris took advantage of the death of Heydrich, SS chief in Prague, and blamed the failure on Heydrich's untimely end.

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Other tales straight out of the witch's brew boiled over today... how mystery planes of the Luftwaffe made recon flights over Leningrad and London from Budapest bases long before the war. Altogether a nightmare session of complicated double-cross, finger-men, atrocities... and just plain murder.

This has been Corporal Sy Bernhard in the Palace of Justice, Nuremberg. We return you now to the AFN Newsroom, Frankfurt.