

Violent Frauen: Manhood and Womanhood on Trial For Nazi Atrocities at Bergen-Belsen, 1945

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Chaos ensued after the Second World War. Investigations of Nazi atrocities took center stage throughout Europe. Britain, France, the United States, and Russia. Each held their own war crimes tribunals in their zone of occupation. From these trials knowledge of the inner workings of the Nazi agenda as well as the day-to-day occurrences at concentration and extermination camps has been exposed.

Over the years, examining history through the lens of gender has become a topic of interest. Looking back at trial records from the Second World War, historians have found that German women camp guards, also known as *Aufseherinnen*, participated in Nazi atrocities as *Schutzstaffel* (SS). At the time of the trials, prosecutors from Britain, France, and the United States had difficulty comprehending that women could commit crimes of violence extending to torture. Judge Advocate C. L. Stirling, Esq., lead prosecutor Colonel T. M. Backhouse, and the defense lawyers each had a different view of German women perpetrators. Each of their views along with their arguments on the idea of women and motherhood are examined in the trial.

Although British courts brought equal indictments against German women perpetrators, the judges did not hold the women accountable for their crimes. British ideas of coverture and manliness shielded the British prosecutors from believing that

women were capable of murder. Men were supposed to have characteristics of civility through strength and self-discipline. Whereas, British judges believed women were supposed to hold characteristics of submissiveness, beauty, kindness, and youthfulness. For women it seems that violence to keep order in the camp was allowed by British judges, but murder, torture, and disregard for human life was deemed as beastly. German men would spend around ten to fifteen years in prison whereas; German women who committed the same crime spent less than a year.

Not only were the German men at the Belsen trial treated unfairly by the weak sentencing of German women, but also the survivors who brought forth evidence against their cruelty. In essence, the British judges allowed the German women on trial freedom from their crimes based solely on their gender.

Violent Frauen: Manhood and Womanhood on Trial For Nazi Atrocities at Bergen-Belsen, 1945

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Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Copyright Page	ii
Signature Page	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	v-vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Images	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Historiography.....	4
Chapter Two: Gendering Nazi Germany	15
Chapter Three: Denazification Through War Crimes Trials	28
Chapter Four: First Belsen Trial.....	35
Chapter Five: German Men at Belsen- Civilized or Savage	48
Chapter Six: German Women at Belsen- Womanly or Beastly	59
Chapter Seven: Conclusion	77
Bibliography	84
APPENDIX A: DEPOSITION OF STANISLAW HALOTA	88
APPENDIX B: DEPOSITION OF ESTERA WAJSBLUM.....	89
APPENDIX C: DEPOSITION OF DORA ALMALEH	90
APPENDIX D: DEPOSITION OF REGINA BIALEK.....	91-93
APPENDIX E: DEPOSITION OF DR. ADA BIMKO.....	94

APPENDIX F: DEPOSITION OF ESTERA GUTERMAN.....	95-96
APPENDIX G: DEPOSITION OF KATHERINE NEIGER	97-98
APPENDIX H: DEPOSITION OF ISAK LOZOWSKI	99
APPENDIX I: DEPOSITION OF FILO PINKUS	100
APPENDIX J: DEPOSITION OF WILHELM GRUNWALD	101
APPENDIX K: DEPOSITION OF EDITH TRIEGER.....	102-103
APPENDIX L: DEPOSITION OF BENEC ZUCKERMAN.....	104
APPENDIX M: STATEMENT OF ROZALJA SZPARAGA.....	105
APPENDIX N: DEPOSITION OF DORA SILBERBERG.....	106
APPENDIX O: DEPOSITION OF ADAM MARCINKOWSKI	107
APPENDIX P: DEPOSITION OF DR. PETER LEONARD MAKAR.....	108-109
APPENDIX Q: DEPOSITION OF SOPHIA LITWINSKA	110-111
APPENDIX R: STATEMENT BY ANTONI AURDZIEG	112
APPENDIX S: STATEMENT OF S.S. FRANZ HOESSLER	113-116
APPENDIX T: STATEMENT OF OBERSTURMFÜHRER DR. FRITZ	117-118
APPENDIX U: STATEMENT OF JOSEF KRAMER.....	119-134
APPENDIX V: DEPOSITION OF HERTA EHLERT	135-136
APPENDIX W: STATEMENT OF IRMA GRESE	137-139
APPENDIX X: STATEMENT OF HELENA KOPPER	140-143
APPENDIX Y: STATEMENT OF HILDEGARDE LOHBAUER.....	144
APPENDIX Z: STATEMENT OF ELISABETH VOLKENRATH.....	145-146

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter Four:

1.1 Defending Attorneys and the Accused	41-42
1.2 Indictments Against Men	44-45
1.3 Indictments Against Women	45-46

Chapter Five:

1.4 German Men's Sentences	57-58
----------------------------------	-------

Chapter Six:

1.5 German Women's Sentences.....	71-72
-----------------------------------	-------

Conclusion:

1.6 German Women Sentenced to Death in British Zone of Occupation.....	81-82
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LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter Two:

1.1 Camps in Germany and German Occupied Territories	21
1.2 Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp Layout.....	25

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION & HISTORIOGRAPHY

On September 17, 1945, the Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four others, also known as the Belsen Trial, held in Lüneberg, Germany, was the first trial conducted under British authority after the conclusion of the Second World War. Twenty-three German men concentration camp guards and twenty-one German women guards stood trial for committing savage war crimes at Belsen concentration camp. Most witness testimony from survivors' portrayed German women as constantly violent, not capable of mercy. One such statement came from Jutta Madlung, a survivor of Belsen. She was asked by Colonel T.M. Backhouse, lead prosecutor in the Belsen trial, "Was it something rather extraordinary to find an aufseherin who did not beat you?"¹ To which she responded, "Yes, you may say so."² However, judges remained doubtful that women were capable of such crimes. When faced with women perpetrators, judges were sensitive to charges brought against women more so than men for their respective actions in the camp. German women defendants in the Belsen trial committed horrific beatings while participating in every aspect of concentration camp life, but received minimal sentences normally associated with minor crimes.³ Barbaric and inhumane descriptions of concentration camp guards' actions included women using pipes, rubber truncheons, brooms, sticks, their boots, and hands while beating prisoners. Even when presented with this evidence, British judges frequently sentenced male and female defendants unequally.

This thesis examines how Judge Advocate Stirling, Col. Backhouse, and the twelve defense lawyers in the courtroom at Lüneberg used gender as a tool to either save or condemn the women on trial for war crimes. Using gender as a tool for analysis this thesis examines the

¹ [WO 235/15], [Reel 1], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General's Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC., page 102.

² [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 102

³ [WO235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 23-105.

differences between German men's maximum sentences and German women's lenient sentences in the first Belsen trial. British prosecutors portrayed German men as the true instigators of atrocities in the concentration camps. Except in a few notable cases, prosecutors characterized German women guards as passive, weak, and largely controlled by male guards who delivered the orders of violence. Many of the judges weighed evidence differently for men and women, refusing to see the women defendants as murderers.

Debates on the ideals of manhood and womanhood persisted during the Belsen trial. In the interwar years and throughout the post-war years, British manhood and civilization included values such as strength and physical stature.⁴ The most masculine of all British men were British soldiers. Traits such as self-discipline, hard work, and physical strength summarized the characteristics associated with the British soldier.⁵ Each of the judges and lawyers in the Belsen trial held a rank in the British military. Instilled with British ideas of manhood since their early years, and now in positions of power, Stirling and the five other judges held German men on trial to the same British standards. For example, the most common charge prosecutors laid on guards encompassed the crime of 'ill treatment.' Prosecutors described ill treatment as starvation, lack of medical care or sanitation, torture and beatings.⁶ The acts of deliberately starving prisoners while watching them slowly die insulted British ideals of manhood and civilization.

The long held British common law tradition of coverture defined womanhood and shaped the Belsen trial. The British precedent of coverture set in the eighteenth-century by William Blackstone in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, argued that "by marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is

⁴ Ina Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41 (October 2006): 596.

⁵ Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman," 598-599.

⁶ Raymond Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, (London: William Hodge and Company, Limited, 1949), 14-30.

suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband.”⁷ Coverture focused on property rights and lack of citizenship for women. The Married Women’s Property Act of 1887 addressed the problem of property rights by giving women the right to hold or sell property, be liable for the property, and the right to sue or be sued.⁸ The Married Women’s Property Act aided in slowly eroding the legal concept of coverture.

The other major legal development, enfranchisement also aided in eroding coverture. During the interwar years, British politicians and employers became obsessed with the ‘Woman Question’ also known as the ‘Woman Problem.’⁹ In the First World War as men went off to fight, employers hired women in manufacturing. Once the fighting ended, employers and politicians raised the question or problem of what to do with women workers. A debate ensued. Employers and politicians demanded that women leave their jobs to return home. Women did not wish to return home with their livelihoods at stake. In 1918, British women won enfranchisement. However, enfranchisement only had a partial effect on granting women independence.¹⁰ Even though women gained the right to vote, men still dominated the political domain and deterred women from accessing the public sphere.¹¹ Politicians still preferred the British housewife ideals.¹² Thus, ideas of coverture though diminished died hard.

In 1945, coverture characteristics rooted in ideas of differences between manhood and womanhood continued to influence judges’ views of men and women in the courtroom. At the Belsen trial, judges and prosecutors views of coverture enhanced their beliefs of manhood and

⁷ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol 1 (1765), 442-445.

⁸ <http://moj.gov.jm/sites/default/files/laws/Married%20Women's%20Property%20Act.pdf>

⁹ Julie V. Gottlieb and Richard Toye, *The Aftermath of Suffrage: Women, Gender, and Politics in Britain, 1918-1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 325. Kindle edition.

¹⁰ Gottlieb and Toye, *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, 3476. Kindle edition.

¹¹ Gottlieb and Toye, *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, 3684. Kindle edition.

¹² Gottlieb and Toye, *The Aftermath of Suffrage*, 3724. Kindle edition.

womanhood. British judges at Belsen defined manhood and womanhood according to certain “natural” traits. Judges and prosecutors identified womanhood with characteristics such as submissiveness, beauty, kindness, and youthfulness.¹³ Judges and prosecutors still associated manhood with soldiers whose traits included strength, self-discipline, and hard work. In most cases men and women were equally indicted for their violent crimes; despite that trial transcripts indicate insufficient sentencing for women once at trial. As Belsen trial transcripts indicate, these judges utilized gendered language of submissiveness in their inquiries, opening and closing remarks, and other courtroom comments.¹⁴ Despite many survivors’ depictions of German female guards as the most vicious of all Nazis, women often received lesser punishments as a result of their gender.¹⁵

This thesis adds to the scholarship already written on Holocaust studies by exposing through a lens of gender the inadequacies of war crimes trials against German women in the British Zone of Occupation. For many years after the Second World War, historians approached examining the Holocaust through Nazi documentation. After the Eichmann trial in 1960, historians became more interested in trial transcripts as a source for understanding the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. Historians examining trial transcripts in English did not begin until 1990. In fact, academic scholarship on post-war trials can be broadly defined in two different topic areas post Eichmann’s trial.

The first topic area of English language scholarship on post-war trials began in the late 1990s, with the emergence of writings focused on the Nuremberg trials. These perpetrators included leaders of the Nazi party, and high-ranking soldiers in the battlefield. Men remained the

¹³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 207-448.

¹⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 14-641.

¹⁵ [WO235/12 -WO235/23], [Reel 1], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General's Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

focus of examination in this topic area. Discussions included examining the lives of perpetrators, effectiveness in condemning war criminals, and the legacy that each war crime trials left behind. First topic area authors include Gary Jonathan Bass, Donald M. McKale, Hilary Earl, and Valerie Geneviève Hébert.

Gary Jonathan Bass discussed the broad functions and effectiveness of war crimes trials during the first topic area of scholarship. His analysis has been the most influential in understanding the ways in which justice became political after the war. Each occupational power did not serve justice to the Nazis equally. The victorious powers had their own ideals of justice, and a debate arose as to how to deal with war criminals. The debate dealt with whether trials should be held at all. Each nation suffered losses during the Second World War, and some Allied leaders argued for revenge killings rather than diplomacy. Overall, though, the author argues that the Allies saw war crimes trials as beneficial to the rebuilding of a nation, allowing democracy to prosper and dissuading those who argued for revenge. He stated, “There are easier ways to punish vanquished enemies. Victorious leaders have come up with an impressive array of nonlegalist fates for their defeated foes. One could shoot them on sight. One could round them up and shoot them en masse later. One could have a perfunctory show trial and then shoot them. One could put them in concentration camps.”¹⁶ By using examples of Nazi cruelty, they maintained that the Allies could have given into the revenge argument, but instead acted in a more suitable manner by holding trials. Even though Bass does not delve into women on trial, it is important to understand the conflict that arose between the conquering nations before the trials took place. To some extent, Bass’ argument explains why the Belsen trial was such a fiasco

¹⁶ Gary Jonathan Bass, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: the Politics of War Crimes Tribunals*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7.

since it was the first war crimes trial to be held in the British Zone of Occupation, and set the precedent for other war crimes trials.

Donald M. McKale also argued in a broad sense that many major perpetrators of the Holocaust escaped punishment. McKale argued that the postwar world did not wish to bring perpetrators to justice. He stated the Allies failed to bring justice to the survivors and allowed freedom to criminals. Both Bass and McKale argued that war crimes trials were beneficial, however, McKale is outraged with the minimal number of perpetrators brought to justice. His dissatisfaction stems from the Allies lack of seeking out Nazis, and convicted perpetrators receiving early release from prison.¹⁷ Although the Belsen trial was the first trial in the British zone, moving past the horrors of the Holocaust was still difficult, and many women on trial walked free since accepting women as murderers was incomprehensible.

Hilary Earl focused specifically on the Nuremberg SS- *Einsatzgruppen* Trial, arguing men became killers from Nazi teachings. Instead of examining all Nuremberg trials, as Bass and McKale, Earl focused her examination on a specific trial. In her biographical approach of Otto Ohlendorf and other *Einsatzgruppen* leaders, she argued against Daniel Goldhagen's widely accepted thesis that men in the *Einsatzgruppen* were natural born killers. Instead, Earl argued that through the teachings of Nazism, these men became killers.¹⁸ She stated that these men would have continued living their lives as 'normal' citizens, but the teachings of National Socialism made them mass murderers. The 1990 debate surrounding the question of whether Nazis were normal human beings who transformed into murderers or born killers who thrived in the concentration camp cruelty became a major theme of historical discussion. This debate is still

¹⁷ Donald M. McKale, *Nazis After Hitler: How Perpetrators of the Holocaust Cheated Justice and Truth* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2014).

¹⁸ Hilary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS- Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945-1958: Atrocity, Law, and History*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 15.

being argued in today's scholarship with a focus on whether the teachings of National Socialism led German women to become mass murders.

Valerie Geneviève Hébert also focused her examination on a specific Nuremberg trial. Hébert argued against the effectiveness of America's crusade for justice against Nazi crimes and contradicts the idea held by Americans that war crime trials necessarily teach German people about Nazi criminality. In addition to fourteen generals of the Wehrmacht placed on trial, twenty million ordinary German soldiers were also implicated.¹⁹ Hébert argued that American judges failed in providing Germans with re-education and denazification. By examining the assumptions and controversies held by the German people before, during, and after the trial, the author concludes that Americans did not achieve their goal. Her findings are in sharp contrast to the hopes and beliefs of the Allied powers that war crimes trials would stabilize Germany through re-education and be viewed as a justified democratic process rather than the idea of 'victor's justice.' Ultimately, the German people could not accept the idea that ordinary German soldiers had participated in the mass killings alongside the *Schutzstaffel* (SS).

Hébert maintained that the German people never accepted the legitimacy of the trials because of the soldiers' duty to follow commands, which became known as "command responsibility." Hébert understands command responsibility as "the degree of responsibility an officer bears for the conduct of soldiers under his command, the limits of military necessity, and the defense of superior order."²⁰ The idea of command responsibility became a well-established defense used by the perpetrators. Its acceptance stemmed from a German soldiers duty to the nation, which meant to follow orders, regardless of the orders' morality. Although not always

¹⁹ Valerie Geneviève Hébert, *Hitler's Generals on Trial: The Last War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 1-7.

²⁰ Hébert, *Hitler's Generals on Trial*, 2.

accepted by the Allies, most German citizens supported the defense. What is interesting is that women in the Belsen trial also used the command responsibility defense.

The second topic area of scholarship emerged around the late 1990s and early 2000s, examining smaller war crimes trials, also referred to as the lost war crimes trials.²¹ A further breakdown of this topic area includes how authors' focus on either men or women perpetrators. Examining men's crimes through trial transcripts began during the Nuremberg scholarship, and remained prevalent throughout the lost war crimes scholarship. Women, however, remained forgotten until Daniel Patrick Brown, publically exposed German women perpetrators in his 2002 book, *The Camp Women: The Female Auxiliaries Who Assisted the SS in Running the Nazi Concentration Camp System*. In this book, he listed the names of German women who committed crimes in the camp system.²² This book was the first of its kind, presenting German women's personal files, their assignments, ranks, and other data Brown deemed pertinent. This list of women led historians to realize that women could no longer be seen as victims. He argued that all of the women on the list were perpetrators of the Holocaust. Second topic area authors include Lawrence Douglas, Daniel Patrick Brown, Patrick Tobin, Flint Whitlock, Wendy Adele-Marie Sarti, Michael S. Bryant, and Michael J. Bazyler and Frank M. Tuerkheimer.

The first author to write on smaller post-war crimes trials, Lawrence Douglas, focused on the evidence of cruel and inhumane treatment of prisoners by outlining the most barbaric items found in some of the camp guards' homes. Instead of focusing on an individual perpetrator or trial, Douglas focused on evidence presented during the trial. Some objects recovered included shrunken heads, tattooed flesh removed from the bodies of those imprisoned, and bars of soap

²¹ Michael J. Bazyler and Frank M. Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, (New York: New York University, 2014), 6.

²² Daniel Patrick Brown, *The Camp Women: The Female Auxiliaries Who Assisted the SS in Running the Nazi Concentration Camp System*, (Atglen: Schiffer Military History, 2002).

made out of Jewish human bodies. The objects were an offense to civility and considered even more barbaric when the courts discovered that shrunken heads and tattoos were found in a woman's household. Douglas' mention of Ilse Koch as the woman who had shrunken heads and tattoo lampshades in her home is the first mention of women in a trial in secondary literature.²³

In addition to Brown's *The Camp Women*, he also examined the life of Irma Grese in order to understand the reasons for her cruelty in the camps. Brown argues that his work is path breaking because historians' focus had previously remained on male Nazi perpetrators, and he broke the traditional view of perpetration or the act of committing a crime based on gender. He argued that women were an integral part of the Nazi system, and their cruelty should receive the same attention as Nazi men. In discussing her life story, Brown argued that Grese changed into a monster through the teachings of National Socialism and the training she received at Ravensbrück concentration camp. Brown's approach was biographical, in hopes that finding a childhood trauma would explain her acceptance of Nazism. Both Earl and Brown examined an individual's life in order to understand why they accepted the teaching of Nazism.

Patrick Tobin emphasized the significance of Bernhard Fischer-Schweder biography in understanding the transitions former Nazis made in his article, "No Time for 'Old Fighters': Postwar West Germany and the Origins of the 1958 Ulm 'Einsatzkommando' Trial." Tobin claimed that Fischer-Schweder's story provides an understanding of the social and cultural differences in West Germany. After the end of World War II, Fischer-Schweder went into hiding and changed his name to Bernd Fischer. By 1950, Bernd Fischer had started over in a new city with a new name, new career, and new family.²⁴ In 1953, after the passage of Article 131 by

²³ Lawrence Douglas, "The Shrunken Head of Buchenwald: Icons of Atrocity at Nuremberg," *Representations* 63 (Summer 1998).

²⁴ Patrick Tobin, "No Time for 'Old Fighters': Postwar West Germany and the Origins of the 1958 Ulm 'Einsatzkommando' Trial." *Central European History* 44 no. 4 (December 2011): 690.

the Federal Republic of Germany that allowed former Nazis to reintegrate into civil service jobs, Fischer- Schweder decided to reclaim his previous name and admit to his Nazi past. German officials, prompted by survivors who recognized Fischer- Schweder, began to examine his life. German officials “discovered that Fischer- Schweder had acted not alone but as part of an *ad hoc* execution squad led by [Horst] Böhme, known as Einsatzkommando Tilsit. During the summer months of 1941, this squad had massacred more than five thousand civilians in at least twenty-two massacres within a twenty-five –kilometer zone of the German-Lithuanian border.”²⁵ The Ulm Einsatzkommando trial arose from Fischer- Schweder reclaiming his name and previous life.

Tobin argued the trial of the *Einsatzkommando* portrays “tension between an individual’s behavior and the changing expectations and values of postwar society. He [Fischer- Schweder] crucially overlooked these changes by assuming stasis in the political and social attitudes toward the Nazi era during the 1950s.”²⁶ During the postwar decade, government officials in Germany began to shift their perceptions towards accepting previous Nazis back into civil service jobs. Openly expressing participation in previous Nazi crimes, however, was not accepted. It is interesting that Fischer- Schweder decided to reclaim his Nazi past, especially since Nazi women never wished to, historians were the ones who reclaimed the pasts of Nazi women by producing biographies on certain German women guards, such as, Irma Grese. Grese was one of the main focuses of the Belsen trial.

Flint Whitlock also provides a biographical approach in his 2011 book, *Beasts of Buchenwald: Karl & Ilse Koch, Human-skin Lampshades, and The War-Crimes Trial of the Century*. He argued that because Ilse Koch was a woman, she was released from her trial without

²⁵ Tobin, “No Time for “Old Fighters””: 708.

²⁶ Tobin, “No Time for “Old Fighters””: 710.

a prison sentence. The author argued that at her trial, her gender saved her from death, “Somehow, perhaps by pretending to have a nervous breakdown in the courtroom, Frau Koch was acquitted of her charges for lack of evidence.”²⁷ Although there was plenty of testimony against Koch, the fact that there was no hard evidence against her plus she was female and pregnant ultimately saved her life. The uproar against her freedom from survivors was massive. In 1949, she was re-arrested, put back in court, and this time, Koch would receive a life sentence in prison for her crimes.

Wendy Adele-Marie Sarti outlined the extent of German women’s perpetration by examining lives, crimes, and trials of eleven German women. Sarti examined reasons Nazism appealed to women and provides biographical case studies of the cruelest women camp guards and overseers in Belsen concentration camp. These include some of the same women who will appear in this study. Sarti argues that “thousands of women involved with the Nazi party were...instructed to take a hard attitude toward prisoners, and for some of them this attitude and the arrogance that came from wielding such power led almost effortlessly into a kind of mindless, almost juvenile, type of brutality.”²⁸ Furthermore, she claims that these women were not born evil, but were taught to be cruel. In addition, the author argued that, even though, the Allies considered women to be of the nicer and gentler sex, these women were cruel and sadistic. She states, “Nazism gave many of these women a sense of identity and a collective purpose...Sadistic violence was a way to assert authority and control, and, quite possibly, release emotions, constrained anger, and act out revenge fantasies.”²⁹ Lastly, the author stated, “The crimes of the Nazi female perpetrators, however, small or large their role was, cannot be

²⁷ Flint Whitlock, *Beasts of Buchenwald: Karl & Ilse Koch, Human-skin lampshades, and the War- Crimes Trial of the Century*, (Wisconsin: Cable Publishing, 2011), 149.

²⁸ Wendy Adele- Marie Sarti, *Women + Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes During Hitler’s Regime, 1933-1945* (Palo Alto: Academia Press, 2012), 190.

²⁹ Sarti, *Women & Nazis*, 192.

overlooked.”³⁰ Just like Brown, Sarti argued that these German women were murderers; their actions cannot be forgotten.

Michael S. Bryant explored the relationship between previous Nazis now jurists and judges in *The Operation Reinhard Death Camp Trials*, arguing they did not produce lenient sentences for their fellow perpetrators. Bryant argued the decisions of West German court leaders in sentencing fellow perpetrators showed that the officials acted according to the standards of West German law. He argued that eyewitness testimony became the key to successfully prosecuting a defendant. He stated, “Closer inspection of the investigations and court proceedings reveals that Jewish survivor testimony was critical to securing convictions of death camp defendants.”³¹ If the prosecution could prove deaths occurred, pinpoint an exact date and time with witness testimony then perpetrators had difficulty contesting it. The author argued the lack of eyewitness testimony against perpetrators in the three trials of guards from Belzec, Treblinka, and Sobibór was the only failure of these trials. Although the camps on trial are different, the lack of eyewitness testimony was also crucial to the Belsen trial. Without an eyewitness to state that they had witnessed that death had occurred, the charge of murder was dropped.

One of the most recent publications on smaller war crimes trials includes Michael J. Bazyler and Frank M. Tuerkheimer examination of war crimes trials that have been forgotten over the years. Bazyler and Tuerkheimer argued that although other historians have analyzed some of the trials they have written on, the Nuremberg and Eichmann trials overshadowed the smaller trials thus, “because they have faded from public memory, we call them forgotten trials

³⁰ Sarti, *Women & Nazis*, 193.

³¹ Michael S. Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide: The Operation Reinhard Death Camp Trials, 1955-1966*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 17.

of the Holocaust.”³² The ten trials occurred in different countries; the authors argued this showed just how different the legal systems could be in prosecuting Nazi war criminals.³³ One of the trials chosen was the Hamburg- Ravensbrück trial, which was very similar to the Belsen trial. From the Ravensbrück trial, “women not only as victims, but also as perpetrators” was revealed.³⁴ The authors argued that trial transcripts and exploring the role that law played in denazifying the German people has yet to be explored.³⁵ Trial transcripts provide ample evidence on German women crimes.

Many historians mentioned used a biographical approach to investigate and explain their findings. Earl, Brown, Whitlock, and Sarti each argue that the only way in understanding an individual’s acceptance of National Socialist teachings comes from examining their pasts. Bass, Earl, Hébert, Tobin, McKale, and Bryant each filled in the gaps of men’s Holocaust history. Brown, Whitlock, and Sarti have engaged the questions of German women’s participation, and shown that there were, in fact, German women in concentration camps. These three authors took their argument a step forward and argued that these German women were perpetrators and routinely committed crimes of violence against victims in the camps.

Each of these authors’ arguments is relevant to the thesis. Specifically, the following chapters examine comprehending the functions of war crimes trials, German citizen’s views of war crimes trials, how other trials were influenced by the Belsen trial, and the ways in which German women were perceived by British court officials including judges, prosecution, and defense. These authors’ ideas are all imperative to understanding the actions of British judges in the Belsen trial pertaining to differences of opinion in men and women’s crimes. Gender analysis

³² Bazylar and Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, 6.

³³ Bazylar and Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, 7.

³⁴ Bazylar and Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, 9.

³⁵ Bazylar and Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, 303.

helps readers understand why there was a difference in sentencing between German men and women guards. German men guards who attacked prisoners until they were no longer conscious received ten to fifteen years in prison. German women guards who conducted the same act of violence received one to five years in prison. Although the crime was the same, the sentence was not.

Post-war trials exposed the extent of cruelty, inhumanity, and genocide of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Gender analysis has become important for the field of history. Women were an integral part of the Nazi system, and historians' should continue to expose crimes they committed during the Second World War. Through gender analysis, German women's violence in concentration camps is exposed. Furthermore, through the examination of the first Belsen trial, Col. Backhouse and Stirling exposed some of the women as perpetrators of the Holocaust. No longer known as only submissive, but murderers.

CHAPTER TWO: GENDERING NAZI GERMANY

War allowed for the radicalization of Nazi Germany. Destruction of war provided Nazis the opportunities to unleash their brutality, torture, and murder of targeted groups. Unchecked violence on social, mental, and racial groups deemed unworthy of living spread as Germans conquered new territory. Nazism and the fear associated with its name eventually spread throughout Europe, as did Hitler's dream of mass annihilation of the Jewish race. Evolution to mass systemized murder took time, and war aided in the transformation to radical outright murder.

This chapter will discuss changes in gender roles that shaped women's participation in Nazi Germany. Hitler, Himmler, and Goering's ideas on gender, citizenship roles, and status had a profound impact on German women's roles as mothers and workers. Although still considered inferior to men, Nazi concentration camps provided German women the opportunity to rebel against previously held notions of women's status as solely bearers of children. By obtaining positions in concentration camps, German women were able to gain status within the German women's hierarchy, and to some extent acceptance and status within the male S.S. hierarchy.

During the 1920s, Hitler provided his views on women's roles in Germany in his manifesto *Mein Kampf*. He stated, "The German girl [will] belong to the state and with her marriage become a citizen."¹ Furthermore, he added, "women who did not marry might qualify for citizenship, but only if they performed important services for the nation."² Hitler's views of German women were constricting, only allowing women rights to citizenship if they married and

¹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf: My Struggle*, editor Rudolf Hess (Decatur: White Wolf Publishing, 2014), 190. Kindle edition.

² Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 101. Kindle edition.

reproduced. Although not fully enforced, Hitler's ideas of German women as solely child bearers was still present in the Third Reich.

On January 30, 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler as chancellor of Germany. Once in office, he began to enact his vision for the future. Hitler believed in the superiority of certain races over others. Following ideas of previous racial hygienists, Hitler believed in a racial hierarchy. In order to achieve his goal of a superior Aryan race, Hitler needed to restructure the mindset of German people. Hitler did so by reorienting Germany along racial lines. In order to survive in Nazi Germany, citizens had to belong in the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a social and racial community of desired Aryans.

The Reich Citizenship Law enacted September 15, 1935, outlined the characteristics of a citizen in Nazi Germany. Jewish persecution began shortly after the enactment of this law. The law stated, "A citizen of the Reich is only that subject who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both willing and able to faithfully serve the German people and Reich."³ Furthermore, citizens in Nazi Germany must hold Reich citizenship papers.⁴ The first regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law came on November 14, 1935 and specifically targeted Jews deeming them unworthy to become citizens of Nazi Germany. Laws governing the definition of a racially acceptable German came from these promulgations.

According to the first regulation of the Reich Citizenship Law, German men and women deemed racially acceptable held superior talents.⁵ In addition, to superior talents, German men and women could not have a Jewish appearance.⁶ Instead, Nazi leadership determined Germans

³ http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1523

⁴ http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1523

⁵ Joseph W. Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, (Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2014), 21.

⁶ Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, 131.

should possess physical features such as blond hair and blue eyes.⁷ Fitting into Nazi Germany entailed more than just an individual's physical appearance. For German women, improving women's public status in the Reich also included men's use of their bodies.

Although German women gained citizenship at birth there were two avenues in which German women influenced their worth in Nazi Germany. Some German women stepped out of their natural roles as mothers, caretakers, and teachers, and into more masculine roles as leaders of women's Nazi organizations, camp leaders, and activists. Others remained content in their role of bearing children for the Nazi state. Many German women desired a family life or the realization of a society that gave priority to family matters. The closest these German women could get to this imagined life came from birthing children and praise on Mother's Day.

German women had two options to gain status within the female hierarchy. Each option had its own set of rules and order. The first was gained through the womb. Most of Europe was dealing with falling birth rates due to massive loss of life after the First World War.⁸ Germany especially pushed maternal politics during the Nazi era, by "granting mothers generous welfare benefits and social protection," if they produced desirable children.⁹ These incentives included, a tax break for large families, state-sponsored marriage loans contingent upon women leaving the workforce, health clinics to advise and support mothers, the revamping of Mother's Day, and the creation of the Mother Cross to publicly honor worthy German mothers.¹⁰ Each child produced meant an increase in status for the mother, and more incentives given to the family. Mother's

⁷ Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany*, 131.

⁸ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 248-249.

⁹ Vandana Joshi, "Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship: Aspects of Illegitimate Motherhood in Nazi Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46 (October 2011): 834.

¹⁰ Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-1945*, (Washington: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 18.

Day took the focus away from German men. In order to receive these incentives, German women had to conform to the racial standards set forth in the Reich Citizenship Law.

Nazi Germany's maternal politics were based in a racial mold, which was different from the rest of Europe's maternal politics. Nazis adopted "a set of ingenious ways...to persuade 'racially worthy' women to be prolific outside the traditional institution of marriage."¹¹ Nazi leaders made it clear to German women that only desirable Aryan children would be accepted. Mouton argued, "Nazi authorities joined together to implement a viscous antinatalism, labeling certain women- and men- undesirable and sterilizing them to prevent the spread of their genes."¹² Under Nazi rule, the very idea of motherhood transitioned from a strictly private affair to a public debate. By making it a public problem, Himmler was able to produce the *Lebensborn* project.

Himmler initiated the *Lebensborn* project in 1935, which allowed German women to have extramarital affairs with S.S officers in order to produce desirable German children.¹³ Even though the Nazis knew "that the *Lebensborn* was an affront to the prevailing bourgeois and Christian notions of sexual morality... they tried to persuade citizens to adopt a new racial and sexual morality that would not distinguish between marital and extra-marital pregnancies."¹⁴ Since the *Lebensborn* project was an affront to traditionally held ideas on marriage, it was kept secret by the Nazi elite.¹⁵ Nazi leadership gave the women involved in the *Lebensborn* project secret lives while pregnant. *Lebensborn* women included both middle-class single and married German women of childbearing age. These women obtained financial aid, jobs, and a place to

¹¹ Joshi, "Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship," 834.

¹² Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk*, 150.

¹³ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 533-535.

¹⁴ Joshi, "Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship," 838.

¹⁵ Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland*, 533-535.

live away from their home to carry the child and give birth without their families or neighbors knowing they were pregnant.¹⁶ In this manner, women could maintain “their dignity and respect,” while still maintaining their motherly duty to the German nation.¹⁷

Sterilization, prison time, or murder awaited German mothers who conceived by a man considered undesirable to the Nazi state. For example, if German women had sex with prisoners of war (POWs) and were caught by Nazi officials then Nazi doctors forcibly aborted the pregnancy and sterilized the woman.¹⁸ In 1933, the Law to Prevent Hereditarily Sick Offspring also known as *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*, legalized forced sterilization on German women to keep them from passing their flawed genes to the next generation of Germans.¹⁹ Some women found themselves subjected to trial in German courts for having sexual relations with POWs.²⁰ The *Lebensborn* project, while sexually freeing to some women, meant incarceration and dishonor for others.

The second avenue for women to obtain status in Germany was by aiding military efforts. These opportunities included working in munitions factories or at concentration and extermination camps. Juana Bormann, woman defendant on trial stated that many German women did not enjoy working in munitions factories since the hours were long and the work was hard.²¹ The other option for women was to work as guards in concentration or extermination camps.²² Many women left munitions factories and became guards since Germany conquered

¹⁶ Joshi, “Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship,” 838-840.

¹⁷ Joshi, “Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship,” 839.

¹⁸ Joshi, “Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship,” 834.

¹⁹ Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk*, 139.

²⁰ Joshi, “Maternalism, Race, Class, and Citizenship,” 841-843.

²¹ [WO235/14], [Reel 1], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General’s Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington DC., page 376.

²² Concentration camps as a segregation tool did not begin in Germany, but in Britain, “The first concentration camp in modern times was set up by the British authorities during the South African war to keep undesirable elements away until the fighting was over.” Concentration camps have been used before by almost all major powers. [WO 235/14], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 252.

more territory, and the need for additional guards flourished. With an ever-increasing number of men brought to the front to fight, German women were summoned to fill the void. German women accepted the challenge and turned previously held masculine positions in the camps into their own domains of power.

There were many different reasons for German women to seek employment or volunteer in the Nazi state. Husbands already working in camps encouraged their wives to apply for positions alongside them. Other instances show that some German women made more money working in camps, rather than their previous jobs in Germany. For example, one German woman guard was paid 150 to 190 marks when she began working for the S.S., rather than receiving 15 to 20 marks at the lunatic asylum she worked at in Germany.²³ For women who barely earned money, a position at a concentration camp was seen as their golden opportunity. German authorities put ads in local newspapers in attempts to recruit German women by promising, “job security, a responsible position, and wages higher than many nonskilled positions.”²⁴ By January 1945, “over three thousand *Aufseherinnen* worked at numerous camps.”²⁵ Through their various roles and responsibilities, German women became a significant part of the workforce at both concentration and extermination camps. These women were even able to advance in rank. Increased pay, living with their families, respectability among their male peers, and easier workdays led many if not all of the women in the Belsen trial to enter the workforce as guards.

Ravensbrück concentration camp became the notorious training camp for German women. The image below depicts locations of concentration camps throughout Germany, and

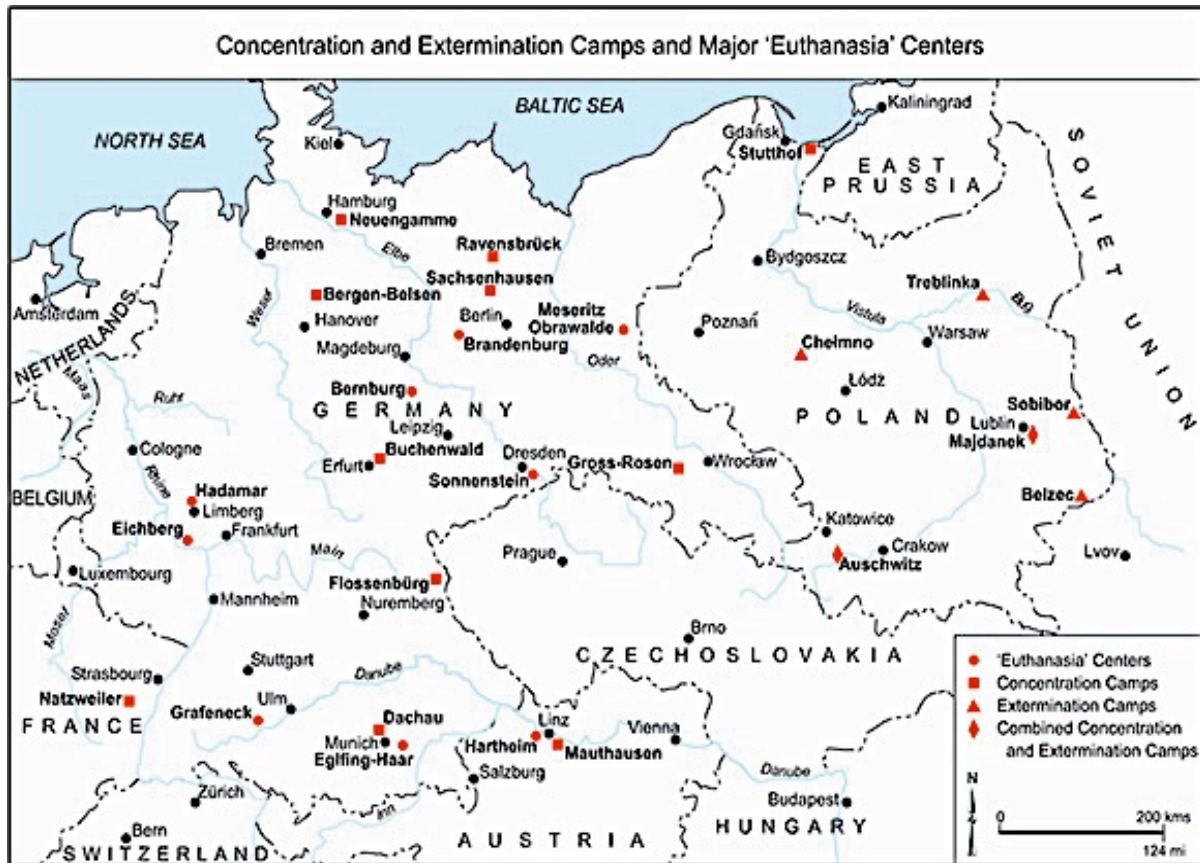
²³ [W0235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 19.

²⁴ Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 198.

²⁵ Wendy Adele- Marie Sarti, *Women + Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes During Hitler's Regime, 1933-1945*, (Palo Alto: Academia Press, 2012), 3.

German occupied territories. Ravensbrück is located at the top center section of the map above Sachsenhausen and the right of Neuengamme.

Image 1.1: Camps in Germany and German Occupied Territories



26

Ravensbrück opened on May 15, 1939, and instantly began recruiting and training SS-*Aufseherinnen*.²⁷ The number of *Aufseherinnen* has never been accurately calculated, but “recent figures suggest that Ravensbrück trained up to four thousand women.”²⁸ German women were trained to become nurses, guards, leaders, and overseers. Initially, training programs lasted

²⁶ "Concentration and Extermination Camps and Major 'Euthanasia' Centers," in Jeremy Noakes, ed., *Nazism, 1919-1945, Vol. 3: Foreign Policy, War, and Racial Extermination*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998, p. 645.

²⁷ Daniel Patrick Brown, *The Camp Women: The Female Auxiliaries Who Assisted the SS in Running the Nazi Concentration Camp System*, (Atglen: Schiffer Military History, 2002), 16.

²⁸ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 3.

several months, but as the war progressed, formal instruction reduced to only mere days. Towards the middle and end of World War II, as Allied armies pushed towards Germany, women barely received training before entering the camps.²⁹ Previously, however a normal training process began with a preliminary course on Nazi ideals. These women learned to uphold SS policies and racial aspects of Nazi ideology.³⁰ Then, women proceeded into Ravensbrück's main camp to receive on-the-job-training, which exposed them to the demands of actively serving in concentration camps.³¹

Training typically entailed methods for inflicting pain. Mild punishments included slapping and punching mainly used as an enforcer to maintain camp structure and regulations. Training did not always include torturing exercises, but torture was prevalent in camps and many German women adopted torture practices. Training also included teaching women ways to detect prisoner sabotage within the camps and prisoner escape plots.³² From the training received at Ravensbrück, German women guards received a full education on anti-Semitism, violence, and sex.

In addition to learning how to punish prisoners, training advisers also warned women that if they developed relationships with prisoners, they would be reprimanded severely.³³ Women guards mostly oversaw female prisoners, due to Himmler's fear that mixing German women and male prisoners would lead to the birth of an undesirable child. The main reason for concentration camps was to separate undesirables from desirables and make Germany pure. Mixing of female guards and male prisoners undermined that goal. German women however found ways to mingle with male prisoners. In one instance, Irma Grese became pregnant and forced the doctor to abort

²⁹ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 17.

³⁰ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 54-55.

³¹ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 17.

³² Brown, *The Camp Women*, 17-18.

³³ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 18.

the child.³⁴ The fear of punishment from Nazi authorities was such that Grese decided to put her life in danger to remove the child from ever being born. Since her actions were not brought to camp commandant Josef Kramer's attention until the Belsen trial, she was not reprimanded or sterilized.

Over time, an evaluator came and observed the women while they were training to determine whether they were suitable to become *Aufseherinnen*. If accepted, German women were sent to camps in need of women guards.³⁵ *Aufseherinnen* and other male S.S. guards taught National Socialist ideas, cruelty and ruthlessness to prospective German women guards. Their training prepared them for concentration camp life, which entailed tragedy, cruelty, and murder. Only the German women who would "conduct themselves in a ruthless manner could expect promotion."³⁶ German women's ranks began at the bottom with *Aufseherin*, or, 'guard'. Next, were the *Erstaufseherin*, or, first guard. These individuals were in charge of an entire block. At the top, and the highest rank obtainable by a German woman was *Oberaufseherin*, or, overseer. An overseer supervised all German women guards and female prisoners in her assigned area of the camp.³⁷

German women guards were sent to any concentration or extermination camp that held female prisoners. One of the better-known concentration camps German women guards were sent to was Bergen-Belsen, commonly known as Belsen and is the main camp examined in this thesis. Belsen opened in 1941, located southwest of the town of Bergen, near Celle near a military base.³⁸ Belsen opened as "a Russian prisoner-of-war camp," but by 1943, the S.S. took

³⁴ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 118.

³⁵ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 17.

³⁶ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 19.

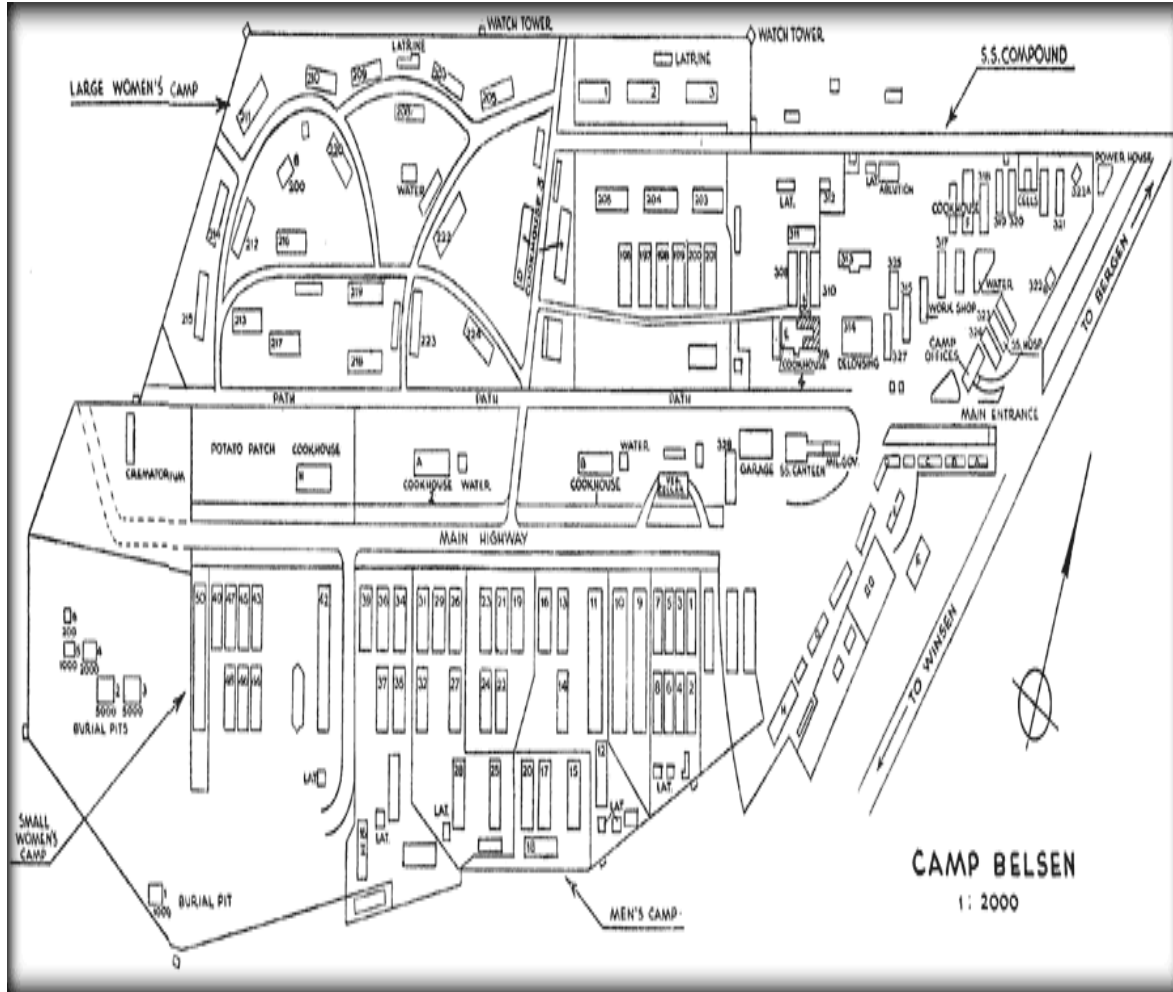
³⁷ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 19.

³⁸ Jane Caplan, "Introduction," in *Inside Belsen*, ed. Hanna Lévy-Hass (New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles, 1982), VII.

over the camp and turned it into a fully functioning concentration camp.³⁹ In so doing dividing the camp into five subsections so groups of undesirables would not mix. For example, Hungarians were put into their own sections separated from Polish Jews. Also, men and women undesirables were divided into their own sections with each subsection to keep the sexes separated. Once Belsen became a fully-fledged concentration camp, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Adolf Haas took command as the first camp commandant. *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Josef Kramer, who replaced Haas in 1944 and remained at the camp until its liberation in April 1945, would surpass Haas' cruelty. Both men aided in the mass extermination of undesirables through hiring guards that beat, starved, and murdered prisoners. The cruelty dealt to prisoners increased over the years, especially with the change of camp commandants. The image below depicts Belsen concentration camp's layout.

³⁹ Caplan, "Introduction," in *Inside Belsen*, VII.

Image 1.2: Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp Layout



40

Since Belsen was located in central Germany, it was a well-protected camp. It was not until Western Allies pushed through German borders, and evacuees from other camps began arriving at Belsen that camp officials doubted German forces abilities to fortify the camp, and camp guards ability to sustain normal operations. Beginning in 1944, as the Soviet Union began their offensive on the German army, camps located on the borders of Germany were evacuated, forcing prisoners to relocate.⁴¹ Many prisoners were relocated to better-protected camps, such as

⁴⁰ http://www.bergenbelsen.co.uk/pages/Trial/TrialIllustrations/MapsPlans/Map_01.html

⁴¹ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 215-229.

Belsen.⁴² The march from one camp to another was dangerous, and many prisoners died along the way. It is estimated between 250,000 to 375,000 people died during relocation. These forced marches were later termed death marches.⁴³ Even though Belsen received mass numbers of evacuees, coming from transit or extermination camps, Belsen was kept solely as a labor camp. Its means of murder included many forms of prisoner neglect and death as a form of punishment for egregious crimes. Prisoners at Belsen died from starvation and ill treatment along with previously mentioned neglect. While other camps initiated euthanasia and mass murder, Belsen deaths involved accounts of homicide through individual acts of violence, starvation, and disease.

Modern historians fail to remember the women in this camp as only recently have their lives, crimes, and deaths returned to the forefront of news. Concentration camps allowed women to possess more than the normally held jobs for women such as nurses, teachers, and hairdressers. It allowed them access into the male dominated world of administration, command, and power. German women did not normally receive positions of power with the authority to command others. Eventually, this newly found power corrupted German women. Witness testimony from the Belsen trial uncovered the guards' crimes at Belsen. Their statements are located in the Appendices.

The training received at Ravensbrück provided women the tools needed to enforce their cruelty. Some German women accepted the position of guard in the camps and instead of maintaining motherly compassionate roles, took on violent and savage roles normally associated with men. Taught to keep order in the camps, some women exceeded their training and turned into cruel guards and overseers. Whether forced to act violently or deciding on their own to enact

⁴² Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 215-229.

⁴³ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 215-229.

such brutality, these German women acted in such a way that shocked many of the judges in the Belsen trial. For example, testimony against concentration camp guard Ilse Forster in the Belsen trial, argued that she beat a girl so severely that the girl defecated, and Forster made her eat her feces, and then continued to beat the girl.⁴⁴ Another example of a woman exceeding their training comes from testimony against Juana Bormann, in which witnesses state that she trained her dog to violently attack prisoners leaving many of them disfigured or dead.⁴⁵ Furthermore, Irma Grese committed the act of ‘making sport’ on prisoners. Seen by court judges and lawyers as ill treatment, ‘making sport’ lasted for hours causing prisoners intense pain, and sometimes-even death. Women held vital roles at the camps and proved themselves responsible for committing truly gut-wrenching atrocities.⁴⁶

Motherhood or working for the military provided avenues for German women to advance in Nazi Germany. Through their wombs, sweat, and hard work these women provided children, munitions, and stability to Germany. Thus motherhood or military work allowed women status and acceptance in Germany. The lines of traditionally held gender roles evolved such that German women entered the workforce; however, the line of acceptable behavior by these women became blurred in the camps.

⁴⁴ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 171.

⁴⁵ [WO 235/14], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 12-22.

⁴⁶ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 3.

CHAPTER THREE: DENAZIFICATION THROUGH WAR CRIMES TRIALS

As early as 1941, Allies were aware of the atrocities by Nazis, when, Roosevelt and Churchill publicly stated, “the punishment of [Nazi] crimes should now be counted among the major goals of the war.”¹ Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union met at the Moscow Conference in 1943 where it was decided that, “at the time of the granting of any armistice to any government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi party who have been responsible for or who have taken part in [various aforementioned] atrocities, massacres and executions, will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of those liberated countries and of the Free Governments which will be erected therein.”² It was agreed upon that denazification would become the main way to rebuild the nation.

This chapter will discuss the ways in which war crimes trials in the British zone of occupation came to be conducted, including the passage of new laws in order to conduct a ‘just’ trial. Through war crimes trials, the denazification process was put on display for the world with reporters from around the world watching the trials.³ These events removed the teachings of National Socialism and besmirched the reputations of previous Nazi leaders.

Denazification although not technically gendered since every man and woman in Germany was supposed to be undergoing the process, was highly gendered in reality. German women on trial received lesser sentences for their crimes showing the world and more importantly other Germans that German women did not require denazification. In other words,

¹ Donald Bloxham, “British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957: Implementation and Collapse,” *Journal of British Studies* 42 (January 2003): 92

² Bloxham, “British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957,” 92.

³ Raymond Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, (London: William Hodge and Company, Limited, 1949), 639.

British judges and lawyers hesitated to hold German women accountable for their actions since many women argued they were just following the demands of German men. Judges and lawyers in the Belsen trial held German women to a lower standard of violence than German men, one that would leave the survivors of the camps in outrage.

The Allied leaders officially declared condemnation on Nazi perpetrators, and denazification was enacted after German leaders officially surrendered to the Allies on May 8, 1945. For British soldiers who spoke German their fight for justice did not end on May 8, 1945 but continued well into 1955.⁴ These British soldiers were transferred to the “British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) and British Control Commission for work that required a fluent knowledge of German.”⁵ The critical roles these soldiers were needed for included the “hunt for Nazi war criminals, ‘Odessa’ escapes, gathering evidence for war crimes trials, interrogations, intelligence duties, military government and all manner of work which requires their knowledge of German.”⁶ The BAOR soldiers began their work once Allied troops had reached and occupied a town or city. Denazification “usually meant the immediate replacement of the local *bürgermeister* (mayor) on the strength of local information. All Nazis had to be removed from positions of power or responsibility: from offices of government and political life, including those in leading economic positions, the judiciary and media.”⁷ Denazification also meant “the process of removing the stigma of having been a Nazi for those ‘lesser Nazis’ and led to restitution of full civil rights. This enabled lesser Nazis to vote again in general elections and to

⁴ Helen P. Fry, *Denazification: Britain’s Enemy Aliens, Nazi War Criminals and the Reconstruction of Post-war Europe*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2010), 13.

⁵ Fry, *Denazification*, 9.

⁶ Fry, *Denazification*, 10.

⁷ Fry, *Denazification*, 12-13.

have their jobs restored.”⁸ BAOR soldiers became the most influential to denazification in Germany. The information collected by them would aid British war crimes trials significantly.

Crimes committed in concentration and extermination camps were undeniable. Before the war ended, Roosevelt and Churchill argued the inhumane conditions German guards forced on powerless prisoners to live in were unacceptable. Once the war was over, Truman, Attlee, Stalin and victims of the Holocaust each added their beliefs to the debate. Two arguments were at the forefront of debate concerning which path Truman, Attlee, Stalin should take, mass murder or humane trials. Holocaust survivors and Russian citizens made an argument for executing all Germans who were involved in the mass murder and ill treatment of thousands of prisoner. In contrast, Truman and Attlee advocated the use of criminal trials in order to educate the German people with evidence of crimes committed by Nazi officers. While some survivors wished the same torture and pain they had endured onto their perpetrators, others felt “that they had been *wrongfully* hurt by the leaders of the Third Reich and wanted a *judgment* to that effect.”⁹ Trials became the humane way of enforcing justice and appease those who debated for mass murder. Only through denazification that came to mean war crimes trials, could German citizens begin to rebuild their lives, and move forward.

Both Churchill and Attlee were never keen on holding war crimes trials. They feared “revanchist Nazi propaganda,” in the courtroom.¹⁰ Churchill especially worried another war would arise from putting German war criminals on public display. Even though Churchill and Attlee did not want to hold war crimes trials, eventually, and after much pushing from Truman and Stalin, Attlee accepted the fact that war crimes trials would happen. Unable to rid Europe of

⁸ Fry, *Denazification*, 13.

⁹ Telford Taylor, *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials: A Personal Memoir*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1992), 33.

¹⁰ Bloxham, “British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957,” 94.

war crimes trials, Churchill and Attlee decided to restrict their efforts in holding war crimes trials. Donald Bloxham goes as far as to argue, “Denazification under the British was far less extensive than under the Americans.”¹¹ Even though Churchill and Attlee did not wish to prosecute all Nazis in their zone of occupation, the regulations passed in order to commence the trials showed that they were willing to aid in the denazification process.

New terminology was brought forth in the British zone of occupation, the phrase ‘ill treatment of prisoners’ was introduced to describe the treatment of prisoners¹² The British War Office and Secretary of State for War, Sir P.J. Grigg, aided in coining this phrase to describe the actions committed against prisoners by perpetrators. It held a different connotation than mere ‘violence.’¹³ Ill-treatment included starvation, lack of medical care, and lack of hygiene needed to stay alive.¹⁴ The term and connotation of ill treatment was mostly aimed at women guards, for women were supposed to be caring, and thus should have taken care of prisoners. However, male guards were also condemned for ill-treating prisoners since it crossed over the line of violence into savagery. Violence and ill-treatment were considered two very different crimes. Colonel Backhouse, the leading British prosecutor at the Belsen trial, argued that German men and women guards, “brought about not only criminal neglect but... deliberate starvation and ill-treatment, with the malicious knowledge that they must cause death.”¹⁵ Ill-treatment held a loftier punishment than mild offences of violence.

Each zone of occupation had its own way of conducting war crimes trials. For example, Truman followed U.S. Code Title 18 Chapter 118 legislations for holding war crimes trials in the

¹¹ Bloxham, “British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957,” 105.

¹² There are many different spellings to this phrase. Ill treatment, Ill-treatment, or Illtreatment, or Iltreatment.

¹³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 17.

¹⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 17.

¹⁵ Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 17.

United States zone of occupation. Whereas, trials under Great Britain's regulations were conducted by legislation of the Royal Warrant, which was headed by the Judge Advocate General's Department of the Army (JAG).¹⁶ The judge advocate's office would play an immense role in deciding who should be condemned for war crimes. The United States did not prosecute German women in the initial war crimes trials. The extent of German women prosecuted by the Soviet Union is not known. The British judges at the Belsen trial although protective over the German women defendants at least held a trial against the women.

The Royal Warrant outlined the regulations of a war crime. A war crime "means a violation of the laws and usages of war committed during any war in which His Majesty has been or may be engaged at any time since the 2nd September, 1939."¹⁷ There are thirteen regulations for a war crimes trial listed in the Royal Warrant. Regulation four and eight are of great importance to the Belsen trial. Regulation four stated,

If it appears to an officer authorized under the Regulations to convene a Military Court that a person then within the limits of his command has at any place whether within or without such limits, committed a war crime he may direct that such person if not already in military custody shall be taken into and kept in such custody pending trial in such manner and in the charge of such military unit as he may direct.¹⁸

This regulation allowed British military leaders to obtain statements from Nazis who were eventually charged with a war crime. These statements would be used in their trials as the basis of everyday occurrences in the camps, and their specific roles in the camps. From these statements, indictments were set against the Nazis found upon liberation of concentration and extermination camps. Regulation eight of the Royal Warrant stated,

At any hearing before a Military Court convened under these

¹⁶ Bloxham, "British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957," 93.

¹⁷ <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtroyal.asp>

¹⁸ <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtroyal.asp>

regulations the Court may take into consideration any oral statement or any document appearing on the face of it to be authentic, provided the statement or document appears to the Court to be of assistance in proving or disproving the charge notwithstanding that such statement or document would not be admissible as evidence in proceedings before a Field General Court-Martial, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing in particular.¹⁹

Regulation eight was extremely important to war crimes trials, especially since before 1945, English Law excluded the use of affidavits in a trial.²⁰ Circumstances of the Second World War had changed British court officials' decision on English Law. From affidavits, British lawyers received an abundance of information on Nazi crimes. From regulation eight, survivors who were incapable of testifying in person had a chance to have their statements read in open court.²¹ The only controversy the admission of affidavits caused was that they could not be cross-examined. Without cross-examination, the testimony sometimes led to confusion and outrage in courtrooms, as defendants had the right to face their accusers.

Reluctant as Churchill and Attlee were to hold trials, many war crimes trials would be held in Britain's zone of occupation. These trials include indictments against the Neuengamme concentration camp staff and the Ravensbrück women's camp staff.²² Also, trials were held against the personnel of several Gestapo prisons and against anyone who murdered British servicemen, specifically British airmen such as the Almelo trial and Zyklon B trial.²³ The British zone of occupation began its first set of trials in September 1945, with the first Belsen trial. Even with the new regulations set in place for the trial to begin, the Belsen trial was the longest and most uncoordinated trial held under British authority. The Belsen trial set the standards for the

¹⁹ <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtroyal.asp>

²⁰ N.C.H. Beresford, "The Belsen Trials 1945-48: An Investigation and Analysis," (Ph.D diss., University of Strathclyde, 2009), 8.

²¹ Beresford, "The Belsen Trials 1945-48," 8.

²² Bloxham, "British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957," 106.

²³ Bloxham, "British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957," 106.

rest of the war crimes trials to come. The decisions on sentencing and views of Nazism were fluid throughout trials held in the British zone of occupation.

CHAPTER FOUR: FIRST BELSEN TRIAL

The Belsen trials were, in fact, three separate trials. The first trial is significant to this study, as defendants of this trial were comprised of German Nazi men, women, and *kapos* who had worked at either Bergen-Belsen or Auschwitz or both. During the evening of January 18, 1945, the Red Army began bombing Auschwitz. Several if not all guards fled Auschwitz seeking shelter at Bergen-Belsen as its location in the middle of Germany provided a margin of safety.¹ Thus, certain Germans were prosecuted for crimes committed at both camps. This chapter will explore the ideologies of all major actors in the trial including Judge Advocate C. L. Stirling, Esq. and lead prosecutor Colonel T. M. Backhouse. It will also explain the different approaches the prosecution and defense took in questioning the women on trial.

The first Belsen trial lasted only three months. Officially, the trial was called ‘The Trial of Josef Kramer and 44 others’, but unofficially the trial was referred to simply as Belsen.² The trial was held in Lüneberg, Germany, located in Britain’s zone of occupation, and began on September 17, 1945. British judges that participated in the trial include Major-General H.M.P. Berney-Ficklin (presiding judge), Brigadier A. de L. Casonove, Colonel G.J. Richards, Lt.-Colonel R.B. Morrish, and Lt.-Colonel R. McLay. The Judge Advocate presiding over the trial was C. L. Stirling, Esq. Stirling became the leading figure in the trial and his judgments and presumptions would influence other judges.

Stirling presided over many trials in the British zone of occupation. Although Stirling did not officially pass judgment during sentencing, he influenced trial outcomes in several ways. He had the ability to question witnesses, perpetrators, and had power to either add or eliminate

¹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, (New York: A Touchstone Book Published by Simon & Schuster, 1996), 155-157.

² Raymond Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, (London: William Hodge and Company, Limited, 1949), XXIII-XLV.

affidavits. Furthermore, Stirling addressed the court with his summation of findings on each of the accused. In the Zyklon B trial, held in the British Military Court in Hamburg, Germany in March 1946 he provided his views on normal civilians whom he believed were dragged into Nazism. In his summation, he stated, “The decision of the Military Court in the present case is a clear example of the application of the rule that the provisions of the laws and customs of war are addressed not only to combatants and to members of state and other public authorities, but to anybody who is in a position to assist in their violation.”³ Stirling argued that although war criminals were normally seen as soldiers in the military, in this case the term war criminal extended to civilians.⁴ Each trial conducted in the British zone of occupation had to overcome the idea of civilians participating in Nazi crimes. Especially in the Belsen trial, in which women were deemed normal impressionable civilians. Furthermore, the judges and lawyers presumed that since women were impressionable then men must have forced women to commit violent crimes.

Stirling also passed guilty judgments on those who were held equally accountable for an act of violence. The Almelo trial, held in the British Military Court in Almelo, Holland in November 1945 was held against three individuals, Georg Otto Sandrock, Ludwig Schweinberger, and Franz Joseph Hegemann for killing a British POW. In his summation, he stated, “There was no dispute that all three knew what they were doing and had gone there for the very purpose of having this officer killed. If people were all present together at the same time taking part in a common purpose of all, they were all equally guilty in law.”⁵ This decision was one that had been previously decided in the Belsen trial, since it was the first trial of such a large

³ <http://www.blacktriangle.org/zyklonbcasesmall.pdf> page 103.

⁴ <http://www.blacktriangle.org/zyklonbcasesmall.pdf> page 103.

⁵ http://www.worldcourts.com/imt/eng/decisions/1945.11.26_United_Kingdom_v_Sandrock.pdf page 40.

group of people. Even though the perpetrators of Belsen concentration camp were tried separately their guilt was decided by the actions of their fellow perpetrators.

In his summation of the Belsen trial, Stirling provided his thoughts on the accusations of beatings brought forth against guards at Belsen. He stated, “You are not here to punish any man or woman for beating people if you are satisfied that although it was irregular the conditions were such that they justified it.”⁶ From his remarks it is clear that Stirling argued women although violent were not brutal. Furthermore, Stirling endeavored to provide other judges with a standard by which to judge the women.

The British precedent of coverture also shaped Stirling’s judgments. Coverture’s origin was in common law introduced in the early modern period that argued once a woman was married all of her rights and responsibilities were bequeathed to her husband.⁷ The ideas of coverture set in the eighteenth-century by William Blackstone, argued that, “by entering into marriage, two become one, and the husband assumes that, by entering into marriage, two become one, and the husband subsumes or covers the wife.”⁸ Furthermore, Blackstone stated, “coverture refers both to the many restrictions imposed on married women under the common law and to the idea of the wife as under her husband’s cover, that is, both protected and obscured.”⁹ Men made decisions and women were supposed to follow them. Ever since coverture was enacted, men regarded women as weak, nonviolent, and nurturing.¹⁰

Numerous times throughout the trial Judge Advocate Stirling took on a fatherly approach while dealing with the women defendants, arguing in defense of the German women. From his

⁶ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 635-636.

⁷ Frances E. Dolan, “Battered Women, Petty Traitors, and the Legacy of Coverture,” *Feminist Studies* 29 (Summer 2003): 255.

⁸ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol 1 (1765), 442-445.

⁹ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol 1 (1765), 442-445.

¹⁰ Dolan, “Battered Women, Petty Traitors, and the Legacy of Coverture,” 250.

comments it is clear that he understands coverture as a man taking care of women in a protective sense. In one instance he told the prosecution that the women did not have to explain themselves. He stated, “I think the witness ought to say yes or no to many of these questions, and if there is an explanation then she can give it after.”¹¹ In attempts to protect the women from damning testimony, Stirling offered that the women only respond with a simple yes or no to the prosecutions questions. Later on in the trial Stirling questioned Irma Grese himself as to ascertain whether she had ill-treated prisoners. Unable to believe that a girl of only fifteen years at the time would have willingly participated in violence, Stirling blatantly asked her, “Did you in Belsen ever take part in what you call making sport?”¹² Grese replied, “I myself made sport with the prisoners.”¹³ Stirling continued to question her, “It was rather strenuous to the prisoners, was it not?”¹⁴ To which she replied, “Yes.”¹⁵ Stirling’s optimism in German women’s nurturing nature failed with Grese’s testimony.

Another example of Stirling attempting to protect the women came when Elizabeth Volkenrath was on the stand. Stirling stated, “It is quite clear as regards the Kramer incident that she was saying that a prisoner was brought back from escape and Kramer beat her but she took no part in it.”¹⁶ In this instance Stirling attempted to defend Volkenrath from claiming participation in a beating. In another instance however, he would not protect her. An affidavit by Katherine Neiger was brought to Stirling’s attention in which he stated, “there is an allegation of a serious nature made against Volkenrath,” which condoned Volkenrath as beating a young girl

¹¹ [WO 235/15], [Reel 1], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General’s Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC., page 97.

¹² [WO235/15], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 148.

¹³ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 148.

¹⁴ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 149.

¹⁵ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 149.

¹⁶ [WO235/14], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 41.

to death with a rubber stick.¹⁷ In this affidavit, a witness definitively stated that Volkenrath had committed murder, something that Stirling could not protect her from, nor did he try to. Stirling's attempts at protecting the German women on trial only extended to those who did not commit brutal crimes sometimes ending in murder.

Lead prosecutor Colonel T. M. Backhouse furious with the crimes committed at Belsen, interrogated defendants ruthlessly attempting to discern the truth. In his opening statement, Col. Backhouse made his observations on the men and women on trial very clear. He stated, "that there was deliberate killing of thousands and probably millions of people, and that each of the accused who, was serving at Auschwitz and is charged in the second charge had his or, [sic] her share in this joint endeavor in this group of persons who were carrying out this policy of deliberate extermination."¹⁸ Furthermore, Col. Backhouse stated, "can this Court for one moment believe that the persons engaged in that did not know that what they were doing was wrong and contrary to every law and custom of war?"¹⁹ Col. Backhouse did not believe that guards at Auschwitz were not aware of the gas chamber when every survivor that entered in a deposition or affidavit mentioned that they were aware of the gas chambers. He stated that guards who argued disbelief or no knowledge were lying.

Col. Backhouse insisted that all defendants should be condemned no matter how small their role since all played a part in the Nazi system of terror. His argument was known as a general conspiracy argument which meant viewing "the evidence as a whole, arguing that each defendant should "bear the responsibility not only for the actions of his own hand but for the actions of this criminal gang who were working together."²⁰ Col. Backhouse believed that

¹⁷ [W0235/14], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1, page 43.

¹⁸ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 17.

¹⁹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 590.

²⁰ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 17.

although each defendant was being tried separately his or her actions should be viewed as a singular unit. He believed in joint punishment since the environment of the camps, and witness testimony suggested that all guards interacted in some way or another. The guards who were known for committing ill treatment were aligned with those who were being tried for only committing minor offences. No matter the charge, Col. Backhouse believed each of the guards was guilty.

Col. Backhouse and Stirling both held the notions of submissive women through the idea of coverture, but both men had limits on what they believed was forced violence and willing violence. Both men believed that some women on trial had been coerced into committing violent acts, whereas others willfully committed violence because it was amusing and fun. The women that Col. Backhouse believed had been coerced and did not exceed his ideals of womanhood, were given lenient interrogations during their testimonies. Also, Stirling showed leniency in his final summation of whether the women were truly guilty or not arguing that violence although committed was needed to maintain the camp.²¹ The main difference between the two men involves Col. Backhouse finding fault in many if not all of the women, arguing that most of them had crossed the line from womanhood and savagery; whereas, Stirling believes many of the male guards forced women to commit violence.

Defense attorneys in the British zone of occupation normally represented four to five accused perpetrators in a single trial. Each of the defense attorneys argued diligently against the claims of brutality on their defendants in different ways. Many of the men and women defendants when pressed by their defense lawyers either admitted to certain low level crimes or argued no knowledge of violence at all. These two defenses were used by all of the accused as a way to deter responsibility or admittedly only agree to crimes such as slapping or boxing ears.

²¹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 630-641.

The defendants however, never admitted to ill-treating prisoners. Ill-treatment along with murder held a heavy connotation of evil, which no defense lawyer wanted its defendants agreeing to.

The defense attorneys and the accused in the Belsen trial are in the chart below. Many defense lawyers defended both men and women.

Table 1.1: Defending Attorneys and the Accused

Defending Attorneys	Accused
Major T.C.M. Winwood, R.A.	Josef Kramer, Dr. Fritz Klein, Peter Weingartner, George Kraft
Major A.S. Munro	Franz Hoessler, Juana Bormann, Elisabeth Volkenrath, and Herta Ehlert
Major L.S.W. Cranfield	Josef Klippel, Irma Grese, Ilse Lothe, and Hilde Lobauer (Lohbauer)
Captain D.F. Roberts, R.A.	Oscar Schmedidzt (Schmitz), Karl Firazich (Francioh),
Major C.W. Brown, R.A.	Fritz Mathes, Otto Calesson (Kulesa), Karl Egersdorf, Ladislaw Gura
Captain J.H. Fielden, R.A.	Anchor Pinchen (Ansgar Pichen), Walter Otto, Franz Stofel
Captain B.W. Corbally, M.C.	Heinrich Schreirer, Wilhelm Dor (Dorr), Eric Barsch, Erich Zoddel
Captain A.H. S. Neave	Ignatz Schlomoivicz, Ilse Forster, Ida Forster, and Klara Opitz
Captain J. R. Phillips, M.C., R.A.	Charlotte Klein, Herta Bothe, Freida Walter, and Irene Haschke
Captain J.M. Boyd, R. A.	Gertrud Fiest, Gertrud Sauer, and Hilde Lisiewitz
Captain D. E. Munro	Johanne Roth, Anna Hempel, and Hildegard Hahnel
Lieutenant A. Jedrzejowicz	Anton Polansk, Antoni Aurdzeig, Vladislav Ostrowoski (Ostrowski), Helena Kopper

The British war tribunal would ultimately prosecute twenty-three men and twenty-one women for their brutal crimes.²³ Violence that occurred in Belsen was horrifying. To show the complete disregard for human life, and violence committed against innocent victims Col. Backhouse stated, “Lying about the camp there were no less than 13000 corpses unburied...the condition of the corpses was something which cannot be imagined. They were so thin that it was easy for a normal man or woman to carry one, but the living were in such a weak and dreadful condition that it took four of them to drag one.”²⁴ Furthermore, in order to convey the desperate conditions of the camp and virtual lack of life in victims, court judges were shown a video of the camp. After showing the video, Col. Backhouse stated, “The causes of death were mainly starvation, thirst and ill-treatment, beating to death and shooting, but the starvation was killing every person in that camp.”²⁵ Moreover, “If a man did not die directly of starvation, he was so weakened that he had no resistance whatsoever to disease. If he did not die of either, he died of overwork or of the beating he received.”²⁶ German guards’ ill treatment and brutality led prisoners to the point of emaciation, and finally death. Starvation was not fast; it took time and was deliberate.

Lack of proper nutrition and care was a crime, and punishable, therefore the trials brought indictments on two charges.²⁷ All forty-five defendants would be tried on the first charge of ill treatment and murder of innocent prisoners at Belsen. The indictment read as follows,

Committing a war crime in that they at Bergen- Belsen,
Germany, between 1 October 1942 and 30 April 1945 when

²² [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 4-5.

²³ [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 5.

²⁴ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 34.

²⁵ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 34.

²⁶ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 34.

²⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, XXX.

members of the staff of Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp responsible for the well being of the persons interned there, in violation of the law and usages of war were together concerned as parties to the ill treatment of certain of such persons causing the deaths... [of] Allied nationals whose names are [known and] unknown.²⁸

Only five of the twenty-three men and six of the twenty-one women would also be tried on the second charge of ill treatment, physical suffering, and mass murder of innocent victims at

Auschwitz. The indictment read as follows,

Committing a war crime in that they at Auschwitz, Poland, between 1 October 1942 and 30 April 1945 when members of the staff of Auschwitz Concentration Camp responsible for the well being of the persons interned there in violation of the law and usages of war were together concerned as parties to the ill treatment of certain of such persons causing the deaths of...Allied nationals whose names are unknown and physical suffering to other person interned there, Allied nationals...and other Allied nationals whose names are unknown.²⁹

Once all the witness testimony and survivor affidavits had been submitted to the five British judges, the court initiated these indictments against the perpetrators. During this entire process, the perpetrators awaited their outcomes in prison. The tables show that men and women were equally indicted, however court records will show that sentencing was lenient on women once the trial commenced. It also exposes, which men and women were charged for crimes at Belsen, Auschwitz, or both. Those who were tried for both participated in the death marches, and their names were well known to survivors. There were more affidavits presented to the court on the guards who were charged at both camps, allowing the prosecution and defense more time to interrogate and discuss these ten guards' lives and crimes at Belsen and Auschwitz. The names of the twenty-three German men that stood trial, and the indictments against them are listed in the table below.

²⁸ [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 10.

²⁹ [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 10.

Table 1.2: Indictments Against Men

Accused	1st Charge- Bergen-Belsen	2nd Charge- Auschwitz
Antoni Aurdzig	Yes	No
Erich Barsch	Yes	No
Medislaw Burgraf	Yes	No
Wilhelm Dörr	Yes	No
Karl Egersdörfer	Yes	No
Karl Franzioh	Yes	No
Franz Hössler	No	Yes
Fritz Klein	Yes	Yes
Josef Klippel	Yes	No
Josef Kramer	Yes	Yes
Georg Krafft	Yes	No
Otto Kulesa	Yes	No
Fritz Mathes	Yes	No
Wladisław Ostrowski	Yes	No
Walter Otto	Yes	No
Anton Polanski	Yes	No
Ansgar Pichen	Yes	No
Ignatz Schlomowicz	Yes	No
Oskar Schmitz	Yes	No
Heinrich Schreier	No	Yes
Franz Stofel	Yes	No
Peter Weingärtner	Yes	Yes

Erich Zoddell	Yes	No
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³⁰

The names of the twenty-one German women that stood trial and the indictments against them are listed in the following table.

Table 1.3: Indictments Against Women

Accused	1st Charge- Bergen-Belsen	2nd Charge- Auschwitz
Juana Bormann	Yes	Yes
Herta Bothe	Yes	No
Herta Ehlert	Yes	Yes
Gertrud Fiest	Yes	No
Ida Forster	Yes	No
Ilse Forster	Yes	No
Irma Grese	Yes	Yes
Hildegard Hahnel	Yes	No
Irene Haschke	Yes	No
Anna Hempel	Yes	No
Charlotte Klein	Yes	No
Helena Kopper	Yes	No
Hilde Lisiewitz	Yes	No
Hilde Lobauer	Yes	No
Ilse Lothe	Yes	Yes
Klara Opitz	Yes	No

³⁰ [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 8-9.

Johanne Roth	Yes	No
Gertrud Sauer	Yes	No
Elisabeth Volkenrath	Yes	Yes
Freida Walter	Yes	No

31

Gender and the question of how to treat women defendants arose at the outset of the trial. On September 17, 1945 the trial commenced and Captain Phillips pleaded that women tried for crimes at both Belsen and Auschwitz endured unnecessary added embarrassment.³² He argued for a separation of trials by camps, in hopes of a reduction in charges against the women. With a combined trial, the defense argued the judges only heard monstrous tales by witnesses.³³ The defense knew how the court and newspapers perceived these women, and their arguments potentially hurt the defense's case to save the women. Even with the defense's plea to the judges to separate the trials, separation did not occur. Stirling and Col. Backhouse argued against the idea of embarrassment, in so doing making an important gesture to the women. Stirling argued the women would not be embarrassed to relive their crimes in court since they committed them in the camps in front of other guards and prisoners.³⁴ This was one of the only instances in which judges treated men and women on trial equally.

Afterwards, the prosecution read survivor affidavits and began his opening statement. In his statement, Col. Backhouse alluded to the acts of individual guards considered most atrocious. For example, he stated, "You will hear that some of those SS women amused themselves by having large hounds which they set upon persons, deliberately let them tear the person to

³¹ [WO 235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 8-9.

³² [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 21.

³³ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 21.

³⁴ [WO235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 19-22.

pieces.”³⁵ Furthermore he argued, “That was one of their amusements, but the real purpose was the quite cold-blooded determination to exterminate all who were not fit to act as beasts of burden for Germany.”³⁶ This statement was a clear reference to Juana Bormann’s violence in Belsen. Moreover, Col. Backhouse blamed the women for Belsen’s conditions. He argued that women were to be blamed for ill treatment of prisoners because they should have cared, and helped the slowly dying prisoners. From Col. Backhouse’s observations of the camp, and survivors’ testimony, he picked out the women on trial he disliked most. These women received bitter comments from him and in his statements it is clear that he did not see these women as mere women. To him, the most violent women guards were seen as abominations.³⁷

Gender expectations and ideologies were heavily prevalent in the Belsen trial. Views of German women drastically changed from person to person. Judge Advocate Stirling’s notions of coverture and patriarchy on women were completely different from prosecutor Col. Backhouse’s views of the women as murderers. Alternatively, the defense attorneys argued women were submissive to men’s orders. Of the two genders, men were deemed capable of committing murder. All five British judges could not fathom that a woman committed murder, or worse, tortured an individual to death.³⁸ Women did not receive the same punishments as men, and were perceived as being subordinates to the male leader of the camp. The judges argued women could only serve as subordinates that were influenced into committing crimes in concentration camps against prisoners. These women were not even seen by judges and defense lawyers as accomplices, but victims. The enduring ideas of British coverture kept the status of German women guards as victims intact, removing the idea of ‘victims’ took a long time.

³⁵ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 41.

³⁶ [WO 235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 41.

³⁷ [WO235/13], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 25-42.

³⁸ [WO235/12 -WO235/23], USHMM, RG- 59.016M, Reel 1.

CHAPTER FIVE: GERMAN MEN AT BELSEN- CIVILIZED OR SAVAGE

Instilled in Col. Backhouse's definition of manhood and civilization contained the ideals of strength and self-discipline. These ideals ran completely opposite to what the five British judges and defense lawyers' saw in German men. The violence explained in affidavits from survivors was a stark contrast to what British judges viewed as civilized. During the interwar years, the definition of British manhood changed to a more physical movement revolving around strength and hard work. In July 1937, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth held a Festival of Youth at Wembley Stadium where 11,000 men and women participated in over forty athletic organizations.¹ This festival played an important role in linking manliness, physical stature, and nationalism in interwar Britain.² Strength was the only way for men to hold citizenship in Britain, and be able to claim their manliness.³ British officials considered soldiers the strongest and most masculine in Britain, promoting incredible self-discipline and hard work.⁴ Therefore, the five British judges and lawyers saw ill-treatment of a prisoner as a most savage form of violence, which defied the ideas of manhood and masculinity. This chapter explores the interactions between the male defendants, prosecutors, and defense lawyers during the trial. Through their interactions Judge Advocate Stirling and both prosecution and defense lawyers explored their views of manhood and explain where each drew the line at ill treatment.

The lead prosecutor Col. Backhouse began his inquiry into men's crimes by defining the different levels of violence committed in concentration and extermination camps. Col. Backhouse asserted that men on trial did not hold the ideals of strength and self-discipline necessary to be considered a man since, "they used anything that came to their hands, iron bars

¹ Ina Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41 (October 2006): 595.

² Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman," 596.

³ Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman," 596.

⁴ Zweiniger- Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman," 598-599.

fists and feet, and as a rule beat them on the head and continued the merciless beating after then men had been knocked to the ground.”⁵ Col. Backhouse implied that although strength was a characteristic of manhood, brute force against innocent victims was not what manhood entailed. Instead, strength should have meant running the camp without needing to use brute force, and also to stop their attack once the victim had fallen to the ground.

From witness testimony, Col. Backhouse was able to ascertain the three different levels of violence committed in the camps, and from this information argued that certain acts of violence violated the ideals of manhood. The first level of violence encompassed minor offences. Survivors and later BOAR soldiers and British judges stated that minor offences, which were also seen as normal day-to-day occurrences, included crimes such as boxing ears and slapping.⁶ It also included crimes such as hitting someone with an object, such as a pipe or tree branch. Many guards argued they committed normal day-to-day minor offences in order to keep prisoners’ attention and control over the camp.⁷ These acts of violence did not end in death and are thus considered only mild. The second level involved more grievous assaults. Once again, survivors, BOAR soldiers, and judges stated that much crueler grievous assaults such as kicking and punching all over one’s body, and ‘making sport.’⁸ Death was the only distinguishing factor between these two levels of violence.

⁵ Raymond Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, (London: William Hodge and Company, Limited, 1949), 23.

⁶ Wendy Adele- Marie Sarti, *Women + Nazis: Perpetrators of Genocide and Other Crimes During Hitler’s Regime, 1933-1945*, (Palo Alto: Academia Press, 2012), 1-9.

⁷ [WO235/12 -WO235/23], [Reel 1], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General’s Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

⁸ ‘Making sport’ means forcing individuals to run a certain distance, drop to the ground, get back up, and run back to where they started. This exercise repeatedly happened for long periods of time.

The third level entailed ill treatment of prisoners, and was considered by Col. Backhouse as the worst affront to manhood. Ill-treatment included starvation, torture, and neglect.⁹ Torture ranged from having prisoners stand for hours on end, to severe beatings with whips, branches, and steel pipes. Victims could also be water boarded or hanged by their arms for hours. Dogs were utilized as another form of violence in torturing prisoners. At times, the dog attack escalated to the point where limbs were severed from victims' bodies.¹⁰ These dog attacks usually ended in death, whether instantaneous or prolonged. Many victims did not survive after the infliction of such brutality.¹¹ Neglecting prisoners led to their death, which went against the British ideals of manhood. British laws to holding prisoners had been violated.

Once the three levels of violence had been established, Col. Backhouse was prepared to begin his inquiry of manhood on the male defendants. Col. Backhouse made a point to highlight not only the violence committed by these men but also the guards' complete disregard for life. The affidavits and depositions are listed in Appendix A-Z. These affidavits are crucial to understanding the questioning and demeanor of the lawyers in the trial. The individuals who received the most attention from Col. Backhouse were Ansgar Pichen and Erich Zoddell. Col. Backhouse believed these men to have crossed the line of civilization into savagery.

Ansgar Pichen who had witness statements against him for committing ill treatment was deemed one of the worst guards at Belsen. Col. Backhouse began his inquiry into Pichen by asking him about his ill treatment of prisoners. Col. Backhouse asked, "By that time the prisoners were getting pretty hungry, were they not?"¹² Pichen replied, "I do not know, but I

⁹ [W0235/12 -W0235/23], USHMM, RG-59.016M, [Reel 1].

¹⁰ [W0235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 13.

¹¹ [W0235/12 -W0235/23], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1.

¹² Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 321.

must assume that they were.”¹³ Even though Pichen had cart-loads of turnips delivered to his kitchen twice daily, he refused to feed the starving prisoners adequate amounts of food. In order to complete Col. Backhouse’s argument of ill treatment, he asked, “They were dying of hunger all around you, were they not?”¹⁴ Pichen replied, “I know that many did die, but whether of starvation I cannot say. I saw that they were very thin.”¹⁵ Thus, Col. Backhouse argued he aided in the ill treatment and neglect of prisoners that eventually caused murder.

There were many different ways in which guards entertained themselves in the camps. One such way was to see how many prisoners they could shoot from different locations in the camps. Col. Backhouse believed that Pichen participated in such entertainment. He asked, “I put it to you that on 13th April you shot two men who were trying to get some turnips?”¹⁶ To which Pichen replied, “It is not true.”¹⁷ Col. Backhouse pushed further, “I suggest to you that you went back to the kitchen to put the foodstuffs down and then went out and shot a prisoner with your pistol?”¹⁸ Pichen replied, “The pistol was locked in the cupboard and in any case I had difficulties with my arm.”¹⁹ Furthermore, Col. Backhouse inquired, “I put it to you that you indulged not just once but on more than one occasion in what had become a popular sport in Belsen that was for the cooks to shoot prisoners who came around the cookhouse?” Pichen replied, “No.”²⁰ From witness statements and Col. Backhouse inquiry it is probable that kitchen guards participated in this ‘sport’ of shooting prisoners. The accusations against Pichen included grievous assaults and ill treatment. British views of manhood dictated strength and self-discipline,

¹³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 321.

¹⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 322.

¹⁵ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 322.

¹⁶ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 322.

¹⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 322.

¹⁸ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 322.

¹⁹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 323.

²⁰ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 323.

neither of which Pichen upheld. Pichen had ill-treated prisoners and thus had crossed over the line of civilized notions of manhood.

Col. Backhouse was also convinced that Erich Zoddel had crossed the line of manhood into savagery since testimony showed he committed ill treatment as well.

While questioning Zoddel, he stated that nobody in his camp died of starvation or from lack of proper care.²¹ Col. Backhouse did not believe him and asked him, “What did they die of?”²² To which Zoddel replied, “Normal diseases - lung trouble, stomach ulcers, T.B., etc., and later, of course, when typhus broke out.”²³ Unable to believe Zoddel’s testimony, Col. Backhouse continued to press Zoddel about his ill treatment of prisoners. He stated, “When the British arrived I suppose in your compound they found everybody well fed and quite different to the others?”²⁴ Zoddel replied, “They could not find them quite all right because there was a great scarcity of bread, and for the last four weeks we had very little. They got their ration of soup, but it was impossible to eat it because it was so bad, thin and dirty.”²⁵ At this point, Zoddel admitted that prisoners were very hungry but denied any involvement of keeping food from them. Instead he argued the food was terrible and thus was not his fault.²⁶

Zoddel was not only tried for ill treatment but also minor offences. Col. Backhouse had learned from survivor affidavits that Zoddel used to frequently beat other prisoners with sticks. From this information he stated, “I suggest that you met this man Lozowski speaks of...and without waiting to enquire why, you started to beat him about the head and split his skull

²¹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 364.

²² Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 364.

²³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 365.

²⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 365.

²⁵ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 365.

²⁶ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 364- 365.

open?”²⁷ Zoddel replied, “No, that is not possible.”²⁸ Col. Backhouse continued to press about Zoddel’s violent nature by asking about another crime mentioned in an affidavit that Zoddel had beaten an individual near the food. He asked, “Do you really mean to say that you never hit anybody who did that?”²⁹ Zoddel stated, “I myself was not concerned very much with food distribution and was hardly ever present... It might have happened that I saw somebody try to get a second helping and I boxed his ears or slapped his face, but I never beat anybody with my stick during the distribution of food.”³⁰ Since Col. Backhouse was unable to produce evidence of Zoddel’s murdering prisoners, he was only charged with ill treatment and minor offences. Just like Pichen, Zoddel had overstepped the line of manhood and civilization by refusing to feed and starving prisoners.

Both of these men had crossed the line from a civilized man to a savage one. Each participated in some form of ill treatment whether by keeping food from prisoners, stealing their food, or neglecting prisoners in general. British prosecutor Col. Backhouse made sure that each of their crimes of ill treatment was the highlight of his inquiry. Violence such as minor offences were not seen as bad as ill treatment since men were naturally violent, it was a part of manhood to be violent. However, violence that surpassed minor offences was not accepted. Cruel torture and mass murder were not accepted violence.

Once Col. Backhouse had presented his inquiries, the twelve defense lawyers began their questioning in hopes of restoring the persona of a civilized man to the male defendants. Many defenses for male defendants included minimizing the accusations against them by agreeing to some crimes but absolutely refuting others such as grievous assaults and ill treatment. Captain

²⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 365.

²⁸ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 365.

²⁹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 366.

³⁰ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 366.

Fielden was Ansgar Pichen's defense lawyer, and when Pichen was questioned about carrying a gun, Captain Fielden made sure to ask him to explain the gun. He asked, "Did you have a pistol whilst you were at Belsen?"³¹ Pichen replied, "Yes, but when I was working in the kitchen I did not carry it. I put it into a locked cupboard, but on the way from the barracks to the kitchen I carried it. It was not loaded."³² In an attempt to get the affidavits stating that Pichen had used the gun dismissed, Captain Fielden ensured that Pichen stated the gun was not loaded nor on his person in the camp.

Another example of minimizing charges came from Captain Corbally who was Erich Zoddel's defense lawyer. He argued that if Zoddel committed only minimal crimes then manliness endured. He stated, "Have you ever had to beat people at the distribution of food?"³³ Zoddel replied, "Sometimes I assisted at the distribution, although really it was not my responsibility but was the duty of the Kapos or the Blockältester, and I must say that sometimes, if people were behaving like animals and trying to get to the containers, I might have beaten them perhaps with my hand or a stick. I have never beaten people so hard that they fell down to the ground, nor have I beaten them again and kicked them when they were lying there."³⁴ Captain Corbally attempted to reduce the charge by having Zoddel state the fault of his actions was because of the prisoners. If the prisoners were acting like 'animals' as he says, Captain Corbally argued that Zoddel had to use force in order to maintain order and make sure every prisoner received some food.³⁵ To reinforce that Zoddel had to use some force but not excessive force, Captain Corbally asked, "Did you ever beat people at the distribution of food?"³⁶ Zoddel

³¹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 319.

³² Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 319.

³³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 362.

³⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 362.

³⁵ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 362.

³⁶ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 363.

replied, “No. I may have boxed their ears when there was some crushing and crowding, but I never gave them a real beating.”³⁷ Boxing of ears was considered minor offences and guards argued it was useful to keep prisoners from breaking the rules.

Even though there were twenty-three men on trial, the prosecution and defense’s inquiries into their actions were scarce, so much so that trial records show barely three pages of dialogue for each defendant. The only two men that received any major attention were the camp commandant Josef Kramer, and the camp doctor Dr. Fritz Klein since they were both considered the upper echelon of the camp structure and should have promoted ideas of manhood to their junior guards. Another reason the inquiry into men was lacking came from the British ideals of gender. The connotation of violence has always been synonymous with men. Men always fought in wars to protect their families, livelihoods, and nations. It was not a shock to the five British judges and lawyers that men were on trial. Many male defendants barely received any time on the stand to defend themselves since violence was so synonymous with men.³⁸

Even Stirling did not have a lot to say to the court judges pertaining to the defendants’ civilized or savage nature. In his summation of findings given before the court decided sentencing, he did not mention any of the defendants by name, only generalizing about the crimes. From previous trial testimony, however, some of his generalizations can be inferred to the men. Stirling stated, “The fact that a rule of warfare has been violated in pursuance of an order of the belligerent government or of an individual belligerent commander does not deprive the act in question of its character as a war crime, neither does it in principle confer upon the perpetrator immunity from punishment by the injured belligerent.”³⁹ Although British men were taught to follow orders, it was argued their civilized nature kept them from even considering the

³⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 363.

³⁸ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 156-207, 280-303, 312-373.

³⁹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 631.

crimes these German men had committed. Furthermore, Stirling's focus of guilt remained on the ideas of the men as civilized or savage.

The most civilized British men normally held positions in the military or court of law. Thus Stirling's comments on men's actions pertained to their duty as soldiers. When faced with the defense of 'superior orders' Stirling commented, "Undoubtedly a Court confronted with the plea of superior orders adduced in justification of a war crime is bound to take into consideration the fact that obedience to military orders not obviously unlawful is the duty of every member of the armed forces and that the law cannot in conditions of war discipline be expected to weigh scrupulously the legal merits of the order received."⁴⁰ Stirling goes on to say that he doubts serious reprisal would have fallen on the soldiers had they challenged the "rules of warfare and outrage the general sentiments of humanity."⁴¹ It is well known that when soldiers go into battle there will be casualties on both sides; however, the mass murder of innocent women and children was not civilized but sadistic. The line of civilized manhood ended where ill treatment and gassing of women and children began.

The defense of superior orders although accepted for German women did not result in leniency towards German men. British standards of gender deemed men as superior, this made it easier to forcibly refuse commands that led to mass murder. Women, however, considered weak by British standards of gender kept them from going against orders from their male superiors. The difference of gender condemned these German men with sentences of maximum penalty.

Once Stirling had presented his summation and views of manhood and savagery, the five court judges decided the men's fates. The men's sentences are in the table which show whether they were found guilty or not guilty, the length of their sentence, whether they received a

⁴⁰ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 631.

⁴¹ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 632.

reduced sentence (which was not normally given to men), and date of release from prison. The lengths of sentencing range from five years imprisonment to death by hanging.⁴² Compared to the women's sentences the men's sentences were much harsher, attributed to British ideals of manhood being squashed by the crimes of German men.

Table 1.4: German Men's Sentences

Accused	1st Charge- Bergen- Belsen	2nd Charge- Auschwitz	Sentence	Reduced Sentence	Date of Release	Date of Death by Hanging
Aurdzig	Guilty		10 years imprisonment		16.7.52	
Barsch	Not Guilty					
Burgraf	Guilty		5 years imprisonment		11.8.49	
Dörr	Guilty		Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Egersdörfer	Not Guilty					
Franzloh	Guilty		Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Hössler	Not Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Klein	Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Klippel	Not Guilty					
Kramer	Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Kraft	Not Guilty	Not Guilty				
Kulesa	Guilty		15 years		16.11.55	

⁴² See Table 1.4: German Men's Sentences

			imprisonment			
Mathes	Not Guilty					
Ostrowski	Guilty		15 years imprisonment		16.11.55	
Otto	Not Guilty					
Polanski	Not Guilty					
Pichen	Guilty		Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Schlomowicz	Not Guilty					
Schmitz	Not Guilty					
Schreier	Not Guilty	Guilty	15 years imprisonment		13.9.50	
Stofel	Guilty		Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Weingärtner	Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Zoddel	Guilty		Imprisoned for life		Executed on another charge	

43

From the sentences, it is clear the five British judges did not view the German men guards as civilized since many were sentenced to death. The lack of attention given to men's crimes was surprising since the judges saw men's crimes as affront to their ideals of manhood. Even though men have been linked with violence it is still surprising that women received more attention in the courtroom than men. It is evident men's crimes offended prosecution and defense lawyers; however, they regarded women's crimes as even more salacious and intriguing. Inquiry into women's crimes is next.

⁴³ [W0235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 1-105.

CHAPTER SIX: GERMAN WOMEN AT BELSEN- WOMANLY OR BEASTLY

Col. Backhouse played out the ideas of manhood and womanhood in court. To the defense lawyers, womanhood entailed submissiveness, beauty, kindness, and youthfulness. The German women on trial adopted these notions of womanhood in attempts to save their lives. Col. Backhouse however refused to accept that the ‘natural role’ of women adhered to these women. Instead he argued that British gender assumptions such as submissiveness should not apply to German women guards since he considered them beastly and violent.

This chapter explores the interactions between defendants, prosecutors, and defense lawyers during the trial. Through their interactions Judge Advocate Stirling, prosecution and defense lawyers explored their views of women, such as whether a ‘natural woman’ could commit murder, conduct beatings, or even torture someone. For Col. Backhouse, it was easy to observe the women as murders, but the defense lawyers argued against the notions that their clients were monsters. To the defense, these women were merely impressionable women who had succumbed to men’s persuasion and demands for violence. The gender assumptions placed on women by the defense lawyers and judges hindered them from seeing the women, as they truly were, cruel.

The first women guards to be tried for their crimes during the war were at the Belsen trial.¹ Overall, compared to the men put on trial, there were a minuscule number of women brought to trial. SS men outnumbered German women almost five to one.² Only thirteen women would be sentenced to death for their crimes, not including women convicted in the Soviet zone.³ These women are Sydonia Bayer, Dorothea Binz, Juana Bormann, Grete Bösel, Therese

¹ Daniel Patrick Brown, *The Camp Women: The Female Auxiliaries Who Assisted the SS in Running the Nazi Concentration Camp System*, (Atglen: Schiffer Military History, 2002), 21.

² Brown, *The Camp Women*, 244.

³ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 244.

Brand[e]l, Ruth Closius, Irma Grese, Ruth Hildner, Christel Jankowsky, Maria Mand[e]l, Gertrud Schreiter, Elizabeth Volkenrath, and Emma Zimmer.⁴ It is important to know the names of those who were convicted and sentenced to death since only thirteen, or less than half a percent of know *Aufseherin* were convicted. Only twenty-six women were given prison sentences and many did not serve their full sentences.⁵ The women who received life sentences received reduced sentences of five to ten years.

Col. Backhouse's gendered arguments differed from Stirling and the defense lawyers. Instead of viewing German woman through a lens of womanhood, as Stirling had done, Col. Backhouse saw German women as vicious, violent, and cruel just like men acted. Instead of womanly, Col. Backhouse saw these women as manly since they adopted traits such as savagery, normally associated with men.⁶ Col. Backhouse began his inquiry by first questioning the women whom although cruel were not as sadistic as others.

Col. Backhouse knew that not all the German women on trial were entirely evil. Some of the women guards argued that they attempted to help the prisoners, and in so doing brought violence upon themselves. For example, Herta Ehlert who was a guard at both Belsen and Auschwitz was sent from Ravensbruck to Lublin for her punishment transfer.⁷ Ehlert was punished at the beginning of her employment as a guard because she

passed letters out of the camp, which was not allowed; I smuggled parcels into the camp, which was not allowed; then messages, that is to say to the parents of to some other relatives, and I had quite a number of friends outside the camp who in the meantime became prisoners and they came into my camp as well so I had to take care and to try to help them.⁸

⁴ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 244.

⁵ Brown, *The Camp Women*, 247.

⁶ Raymond Phillips (ed.), *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, (London: William Hodge and Company, Limited, 1949), 209.

⁷ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 61.

⁸ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 85.

For helping prisoners, the Nazis sent her to spend a year at Lublin.⁹ Also, Ehlert stated she went to the Commandant several times trying to fix the camp. She did so by demanding better food, discussing the diseases in the camps, and asking to limit the amount of roll calls in the camps.¹⁰ Even though she went to Commandant Kramer with her demands, she stated her claims were ignored, and it was not her fault the camp was in disarray.

Women guards on trial argued they received punishment for acting against S.S. demands. One of the guards, Elizabeth Volkenrath, provided Col. Backhouse with a statement that showed what happened to *Aufseherinnen* when they did not act accordingly. In this instance, the story told by Volkenrath provided the court with a picture of German women guards' actions as forced. Fellow German S.S. men punished *Aufseherin* Buchhallar because she helped prisoners, which went against Nazi policy. Volkenrath told the court that Buchhallar was whipped 25 times because she had sent letters written by prisoners to their relatives which was not allowed. Also, Buchhallar had a supposed love affair with a male prisoner. *Aufseherinnen* leaders taught prospective female guards that they could not have sex with prisoners. If they did, severe punishment awaited them. Volkenrath and other *Aufseherinnen* considered a whipping of 25 lashes very severe for the women guards. After witnessing how the S.S. treated a fellow Nazi who had sex with a prisoner; many of the women guards ended their relations with prisoners.¹¹ Male guards however continued their relations with female prisoners.

Ilse Lothe was a *kapo*, or prisoner aid to the guards who received more food and her own room in exchange for information on other prisoners. Lothe argued that although she held the title of *kapo*, she was punished three times, "the first time because I smuggled a letter out of the camp. The second time because I burned bed boards, the boards of the beds- I made a fire of

⁹ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 62.

¹⁰ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 66.

¹¹ [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 30.

them- and the third time because we organized some food and some smokes for us, cigarettes.”¹² She violated rules that prohibited the smuggling of letters. Since Lothe was a *kapo* she held a higher status than prisoner, but was not considered a guard. Concentration camp leadership viewed her actions as crimes committed by a guard but disciplined her as if she was still a prisoner.

Other women guards acted more brutally in the camps, and by breaking traditional gender norms of womanhood, were attacked on the stand by Col. Backhouse. The individuals who received extra malicious comments during their testimony included Herta Ehlert, Irma Grese, Hilde Lobauer, and Ilse Lothe. Col. Backhouse believed these women acted most violently towards prisoners. His focus remained on these women in order to portray to the judges a different more savage side of the women. Col. Backhouse accused them of being perpetrators of the Holocaust, and murderers, two themes normally only associated with men, but were now extended to these German women. His inquiry and statements are vital since other than the survivors, he was the only one that depicted women as violent, not examining them through their gender, just their crimes.

During Col. Bakchouse’s interrogation of *Aufseherin* Herta Ehlert, he implied that *Aufseherin* Herta Ehlert violated the conventions of womanhood. Col. Backhouse asked her,

Col. Backhouse: Was not the normal practice when you thought a prisoner was lying to beat them till you thought you had got the truth out of them?

A: I am not such an animal who would beat a prisoner for such a reason; there was no real reason at all to beat her.¹³

Ehlert argued against the claim that she was a perpetrator of violence. Instead she argued a gendered defense, stating that she attempted to help the prisoners by getting them food and other

¹² [WO235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 168.

¹³ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 95.

necessities. Then Col. Backhouse asked Ehlert, “You learned your lesson then, did you not?”¹⁴ Col. Backhouse implied her punishment came from her being nice to prisoners, but after her punishment, she evolved into one of the more ruthless guards at Belsen. To which she replied, “you cannot learn your lesson if it is not in your nature.”¹⁵ Ehlert’s gender argument portrayed an image of herself that was not cruel, but a woman who retained her womanhood.

The British judges reserved their harshest courtroom treatment against three women who, by British standards, most deeply violated the conventions of proper womanhood. Irma Grese, Juana Bormann, and Elisabeth Volkenrath were both cruel and sadistic. These three women had flare for malice and death, and each had a skill set for torture and murder. In the camps, prisoners and other camp guards looked upon these three women as the epitome of the entire Nazi system. Their actions, as cruel as they were, represented the genuine hatred and disgust that Hitler and Nazism symbolized. They embodied every aspect of Nazism especially the camp system, and became known as the most feared women of the camp. Grese however stood out above the other two and remains the most notorious German women guard from the Holocaust for her age and beauty. She previously began working at sixteen years old as an assistant nurse in a hospital, and remained there until she was eighteen. Grese stated she wanted to become a nurse but was conscripted into the S.S. in July 1942.¹⁶ Grese remains the most notorious German women guard from the Holocaust for her age and beauty.

Grese was the youngest woman on trial, and Col. Backhouse portrayed her as one of the most vicious guards. Grese was violent, vicious, sadistic, and murderous. Col. Backhouse focused on her especially since she did not deny witnesses claims that she had committed violent crimes. Col. Backhouse asked Grese,

¹⁴ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 97.

¹⁵ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 97.

¹⁶ [WO235/14], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 225.

Col. Backhouse: And you beat people sometimes with the whip and sometimes with the stick?

A: Yes

Q: Were you allowed to beat people?

A: No

Q: So it was not a question of having orders from your superiors to do it; you did this against orders, did you?

A: Yes.¹⁷

Grese began her testimony by admitting to most of the offenses Col. Backhouse raised against her. When asked by Col. Backhouse, “Were you the only person who beat the prisoners against the regulations?”¹⁸ Grese responded with “I do not know.”¹⁹ Grese did not have a problem discussing her own actions, but retreated when asked about the actions of her fellow defendants.

Grese claimed she had acted accordingly with Nazi requirements, and did not understand that she could be found guilty for her actions. She had done what her superiors had told her to do, and did not see fault with her actions. However, Col. Backhouse made sure to explain that Grese had climbed the SS ranks much faster than other guards, attributing to her attention to violence and unwavering belief in the message of Nazism for the mass murder of undesirables. Her lack of womanly characteristics further demonstrated by Col. Backhouse proved to the court that there were women in the trial who had surpassed their role of womanhood and took on beastly traits in the camps.

Many survivors wrote affidavits or wished to provide information on Grese. The prosecution demonstrated that she was well known for her savagery at Belsen. Since most of the testimony against Grese focused on her cruelty towards prisoners, the prosecution asked, “Was it just you who was vicious?”²⁰ Grese responded with, “It has nothing to do with being

¹⁷ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 137.

¹⁸ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 137.

¹⁹ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 137.

²⁰ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 137.

vicious.”²¹ Grese honestly believed that her actions and crimes were not viscous but necessary to keep the camp functioning. She viewed her actions as following Nazi regulations and thus was not improper.

Col. Backhouse no longer associated the gender assumptions of submissiveness with Grese. He stated,

Col. Backhouse: I suggest to you that you gloried in your jack boots and your pistol and your whip?

A: Gloried? I could not say so.

Q: And that you beat and ill-treated prisoners to such an extent that even you were told to stop carrying a whip, that you continued to do it?

A: I have beaten prisoners, but I have not ill-treated them, and it was not prohibited to me personally to carry a whip; it was a general order emanating from the commandant that whips will not be carried anymore.²²

Col. Backhouse had finally angered Grese. Portraying Grese in a way that was different from how she saw herself meant she had to defend her womanhood. She admitted to beating prisoners, carrying, and using a whip to beat prisoners with, but did not admit to ill treatment.²³ From the trial, Grese became the most notorious and murderous woman at Belsen, allowing the world and judges to revoke her status of womanhood.

The prosecution also targeted women *kapos* since their so-called minor offenses tended to be excessively violent. Also, the Belsen judges and lawyers views on their womanhood vacillated with each deposition put against them. Furthermore, judges and lawyers viewed becoming a *kapo* and ill-treating fellow prisoners as an act of violence worse than being a low-level guard and ill treating prisoners. Both prisoners and prosecution regarded prisoners who turned *kapos* as a betrayal. Col. Backhouse refused to define the women *kapos* as impressionable

²¹ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 137.

²² [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 147.

²³ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 124-157.

or submissive. Instead interrogating the women by asking questions generally reserved for men on trial. Violence was an aggressive trait not a womanly trait, and as a result Col. Backhouse believed that these men and women should be held to the same standards no matter their gender.

For women *kapos*, the only difference between them and other women guards was that they did not receive training at Ravensbrück concentration camp, as other German women guards. Specifically, Lobauer's training came from watching the women guards' actions and reenacting them on other prisoners. In other words, her brutality came from witnessing German women guards' crimes, the same women on trial who claimed male superiors forced them to commit acts of violence. Witnesses argued Lobauer acted maliciously at both Auschwitz and Belsen. The prosecutors agreed with the witnesses,

Col. Backhouse: at Belsen I suggest to you that you carried on just as you had done at Auschwitz, regularly beating women and regularly ill-treating them?

A: That is not true.²⁴

When Lobauer transferred from Auschwitz to Belsen, she retained the status of *kapo*. From witness testimony, it is clear that her actions remained as vicious as they had been in Auschwitz. Although she argued to the court that she was only a prisoner, the violence depicted by survivors proved that she was indeed more than just a regular prisoner. She beat prisoners, stole from them, and decided who could live or die in selections for the gas chamber. She had assumed the role of women guard without the title, and in so doing aided the prosecution's case of removing her status of a submissive victim.

Ilse Lothe also used a gendered defense arguing that she was merely an impressionable female and a prisoner. Throughout the trial, Lothe continuously refused to admit that she was a *kapo*, and repeatedly stated she was a prisoner forced to complete acts the S.S. demanded of her.

²⁴ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 194.

Col. Backhouse inferred that at the beginning of her incarceration at Belsen, Lothe had committed acts of ill treatment in order to save herself from punishment, but as time went on she enjoyed the power and beat prisoners for no reason.²⁵ Whereas, Lothe argued that her passivity and obedience to the S.S came from fear, not pleasure.²⁶ Even though there were multiple depositions and affidavits against Lothe, she, like the other *kapos*, believed that since they had been prisoners, no criminal action would come against them. The prosecution, however, did not view them as prisoners but as *kapos* who had violently beaten and ill-treated prisoners.

The defense of fear or obedience to orders was known as the ‘iron discipline of the SS’. Both men and women on trial used this term in their defense. Although many guards argued that the S.S. would have punished them for not following orders, in many cases there is no proof that punishments would have actually occurred. Many women received more leniencies with this defense than men because women were considered submissive. However, Col. Backhouse did not accept this defense for German women. Especially since one of the guards on trial Hilde Lisiewitz stated in her testimony that she left Belsen to go find her mother, and upon return did not receive any punishment for being absent. Lisiewitz testimony spiked the judges’ attention especially when Col. Backhouse asked her, “All these S.S. women who have told us they were so frightened if they did not do the things they were told, need not have been frightened at all, if there was no trouble when you went off like that?”²⁷ To which she replied, “Generally, they were very severe, but they could not prove anything because I could have said that I was on my way for such a long time because the conditions were very bad.”²⁸ From Lisiewitz’s testimony, Col.

²⁵ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 175.

²⁶ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 164.

²⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 405-406.

²⁸ Phillips (ed.) *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 406

Backhouse challenged the iron discipline defense used for women. Since it had not applied to her, why would it have applied to the other guards?

Once Col. Backhouse had presented his cases, the twelve defense lawyers began their line of inquiry by arguing against the bestial nature the prosecution had just presented of these German women. Most of the defense lawyers knew the evidence against their clients was abundant and attempted to turn the evidence in their favor by removing the stigma of violence. In Major Cranfield's opening speech he argued, "I am not suggesting that my accused at Auschwitz did not know there was a gas chamber. They did."²⁹ Furthermore he stated, "There are allegations of ill-treatment by beatings and kickings [sic]. It is not my case that beatings did not take place at Auschwitz, or that Grese, Lobauer, and Lothe did not strike internees. They will all tell you they did."³⁰ He also stated, "In my submission, however, what their evidence reveals, if you take it at its face value, is a general standard of corporal punishment rather than deliberate and excessive cruelty."³¹ Finally, Major Cranfield argued, "that the accused received or were liable to similar punishment; the use of a reasonable amount of force and a reasonable weapon for punishment was justified, and that the court should only convict the accused [if they] exceeded what was required, and that their brutality was wanton and excessive."³² The defense believed that most of the women on trial used the proper amount of force needed in maintaining the camps safety and structure. The only reason defense lawyers' thought the court should convict was if that force exceeded the amount necessary for proper maintenance of the camp, which could then be considered murder.

²⁹ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 117.

³⁰ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 118.

³¹ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 118-119.

³² [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 119.

In order to save their defendants, the defense lawyers argued that womanhood meant submissiveness, beauty, kindness, and youthfulness. In so doing, they attempted to remove the defense characterization of these women as monsters by having the defendants admit to minor offences, and denying that they had committed murder. For example, Bormann's lawyer, Major A.S. Munro asked her, "Did you ever hit girls?"³³ Which she replied, "Yes, when they did not obey orders or when they did not do what they were told to do, then I hit their faces or boxed their ears, but never in that way that I knocked their teeth out."³⁴ This was Major Munro's attempt in discussing the witness's accusations against Bormann. Thereby allowing the court to hear Bormann's reasons for violence in hopes that witness testimony would not hold as much as weight.

Another way that the defense tried to aid the women was by focusing on their beauty, age, and gender. For example, one defense lawyer stated,

I think that in the case of Grese it should not be overlooked that she is a young girl and she is better looking than the other female accused- probably better looking than the other wardresses in these camps. She was in authority over these young women who have come here as prosecution witnesses, and it is now that the positions are reversed I think it is not surprising to see the spite and vindictiveness with which they picked her out from among the others and make their accusations against her.³⁵

Grese was the youngest woman guard at Auschwitz and Belsen. She was only fifteen when she began her training at Ravensbrück. Grese was young, gorgeous, and vibrant. Bormann was the oldest woman on trial. Women around the age of forty were considered old. Since Bormann was

³³ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 15.

³⁴ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 15.

³⁵ [WO 235/15], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 115.

over forty years old, she was considered haggard, and thus had to be cruel.³⁶ The defense and the newspapers reporting on the trial stated, “If a guard looked cruel, she must then be cruel. If a guard was attractive, how could she be responsible for such horrible crimes?”³⁷ Condemning Bormann came easier to the court officials and the newspapers than convicting a young beautiful girl like Grese, since beauty was supposed to equate with kindness and love. The courts and onlookers had a difficult time accepting that Grese and other women camp guards, “who were so young and pretty could commit such heinous crimes.”³⁸ However, in reality their beauty meant mass murder and torture.

Defense lawyers attempting to save the women also used the argument of the forceful nature of Nazism. Major Cranfield, who was the lawyer for Grese, Lothe, and Lobauer, “attempted to argue that Nazism, not Grese herself, was responsible for what she did while employed by the SS.”³⁹ Other defense lawyers also argued that the instilled ideals of Nazism drove women to commit acts of violence. Women themselves were not violent, but the ideas of National Socialism were extremely violent. Thus, the women were simply impressionable.⁴⁰

Col. Backhouses’ strategy to condemn these women came three-fold. First, he targeted certain women who he considered had overstepped the boundary of womanhood. These women included Ehlert, Lothe, and Grese. Second, during his interrogation of these women, he made sure to shatter the womanly façade of innocent submissiveness by re-reading witness affidavits already presented to the court. Thirdly, anytime a defendant attempted to use their gender as their defense he reiterated their violent nature in the camps to the court judges. Even though many of

³⁶ [WO 235/14], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1, page 207.

³⁷ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 121.

³⁸ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 121.

³⁹ Sarti, *Women + Nazis*, 123.

⁴⁰ [WO235/12 -WO235/23], USHMM, RG-59.016M, Reel 1

the women could not be pinned as exceeding the British judges views of womanhood, Col. Backhouse lambasted those who did.

Many factors determined women’s sentencing. First, gender played a significant role in the severity of a sentence given to an individual. The debate of womanhood played out in the court by Stirling, Col. Backhouse, and the defense lawyers showed that no one had a definitive answer as to what they believed womanhood meant. From court officials questioning and discussions in the trial, it is clear that the line that removed the status of womanhood occurred when it was proven that women had committed murder or ill treatment. Men received much harsher sentences than women even though the women had openly expressed committing violence. Secondly, sentencing was also based on the extent of violence committed against the prisoners. As mentioned before there were varying levels of violence, therefore, some violent acts were considered more severe than others.⁴¹

The table below portrays defendants’ names, whether they were found guilty, the sentences they received, the reduced sentences, and the date of death. Compared to men’s sentences, these sentences were exceedingly reduced.

Table 1.5: German Women’s Sentences

Accused	1st Charge- Bergen- Belsen	2nd Charge- Auschwitz	Sentence	Reduced Sentence	Date of Release	Date of Death by Hanging
Bormann	Not Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Bothe	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	16.7.52	
Ehlert	Guilty	Not Guilty	15 years imprisonment	12 years imprisonment	16.11.53	

⁴¹ See Table 1.5: German Women’s Sentences

Fiest	Guilty		5 years imprisonment	5 years imprisonment	11.8.49	
Forster, Ida	Not Guilty					
Forster, Ilse	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	16.7.52	
Grese	Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Hahnel	Not Guilty					
Haschke	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	16.7.52	
Hempel	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	6.7.52	
Klein	Not Guilty					
Kopper	Guilty		15 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	16.7.52	
Lisiewitz	Guilty		1 year imprisonment	1 years imprisonment	16.11.46	
Lobauer	Guilty	Guilty	10 years imprisonment	7 years imprisonment	15.7.50	
Lothe	Not Guilty	Not Guilty				
Opitz	Not Guilty					
Roth	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	3 years imprisonment	15.7.50	
Sauer	Guilty		10 years imprisonment	10 years imprisonment	16.7.52	
Volkenrath	Guilty	Guilty	Death by hanging			December 13, 1945
Walter	Guilty		3 years imprisonment			

42

⁴² [W0235/12], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 23-105.

Gender became one of the main subjects of the trials. Whether a woman broke gender norms or not decided the severity of their convictions. Otherwise, judges were extremely lenient with sentencing the women. If women only committed minor offences and could show the court that they at least attempted changing the camps for the better than Stirling and the other judges saw these women as victims of Nazism and male dominance. Some however were not seen as submissive; for example, Stirling gave his opinion on the woman *kapo* Stanislawa Starostka's actions in the camps. He stated, "I suggest that among those accusations there is a considerable amount of chaff, but, be that as it may, there is a considerable volume of evidence which you may be prepared to believe, that she (Starostka) was, at any rate, taking part in some of these gas selections (whatever her motives may be is for you to decide) and that she was beating internees."⁴³ Participating in gas selections was considered murder, and making the decision such as whether or not someone should live was not taken lightly. By making that choice to murder, Starostka had crossed over her womanhood boundary into bestiality.

Afterwards, Stirling provided leading questions on whether the other court judges should convict Starostka or give her leniency since she stated she was submissive to male superiors. Stirling stated, "Are you satisfied that this woman was willing to be an official at this camp, that she liked power, and that she may have used it when it suited, her to benefit the Poles who were interned?"⁴⁴ Furthermore, he stated, "Are you satisfied that the accusations made against her by the Prosecution have been made out in such a way that you are prepared to take the view that the evidence is consistent with the fact that when she was on the staff, as a Blockälteste or Lagerälteste of this concentration camp, she was, in violation of the laws and usages of war, concerned with the other members of the staff in the ill-treatment of Allied nationals, either

⁴³ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 637.

⁴⁴ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 637.

named or unknown, so as to cause their death or to cause physical suffering to them?”⁴⁵ In the end, Starostka’s name would not be called out during the sentencing, and her case completely dismissed. Starostka was not a German citizen, but held a higher status in the camp as a *kapo* and committed violent crimes at Belsen. The fact that Stirling found her case disturbing enough to discuss in his summation is crucial. Violence, whether ill treatment or an actual beating, was not normally associated with womanhood; but for some of these women it was a reality.

The court judges now had to decide whether the women on trial had exceeded the boundaries of womanhood. Major-General H.M.P. Berney-Ficklin, Brigadier A. de L. Casonove, Colonel G.J. Richards, Lt.-Colonel R.B. Morrish, and Lt.-Colonel R. McLay debated over whether they could believe that women had committed crimes, or fought for prisoners care. Once Stirling had made his three comments on Starostka, he turned to making general statements on the women guards to the other court judges. Stirling stated, “You may think that if these *Aufseherinnen* were responsible and taking part in a concerted scheme at Belsen to ill-treat these Jews they must take the responsibility for that.”⁴⁶ He continued, “On the other hand, if you think these *Aufseherinnen*, or some of them, were at Belsen doing a good job of work in the kitchens and trying to help as much as they could, that is a factor you will have to consider when considering their guilt or otherwise for the appalling state of affairs that arose at Belsen.”⁴⁷ The debate of whether the judges believed the women retained their womanly roles decided whether they were condemned or not. The differences in opinion of violence were judged by an individual’s gender.

Out of sixteen male guards and seven male prisoner functionaries indicted for their crimes against humanity and ill treatment of prisoners, eight of the sixteen men received

⁴⁵ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 637.

⁴⁶ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 640.

⁴⁷ Phillips, *The Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty- Four Others (The Belsen Trial)*, 640.

executions, and two received prison sentences of fifteen years. Compared to the men's sentences, the women's sentences continued to be minimal. Out of the twenty-one women defendants, only three received executions. Haschke, Ilse Forster, Kopper, and Lobauer each committed murder at the camps, but they received sentences of only ten years and once reduced the sentence turned into seven years. Whereas, Pichen and Zoddell received sentences ranging from ten years, imprisonment for life, and death by hanging.

Not only were male guard's sentences harsher, they could not appeal for a shorter sentence as the women did. Many of the women guard's lawyers appealed to the court that their defendants served time in jail from the time they were arrested to sentencing in hopes that the time already spent in jail could reduce their sentence.⁴⁸ In most trials, and certainly in the Belsen trial, the women could count the time they had already spent in jail as part of their sentence.⁴⁹ Even though the lawyers for the men guards attempted to do the same, the men did not receive the same special treatment as the women.

In the Belsen trial, gender determined justice. Gender norms and stereotypes had saved many women from the gallows, but not all. Grese, Bormann, and Volkenrath received executions for excessively stepping outside of their gender norm. These three women had exceeded the defenses' amount of cruelty needed in keeping the camp structure intact, and thus received death sentences for extravagant cruelty. While other women guards who had stayed within gender stereotypes received jail sentences, many of them gained early release from prison long before their sentences were fully served. Even though most women exhibited violent or masculine behavior at Belsen, court judges only deemed Grese, Bormann, and Volkenrath as equal to their male counterparts in terms of culpability. Removal of gender norms made it easier for judges to

⁴⁸ [WO235/23], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 69-76.

⁴⁹ [WO235/23], USHMM, RG-59.016M Reel 1, page 172.

condemn these three women to death. Court officials' decision to hang these women came from viewing the women as murderers and not women. Grese, Bormann and Volkenrath had entered into the world of masculinity and would die for doing so.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

German Nazi women have only recently become known as perpetrators, and historians have largely ignored their crimes. After World War II, historians portrayed German women as victims of male influence. Some argued women acted violently towards prisoners because of fear of retribution from their male counterparts. This image of innocence broke in the 2000s when historians reexamined previously ignored trial records and focused on acquiring new information pertaining to German women perpetrators. The Belsen trial is one of the many forgotten trials after World War II, and this thesis has brought the crimes of twenty-one German women to the forefront of Holocaust studies through the lens of gender.

British war crimes trials did not accomplish their goals; they failed in equal sentencing between men and women, and in providing justice for survivors. Furthermore, trials have failed in prosecuting lower-level Nazis such as women camp guards. After World War II ended many German women moved, changed their name, or went into hiding. Although, British soldiers found some German women and charged them for their crimes against humanity, many women remained free.

The Belsen war crimes trial had many flaws. A major flaw of the trial included that if prosecutors could not find hard evidence against the women defendants, they did not receive any prison time. Hard evidence meant that witnesses had to provide judges with a specific date of violence, the name of the victim, the name of the perpetrator(s), and the definitive cause of death. Finding hard evidence for trials covering the Holocaust continued to be a problem because many prisoners did not exchange names, nor were some of them aware of the date or month or sometimes even the year. Without this information, “West German courts had difficulty finding

proof of the perpetration of murder and, therefore, seldom applied the maximum punishment.”¹ Col. Backhouse submitted 113 affidavits and brought survivors and liberators to the stand in an effort to prove that although he did not have hard evidence against all twenty-one women, they still committed crimes. Although many of the women received minute prison sentences, their actions exposed women’s ability for violence.

The most important flaw of the trials was that it seemed as though the judges were still entrenched in gender biases. The judges, especially C. L. Stirling, Esq., were not prepared for the testimonies the witnesses gave on the acts committed by women. Their disbelief and questioning of witnesses themselves to make sure their testimony was correct shows that judges hesitated in accepting witnesses’ testimony that portrayed women as instigators of violent crime. Even when the witnesses’ testimony remained consistent with their affidavits to their questioning at trial, the judges still questioned their authenticity. There were many instances throughout the trial, where witnesses stated that women were much more vicious and more cruel than men. Stirling however, refused to see women stepping out of their gender bias, until Grese and Bormann agreed they had committed violence at Belsen. Stirling held firmly to his definitions of gender norms until these two women openly stated in court that they had committed acts of violence. Some historians argue, “Prosecutors were more interested in the heinous crimes of their male colleagues and husbands than in those of women.”² Eventually, historians accepted the fact that women could be perpetrators, and since then historians have exposed women’s crimes.

After examining the Belsen trial, it is apparent that German women participated in every facet of camp life. Many women were aware of what occurred in the camps. These women

¹ Donald M. McKale, *Nazis after Hitler: How Perpetrators of the Holocaust Cheated Justice and Truth*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012), 217-281.

² Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 2.

witnessed, participated in and, often, initiated atrocities in the camps, even if their trial testimony stated otherwise. The women actively participated in violence and death, and the British judges should have convicted them of murder. The judges, and Stirling, however, did not condemn the women as murders. At the time of trials, in 1945, gender norms prevented Stirling from seeing women as killers. Other male German guards during the war argued that, “rounding up and shooting Jews for several hours was hard labor, so female consolation extended beyond creating a moral sanctuary at home: women set up refreshment tables with food and drink for their men near mass execution and deportation sites.”³ Men sought comfort from women since they reminded them of home, took care of them, and mothered them. It was argued a woman, who cooked, took care of the children and helped ease the pain of her husband by being near him, could not have committed violent crimes. Furthermore, defense lawyers reinforced Stirling’s view of innocent women by arguing that German men saw German women as impressionable. Thus men had an easier time taking advantage of German women. Weak and submissive traits associated with women remained throughout the trial, enforced by Stirling and the defense lawyers.

The ‘law of complicity’ entered into West German courts as a result of German women’s testimony that German men had power over German women. The law of complicity is sometimes referred to as ‘subjective theory’ by German legal scholars.”⁴ The courts brought about the ‘law of complicity’ in an attempt to understand the reasons that drove these men and women to partake in acts of inhumane violence. The law enacted in the Belsen trial, came from an attempt to understand why women participated in the mass murder of millions. Stirling, and the other judges endeavored to understand German women perpetrators’ reasoning’s for

³ Lower, *Hitler’s Furies*, 8.

⁴ Michael S. Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide: The Operation Reinhard Death Camp Trials, 1955- 1966*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 18.

becoming guards, and committing crimes. However the judges' actions allowed many women to get away with brutal crimes. British definitions of womanhood were tested in the trial, shocking Stirling and Col. Backhouse at how unwomanly these women actually became.

The law of complicity was one of the worst ideas the courts enacted in hopes of comprehending the mass acceptance of Nazism. Many perpetrators walked free because of the law, "It enabled defendants to be characterized as accomplices or aiders and abettors, a characterization that virtually assured lenient punishment."⁵ Furthermore, "Once it became an organizing principle in the trials of Nazi war criminals, subjective theory bedeviled the trials of Nazi offenders, obliging German judges to categorize defendants with blood-stained hands as accomplices to murder."⁶ Now German women's actions detailed as cruel, sadistic, and murderous, were degraded to that of an accomplice. Once again, Stirling did not accept the fact that women committed crimes and reduced their perpetration to that of a bystander. Reducing the amount of perpetration led Stirling and the other judges to ignore the women, their crimes, and testimonies from survivors. Ignoring the women's crimes did not remove their actions from the minds of the survivors, but eased judges' sense of righteousness.

Another contributing factor as to why judges ignored women's violent murders came from the defense lawyer's tactics that took advantage of the prevailing view of gender norms. British views of womanhood encompassed traits such as submissiveness, beauty, kindness, and age. The defense lawyers exploited Stirling's traditional views of womanhood in their questioning to portray each of their defendants as also holding British traditional views of women. Furthermore, some lawyers pleaded with judges that these women had families, and some of the defendants' husbands had died in the war. Thus, their children needed someone to

⁵ Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide*, 18.

⁶ Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide*, 18.

look after them. While this defense did not work on all judges, it did work on some, and the defendants received no jail time in order to take care of their children. Also, family members of the accused could submit documentation showing that a family member had died in the war, in an attempt to influence the judge.⁷

At the trials end, many of the survivors and other Allied nations expressed astonishment that the British acted so leniently towards women by handing down lenient sentences. Other Allied leaders knew that the British government did not want to participate in the war crimes trials. Britain’s leaders had to be persuaded to do so by “the United States and Soviet Union urging them into compliance and enforcement (however halfhearted).”⁸ The United States, the Soviet Union, and France responded swiftly with their war crimes trials and made sure that perpetrators received prison sentences or death for their actions. British leaders did not. From the table it is clear that although Great Britain’s lawyers and judges remained lenient while prosecuting women, and definitely did not condemn as many as could have been, they did exercise the death penalty.

Table 1.6: German Women Sentenced to Death in British Zone of Occupation

Name	Date of Execution
Dorthea Binz	May 2, 1947
Juana Bormann	December 13, 1945
Grete Bösel	May 2, 1947
Ruth Closius	July 29, 1948
Irma Grese	December 13, 1945

⁷ [2001.114], [Digital page 000008-00201], RG-59.016M, Judge Advocate General's Office: War Crimes Case Files, Second World War (WO 235/25), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

⁸ McKale, *Nazis after Hitler*, 46.

Gertrud Schreiter	September 20, 1948
Elisabeth Volkenrath	December 13, 1945
Emma Zimmer	September 20, 1947

9

Out of more than 3,000 German women guards only eight were hanged for their crimes under British authority. The trials held in the British zone of occupation allowed perpetrators to avoid accountability. However, Great Britain's judges did condemn German women to death, whereas, the United States' judges did not. That does not erase the fact that German women escaped punishment from British leaders. German women, who participated in the systematic eradication of 11 million undesirables, walked free based on the idea that women could not commit violent acts. The table above shows the amount of women who received death sentences and the number of women who received a prison sentence under the authority of British military courts.

The world needed justice and they did not receive it. McKale argued "Tragically, the post- Holocaust world had little sympathy for the victims and thus little will to punish the perpetrators and persuade them to tell the truth about their role in what happened."¹⁰ German women played an important role in the Nazi camp system. They were indoctrinated in Nazi ideology and were just as vicious as men. Rarely did a German woman step forward and admit their crimes. The true extent of these women's monstrous acts may never be known. Eyewitness testimony can only go so far without collaboration from other sources.

The lessons to be gained are for the next round of war crimes trials. War will forever be a part of life. While we hope, this is not so, history shows the reality. When that time comes again, and women begin to participate in a truly horrific violent manner and murder human beings, let

⁹ Daniel Patrick Brown, *The Camp Women: The Female Auxiliaries Who Assisted the SS in Running the Nazi Concentration Camp System*, (Atglen: Schiffer Military History, 2002), 244.

¹⁰ McKale, *Nazis after Hitler*, 345.

the judges of future war crimes trials remember that women can be violent and murderous. Women can be just as awful and cruel as men. If a crime is committed, justice must be dealt out. Otherwise, mankind will continue to let perpetrators roam freely based on their gender.

The Holocaust lives on in the collective conscious of many as a horror of modern times. Through books, documentaries, and movies the Holocaust is taught in schools throughout the world. Memorials are dedicated in remembrance of the atrocities committed and are stark reminders that the actual perpetrators at Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz were never held to a fitting punishment.

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APPENDIX A: DEPOSITION OF STANISLAW HALOTA

DEPOSITION OF STANISLAW HALOTA (Pole, aged 26)

2. I identify No. 3 on photograph as an S.S. man at Belsen who was in charge of Kitchen No. 1. I have now been told that his name is Ansgar Pichen. I was in a working party which had to carry containers of soup from Pichen's kitchen to the women's camp. On 13th April, 1945, I was waiting outside the kitchen for the containers when two male prisoners started to take some turnips from a pile outside the kitchen. Pichen was standing outside the kitchen and saw the men taking the turnips. He immediately pulled out his revolver and shot at them both, from a distance of about 25 metres. The two men fell to the ground and Pichen walked away. I saw the whole incident, including the shooting. This incident occurred about 12 noon and at about 4 o'clock that afternoon I was outside the kitchen when the Totenkommando appeared. The two bodies were still lying on the ground and I assisted the Totenkommando to put the bodies on a stretcher. They were both dead. One of them had been hit with a bullet at the back of the neck. The bullet which hit the other man had penetrated his body under the right shoulder-blade and had come out of his body through the left chest.

APPENDIX B: DEPOSITION OF ESTERA WAJSBLUM

DEPOSITION OF ESTERA WAJSBLUM (Pole, aged 22)

2. I recognise No. 3 on photograph 5 as an S.S. kitchen chief in No. 1 Kitchen at Belsen, where I was employed. I have now been told that his name is Ansgar Pichen. About three weeks before the English [British] came, a male prisoner, whose name I do not know, was working next to the wire separating No. 1 Kitchen from the men's camp at Belsen. I was in the kitchen at the time and I saw Pichen leave the kitchen. He went up to this prisoner and searched him. He then returned to the kitchen with some foodstuffs he had found on the prisoner. He then accused the girls working in the kitchen that one of them had given the stuff to the prisoners, but we all denied having done so. Pichen then left the kitchen again and went towards the prisoner. When about five metres from him he pulled his pistol out of the holster and shot him. He fell down bleeding from the chest and I was of the opinion that he was dead. Pichen then ordered other prisoners to take the body away and this was done. The next day I was told by some male prisoners who came for food that the man shot by Pichen was dead.

3. About 13th or 14th April, 1945, all girls working in No. 1 Kitchen were ordered by Pichen to leave the kitchen and wait outside whilst he attended a parade of S.S. men, which was being held in the vicinity of the S.S. quarters. There was only one S.S. man left behind and he did duty at the guard tower. Many male prisoners who were starving took the opportunity of obtaining turnips which were piled up outside Kitchen No. 1. After about half an hour Pichen and an S.S. Rottenführer who worked in the kitchen returned. I do know the name of the Rottenführer except that his first name was Josef. When they saw the prisoners, who numbered about 50, stealing the turnips, they ran towards them, firing as they ran. They opened fire from about 30 metres. I saw many of these prisoners fall down. When they, Pichen and Josef, reached the kitchen, Josef went inside, but Pichen continued firing at the prisoners who were trying to escape. To escape from the firing we, the girls working in the kitchen, went inside the kitchen immediately it was open. I would estimate that a total number of men shot by Pichen and Josef was between 10 and 15. After about half an hour I saw other prisoners take away those who had been shot. The prisoners dragged those who had been shot by the ankles, which was the usual method of taking corpses away for burial.

APPENDIX C: DEPOSITION OF DORA ALMALEH

DEPOSITION OF DORA ALMALEH (Greek, aged 21)

Deposition of Dora Almaleh (female), late of 19b Othos Peve Ganna, Salonika, Greece, sworn before Major Savile Geoffrey Champion, Royal Artillery, Legal Staff, No. 1 War Crimes Investigation Team.

1. I am 21 years of age and because I am a Jewess I was arrested on 1st April, 1942, and taken to Auschwitz Concentration Camp, where I remained until I was transferred to Belsen in November, 1944.

2. I recognise No. 2 on photograph 22 as an S.S. woman at Belsen. I knew her by the name of Hilde. I have been told now that her full name is Hilde Lisiewitz. One day in April, 1945, whilst at Belsen, I was one of a working party detailed to carry vegetables from the store to the kitchen by means of a hand-cart. In charge of this working party was Lisiewitz. While I was on this job I allowed two male prisoners, whose names I do not know, to take two turnips off the cart. Lisiewitz saw me do this, and pushed the men, who were very weak, to the ground, and then beat them on their heads with a thick stick which she always carried. She then stamped on their chests in the region of the heart with her jack-boots. The men lay still clutching the turnips. Lisiewitz then got hold of me and shook me until I started to cry. She then said, "Don't cry or I'll kill you too." She then went away and after 15 minutes I went up to the men and touched them to see if they were still alive. I formed the opinion that they were dead. I felt their hearts and could feel nothing. They were cold to the touch like dead men. I then went away, leaving the bodies lying there, and I do not know what happened to them.

3. I recognise No. 1 on photograph No. 5 as an S.S. man at Belsen who was in charge of the bread store. I have now been told that his name is Karl Egersdorf. One day in April, 1945, whilst at Belsen, I was working in the vegetable store when I saw a Hungarian girl, whose name I do not know, come out of the bread store near by carrying a loaf of bread. At this moment Egersdorf appeared in the street and, at a distance of about 6 metres from the girl, shouted, "What are you doing there?" The girl replied, "I am hungry," and then started to run away. Egersdorf immediately pulled out his pistol and shot the girl. She fell down and lay still, bleeding from the back of the head where the bullet had penetrated. Egersdorf then went away and a few minutes later I went and looked at the girl. I am sure she was dead, and men who were passing by looked at her and were of the same opinion. The bullet had entered in the center of the back of her head. I do not know what happened to the body.

APPENDIX D: DEPOSITION OF REGINA BIALEK

DEPOSITION OF REGINA BIALEK (Pole, aged 28)

2. I recognise Ladislav Gura (photo. 7-1) as being a Slovak and a Blockführer at Auschwitz. One day in the summer of 1943 I saw him beat a man on the face and head with the butt of his rifle for speaking to a woman. The man's head was split open and blood issued from his mouth and ears and his injuries appeared so bad that I had no doubt that he was dead. On Gura's orders some prisoners had to take the victim to the male quarters. On another day, in the summer of 1943, I saw, from about 40 metres away, George Kraft (photo. 7-5) catch a man who was also speaking to a woman. Kraft battered the man's face and head with a stick so that his head was gashed and blood poured from his mouth and ears. In my opinion the man must have died, since no one could have survived such injuries. I later saw his body taken away to the male quarters by other prisoners.

3. On 25th December, 1943, I was sick with typhus and was picked out at a selection made by Doctors Mengele and Tauber along with about 350 other women. I was made to undress and taken by lorry to a gas chamber. There were seven gas chambers at Auschwitz. This particular one was underground and the lorry was able to run down the slope and straight into the chamber. Here we were tipped unceremoniously on the floor. The room was about 12 yards square and small lights on the wall dimly illuminated it. When the room was full a hissing sound was heard coming from the centre point on the floor and gas came into the room. After what seemed about ten minutes some of the victims began to bite their hands and foam at the mouth and blood issued from their ears, eyes and mouth, and their faces went blue. I suffered from all these symptoms, together with a tight feeling at the throat. I was half conscious when my number was called out by Dr. Mengele and I was led from the chamber. I attribute my escape to the fact that the daughter of a friend of mine who was an Aryan and a doctor at Auschwitz had seen me being transported to the chamber and had told her mother, who immediately appealed to Dr. Mengele. Apparently he realised that as a political prisoner I was of more value alive than dead, and I was released.

4. I think that the time to kill a person in this particular gas chamber would be from 15 to 20 minutes.

5. I was told that the staffs of the prisoners who worked in the gas chamber and crematorium next door changed every three months, the old staff being taken to a villa in the camp to do some repair work. Here they were locked in the rooms and gas bombs thrown through the window. I estimate that in December, 1943, about 7000 people disappeared from Auschwitz by way of the gas chamber and crematorium.

FURTHER DEPOSITION OF REGINA BIALEK

2. I first met Helena Koper when I traveled from Auschwitz to Belsen in the summer of 1944. During the time we were in Belsen Camp Koper told me that her husband and son were both members of the S.S. and that she came from Cracow [Kraków]. I first heard that her husband was a German from other prisoners, and in order to find out the truth I told Koper that my husband was a German. It was then that Koper told me the story of her own husband and son. At Belsen

Koper acted as an assistant Blockälteste, Blockälteste, and for a while as camp policewoman. She was well favoured by the S.S. Koper reported to the S.S. the names of women who were in possession of valuables, etc., and the S.S. then came to those women and deprived them of that property. Women found in possession of valuables were often beaten by the S.S.

3. Koper was assistant Blockälteste of Block 27 in the women's camp at Belsen and I was in this block whilst she was there. Koper deprived women in the block of their proper share of what food there was, because she kept more for herself than she was entitled to have. The food that she saved in this way she exchanged with other prisoners for margarine. Koper frequently beat other women prisoners in the block for coming to her for more food. She beat them across the head and all parts of the body with a wooden stick, sometimes three or four times. As far as I know, Koper did not inflict any serious injuries on those she beat, but there was no necessity for the beatings.

4. I have also seen Koper beat women prisoners outside the block in the camp. As a camp policewoman she checked prisoners for small offences, such as being outside the block when an alert was sounded. For those trifling offences she beat prisoners with a wooden stick, and on one occasion she beat a friend of mine without reason. I did not see the incident, but was told by my friend who had a black eye.

5. In Belsen Koper used to keep company with one of the S.S. men. I do not know his name, but he used to visit the block to see her and bring her packets of food. When he came other prisoners used to clear out of the way. Koper became pregnant according to other prisoners, and all said that the S.S. man was responsible. Then one day in march, 1945, S.S. woman Ehlert came to the block to search for jewellery, but was unable to find any as the women had hidden it. It had been reported to Ehlert by Koper that other prisoners were in possession of jewellery, and when she did not find it she struck Koper and told other prisoners to set about her. Koper was hated by the other prisoners and they all began to beat her. Koper had to be taken to hospital afterwards, and I was told by other prisoners she had a miscarriage when about four months pregnant.

6. I identify No. 3 on photograph 37 as an S.S. woman who was an Aufseherin in Kitchen No. 1 at Belsen. I knew her by the name of Ilse Forster. I often saw Forster beating other prisoners with a thick stick in the kitchen. She struck male prisoners across the head and women across the backside, but sometimes she hit women on the head too. I have seen Forster beat many prisoners until they were unconscious and they were then left lying on the floor. These beatings were inflicted in a room within the same building as the cookhouse, and I saw the beatings through a window of the room. These beatings were given because prisoners asked for food or because they took food from the kitchen. I have seen unconscious prisoners who had been beaten by Forster taken away on a wheelbarrow to the hospital. I do not know whether any of them died as a result of their injuries, but many were covered with blood.

FURTHER DEPOSITION OF REGINA BIALEK

2. I know the accused Ilse Lothe in Belsen. I met her about two months before the camp was liberated. She was a Kapo in charge of the agricultural working party. I myself was working in

Kitchen No. 1 in the men's camp. I saw Lothe every day and never saw her beat anybody. The other Kapos used to take food away from the internees for their own purposes. Lothe never did that - in fact, she often asked me to get her something to eat as she was hungry.

3. There is nothing more I can say about her as I had no dealing with her outside the kitchen, but judging from her behaviour I find it hard to believe that she would have treated the girls badly.

APPENDIX E: DEPOSITION OF DR. ADA BIMKO

DEPOSITION OF DR. ADA BIMKO (Pole, aged 32)

1. I am aged 32 and am a Jewess of Polish nationality. I am a qualified Doctor of Medicine. I was arrested in August, 1943, because I was a Jewess, and I was taken to Auschwitz. I was transferred to Belsen in November, 1944. I worked as a doctor whilst at Auschwitz. I set out hereafter what I observed myself with regard to the mass exterminations of prisoners and I will name the persons, each of whom individually selected persons for extermination. I have examined the records of the numbers cremated and I say that the records show that about 4000000 persons were cremated at the camp. I say that from my own observation I have no doubt that at least this number were exterminated.

2. The selections of persons to be exterminated were made in three ways: (1) on arrival, (2), on selection parades held two or three times a week on an average, (3) in hospitals.

3. For example, I arrived in a batch of 5000 persons. S.S. Doctor Rohde, S.S. woman Drechsler and S.S. man Tauber were waiting at the station. They made a selection at once. First of all, the children and the old people were picked out, then those who looked ill, and after that anyone was picked out until 4500 people had been selected. These went to the gas chamber and were never again. In this way died my father, mother, brother, husband and son, aged 6. My sister was not selected then, but she was selected and killed at a later date. I have been present at many other station selections where the same procedure was adopted and the number selected was always a round figure, which might even amount to as many as 10000 persons on one day.

4. Persons were also selected for execution from those detained in hospital. I have seen the patients made to run naked past the selectors and those who could not run quickly or looked ill or poorly developed or, in the case of women, were ugly, were picked out by any of the selectors present. There were often as many as 4000 patients in hospital at a time, and I have known as many as 1000 taken from hospital and never less than 500. Indeed, I particularly remember 1st December, 1943, when there were 4124 women patients in hospital. There was an outbreak of typhus and 4000 patients exactly were sent to the gas chamber. The selectors on this occasion were Doctors Tilot, Klein and S.S. man Tauber, and S.S. women Mandel, Drechsler and Brandel.

5. Selections were also made at roll-calls in the camp as and when desired by the S.S. Usually sick-looking people and old persons were picked out. Sometimes during the winter months the women were compelled to remove all their clothing whilst S.S. selectors walked round the ranks and chose individuals. At other times they had to hold out their hands, and those wearing bandages or having visible wounds were chosen. On other occasions a section of the parade, without any sorting, were detailed for the gas chamber. I herewith name persons who in my presence selected internees for the gas chamber. Each of the individuals were responsible for sending a large number to the gas chamber.

APPENDIX F: DEPOSITION OF ESTERA GUTERMAN

DEPOSITION OF ESTERA GUTERMAN (Pole, aged 42)

2. I first saw Helena Koper in Block 27 at Belsen Camp, where Koper was assistant Blockälteste. I was in Block 27 myself. I later moved with Koper and other prisoners to another block, the number of which I cannot remember, and later to Block 224. At the second block we went to, Koper was Blockälteste and she also held this position in Block 224. For a few days shortly before the British troops arrived Koper was Lager policewoman.

3. One day in February, 1945, I attended an Appell of which Koper was in charge. It was cold and there was snow on the ground. The Appell lasted about two hours that day. After about an hour on this Appell I felt very cold and moved my position slightly. Koper then came up to me and beat me across the head and body with a leather strap she was carrying. The beating was very painful and made me cry. After the beating Koper made me kneel in the snow for about an hour. Whilst I was kneeling down an S.S. woman, whom I identify as No. 5 on photograph, 22, and whose name I have been told is Herta Ehlert, came up and spoke to Koper. She said to Koper, "It is enough," and Koper replied, "No, she must stay there, she did not stand straight." I had to carry on kneeling.

4. At another Appell in February, 1945, of which Koper was in charge, there was a Polish woman named Fischer, aged about 40 years, standing on parade without any shoes. She stood in her stockings. There was snow on the ground and the weather was damp and cold. Koper came up to the woman Fischer and said, "Why are you not working? You should be with the working party." Fischer replied, "I have no shoes." The Appell was at 8 a.m. and working parties had gone out at 7 a.m. Koper, without saying any more, then beat Fischer with a leather belt, again and again, across the head and other parts of the body. Fischer fell to the ground crying, and Koper then made her kneel in the snow for about an hour until the Appell was finished. I was on this Appell and saw all that happened. When Fischer returned to her block, No. 224, she was ill and had to lie down. She remained ill from the onwards until about three weeks later, when she died. I was present when she died and I saw her dead body carried out of the block by other women prisoners. She had received no medical attention.

5. On another occasion in February, 1945, just before the Appell, I was in the block when Koper ordered everyone outside on Appell. There was a sick Polish woman who was suffering from heart trouble and swollen limbs. I do not know this woman's name, but she was about 35 years of age. She was lying on the floor as there were no beds. In my presence this woman told Koper that she felt too ill to attend Appell. Koper immediately started to beat her with a leather strap and continued to do so until the woman got to her feet. Koper then made her go outside to attend Appell. During Appell the woman collapsed on the groups unconscious. There was snow on the ground at the time and the Polish woman was left lying in the snow for two hours, no one being allowed to touch her because Appell was on. After Appell I saw other prisoners carry the unconscious woman to the hospital block. Three days later other prisoners told me the woman had died and I did not see her again.

6. I have seen Koper beat other women prisoners with a wooden stick or a leather belt every day at Belsen. She beat them on the head and all parts of the body for trifling offences and often for

nothing at all. As she walked through the block she would beat women prisoners without reason. On a number of occasions I have seen Lopper beat other women prisoners until they were unconscious, and many of her victims had to be taken to hospital for treatment.

APPENDIX G: DEPOSITION OF KATHERINE NEIGER

DEPOSITION OF KATHERINE NEIGER (Czech, aged 23)

3. I was one of the first batch to a thousand girls to arrive at Belsen. Previously only male prisoners were kept at Belsen. I was employed as a clerk and it was my duty to record the number of deaths of women in the camp each day. In the first few weeks the figures were low. As more internees arrived the deaths increased. In January, 15 to 20 died daily. From then on deaths increased until the last day of March, on which day the number of deaths reported was 349. This figure was not accurate, since all deaths were not reported and bodies uncounted were lying in the open. In April the daily deaths increased, but I can give no figures as I then went ill with typhus. I estimate that 900 of my party have died from malnutrition, disease and ill-treatment.

4. On the day before the British arrived I saw S.S. woman Elisabeth Volkenrath, who I identify No. 6 on photograph 22, now shown to me, ill-treating a girl internee. The girl had been caught taking some vegetables. She was very sick, pale and thin. The S.S. woman made her kneel down and hold the vegetables above her head. After about four hours the girl could no longer hold her arms up and this S.S. woman went to her and beat her on the head, back and legs with a rubber stick. She lay there until nightfall and I do not know what happened to her afterwards. I would add that I have seen this S.S. woman often beating sick girls, usually when Appell was on, and on one occasion in March I was struck across the face again and again with a rubber stick for having my coat open. On another occasion I saw her striking a girl on the ground with a stick and kicking her. The girl was covered with blood.

5. There was another S.S. woman Herta Ehlert, who I identify as No. 5 on photograph 22. She used to search the blocks and if she found any food, take out the girl responsible and beat her.

6. I have seen S.S. woman Gertrud Sauer, who I identify as No. 5 on photograph 19, frequently beat girls without reason. She never allowed any girls to rest during the day-time.

7. I name also Gertrud Fiest, whom I identify as No. 4 on photograph 19, as guilty of great cruelty. When she was on Appell duty she always made it last as long as possible, and often it lasted from 6 a.m. until noon. Sick and dying women were forced to attend and many of them collapsed.

8. I have seen S.S. woman Irene Haschke, whom I identify as No. 3 on photograph 35, beating sick girls with a rubber stick on a number of occasions.

9. I often saw Herta Bothe, whom I identify as No. 5 on photograph 25, beating sick girls with a wooden stick.

10. I have often seen Peter Weingartner, whom I identify as No. 1 on photograph 12, Johann Kasainitzky, whom I identify as No. 3 on photograph 12, and Frederick Herzog, whom I identify as No. 4 on photograph 12, beat sick women severely with rubber truncheons.

11. I am well acquainted with the English language and have made this statement on oath in English.

FURTHER DEPOSITION OF KATHERINE NEIGER

2. I was in Camp "C" at Auschwitz from 11th August, 1944, until 21st August, 1944. I recognise No. 2 on photograph Z/4/2 as one of the chief women in the camp. I am now told that her name is Irma Grese. There were 31 blocks, each containing 1000 people, in this camp, and every day internees of one of the blocks would have to attend Appell. These Appelle would last from 3 a.m. to 9 a.m. and Grese would attend. At her orders the internees would have to hold their hands above their heads during this period, holding in each hand a large stone. I was one of the internees who had to do this. Grese carried a pair of gloves with her which she put on when she was going to beat anyone, which she did with her fists. These beatings were given for no apparent reason.

3. People were kept in Camp C for about a fortnight only, and at the end of this time they would be transferred to working camps. Grese would personally make selections for these transfers and always took particular trouble to arrange that relatives were never in the same transport.

APPENDIX H: DEPOSITION OF ISAK LOZOWSKI

DEPOSITION OF ISAK LOZOWSKI (Pole, aged 23)

3. I identify No. 8 on photograph Z/4/3 as a man whom I knew by the name of Erich and who was Lagerältester in No. 1 Camp at Belsen. I have now been told that his full name is Erich Zoddel. I frequently saw this man Zoddel beat other prisoners. Zoddel always carried a wooden stick, fixed on the end of which was a piece of iron piping, and Zoddel beat prisoners on the head and other parts of the body. As Lagerältester he worked as an assistant to the S.S., giving orders for working parties, etc.

4. One day about the middle or end of March, 1945, I saw Zoddel kill another prisoner. At 7 a.m. in the morning in question I was with a working party waiting to move off to work. There was another working party standing near by. In this working party there was a very sick man, a Polish Jew, whose name I do not know. This sick man spoke to the Kapo and said that he was too sick to go to work. I heard the Kapo tell him to go to an Appell place, and the sick man walked off towards the Appell place, which was behind Block 2. Zoddel was walking in the opposite direction and when he reached the sick man I saw Zoddel strike him heavily across the head with the metal end of the stick which he always carried. There was no apparent reason for this as no word was spoken between them. I was only about five or six metres away when this happened.

APPENDIX I: DEPOSITION OF FILO PINKUS

DEPOSITION OF FILO PINKUS (Pole) (Not sworn)

On the day of my arrival in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen, I made the acquaintance of the camp inmate, Antoni Aurdzieg, a Pole, who was overseer of block 12. I was amongst those assigned to his block. Aurdzieg received us with blows and hit us with stools, iron bars, rubber truncheons, etc. This was the usual thing in every camp.

The word "block" means a large building about 45 metres long and about 6 metres wide. Some 1200 prisoners were housed in one such block. Aurdzieg had a block like this and its inmates under his charge. I can clearly remember that on Thursday, the 12.4.45, it was about 7.30, the painter Grünzweig, a Pole from Vilna, did not want to do his work as he felt too weak. He remained in the block. Aurdzieg ordered Grünzweig to leave the block and to get to work. Aurdzieg had some object in his hand, what it was I am now unable to say, and beat Grünzweig with it until he collapsed and died. I was in the block at the time and saw the incident described above quite clearly. I can well remember that day, as I had several teeth knocked out by the Camp Overseer with an iron bar. I had also several blows on my left hand.

On Sunday, the 15.4.45, about 8 o'clock, a Russian national, whose name I do not know, failed to report at Block 13 for work in connexion [connection] with the dead. He was passing by Block 12 and, in doing so, unintentionally brushed against Aurdzieg. The latter dealt him a blow, and the Russian hit back. Aurdzieg called his deputy and the orderlies of the room-service out from Block 12. All these persons then dragged the Russian into the block, where they fell upon him, beating him up with all kinds of things, until he lay lifeless on the floor. I personally witnessed this incident as I myself was in the block, at the time. The Russian's dead body was removed to another block, where there were several other corpses. That other men besides were killed by Aurdzieg (I am unable to say), I saw only the two above-cited cases. I can fully guarantee the truth of my statements. I should like to add that on several hundreds of occasions I have seen, as an eye-witness, Aurdzieg beating his fellow-prisoners with (various) objects so that they were physically disabled. He was able to continue with this kind of thing unhindered, as none of the men in charge of the camp or on guard bothered about such things, but even tolerated them.

I should like to mention the following incident. On 10th April, 1945, in the course of the morning, I saw, when the hot soup was being served out by Aurdzieg, that the latter demanded of my fellow-prisoner, Lajwand, five Russian gold roubles, and also received them. Lajwand had asked Aurdzieg to give him a little more soup. After Lajwand had given Aurdzieg the rouble-piece and then asked for soup, Aurdzieg turned and beat Lajwand with a stick. I also know that Aurdzieg got a diamond out of the Polish Jew, Marxo (or Marzo), also an inmate of the camp, who wanted Aurdzieg to give a little more soup. However, he did not give him any, but beat Marxo, too, repeatedly. The only reason why I am giving these details is to convey some idea of what kind of person Aurdzieg is.

APPENDIX J: DEPOSITION OF WILHELM GRUNWALD

DEPOSITION OF WILHELM GRUNWALD (Czech, aged 17)

2. About 10th April, 1945, whilst at Belsen, I saw two prisoners crawl through a hole in the wire surrounding Kitchen No. 2. They were attempting to steal some carrots piled up there. Before the two prisoners could reach the pile I saw an S.S. man, whom I recognise as No. 3 on photograph No. 3, shoot at them with his pistol and the prisoners fell. I have now been told that this S.S. man's name is Fritz Mathes. About twenty minutes later I saw other prisoners collect the two prisoners, who had been shot and were lying on the ground, and carry their bodies away to a pile of corpses. I have no doubt that the men were killed by Mathes.

3. I recognise No. 5 on photograph 25 as an S.S. woman at Belsen. I have now been told that her name is Herta Bothe. Between 1st and 15th April, 1945, I saw several very weak female prisoners carrying a food container from the kitchen to the block. As it was filled and very heavy the women could not stand the weight and put it down to rest. At that moment I saw Bothe shoot at the two prisoners with her pistol. They fell down, but I cannot say whether they were dead or wounded, but as they were very weak, thin and under-nourished I have no doubt that they died.

APPENDIX K: DEPOSITION OF EDITH TRIEGER

DEPOSITION OF EDITH TRIEGER (Slovak, aged 20)

2. At Auschwitz I knew an S.S. woman by the name of Grese and I identify her as No. 2 on photograph Z/4/2. I have now been told that her full name is Irma Grese. Grese was at Auschwitz from about June, 1942, until 31st October, 1944. Until May, 1944, Grese was in charge of working parties of women, but from that date onwards until she left the camp she was a Rapportführerin. I also saw Grese in Belsen after I left Auschwitz.

3. In August, 1944, I saw this S.S. woman Grese at Auschwitz shoot a Hungarian Jewess who was aged about 30 years. I saw this incident from my block. At this time a transport of prisoners was arriving at the camp by train, and when prisoners arrived all prisoners in the camp were confined to their blocks. The Hungarian woman stood outside the block watching the transport arrive, when Grese approached the woman on her bicycle. She stopped and got off her bicycle about five metres away from the woman, and shouted to the woman, "Get in your block." Then, without giving the woman an opportunity to go to her block, Grese produced a revolver from a holster she was carrying, aimed at the woman and fired. The woman fell to the ground and stayed there unconscious. Grese rode away on her bicycle, leaving the woman there. I saw all this occur from the distance of about 50 metres. After about a quarter of a hour the transport passed by and Grese disappeared from view. I then went to the woman who had been shot and found that she had a bullet-hole through the left breast. I pulled her clothes open and saw the hole where the bullet had penetrated and left the body. There was a pool of blood on the ground and the woman's clothing was soaked in blood. The woman was dead. I am quite certain of this, as I put a mirror to the woman's mouth to test whether she was breathing and it did not cloud over. After satisfying myself that the woman was actually dead I returned to my block. No one else came to see the body at that time as we were still confined to our blocks. The body lay in the road for another hour and then other prisoners came out and carried the body away to a spot behind a hut and covered it with a blanket. I did not see the body after that.

4. One day in the beginning of October, a selection to choose people for the gas chamber was made inside the block in which I lived. Selections were sometimes made outside and sometimes inside the block. The selectors were Kommandant Kramer, Dr. Mengele, S.S. woman Drechsler and S.S. woman Mandel, Dr. Mengele was in charge of the selection. The woman Grese was present, moving about the block in the passage and round the door of the block. All the women in the block had to undress. I was excused as I was a Block Leader. Those selected were taken to my room to await removal to the gas chamber and I was ordered to keep those selected in my room. Drechsler stood near to me all the time and I was made to stand in front of the doorway of my room with my hands outstretched. The selected persons endeavoured to escape by passing under my arms and between my legs. When an opportunity occurred I let them do so and they ran out into the street. Grese saw this. One or two got away, but Grese caught the majority, and beat them with her hands and kicked them until they were forced back into the room. All the girls were naked.

5. I saw many selections in Camp C at Auschwitz and Grese was invariably present. At the smaller ones I have seen Grese sort out the weaker women and send them off for removal to the

gas chamber. I have also seen Grese beating women prisoners at the camp every day, sometimes with her hands, sometimes with a rubber stick and sometimes kicking them.

6. I recognise Hilde Lohbauer, who I know by name, as No. 3 on photograph Z/4/2. This woman was at Auschwitz from March, 1942, and was still there when I left. I later saw her at Belsen. Lohbauer was a German Aryan who had been arrested as an undesirable element. At first this woman used to work as an assistant supervisor to parties of women prisoners going out of the camp to work. Later she worked in the camp selecting prisoners for working parties. I have frequently seen this woman beat other women prisoners, sometimes with her hands and sometimes with a wooden stick. Beatings by this woman occurred daily. She would beat women for not lining up quickly on parade or for any trifling offence. Sometimes she would beat other women for no reason at all except that she did not like them. She was very sadistic. During the daytime Lohbauer, after selecting working parties, patrolled the camp as a police guard, striking women for small offences or because they did not satisfy her. I have seen Lohbauer beat women across the head, shoulders and body, often making them bleed. I did not see her kill anyone or knock anyone unconscious but I have been told by other prisoners that some of the victims had to be taken to hospital for treatment as the result of injuries inflicted on them by this woman. I cannot recall any particular incident, as beatings by this woman were a daily occurrence.

7. I recognise Elisabeth Volkenrath, who I know by name, as No. 6 on photograph 22 . I have seen Volkenrath at Auschwitz frequently beating women prisoners on all parts of the body with a rubber stick. At selection parades for the gas chamber I have seen Volkenrath make selections herself of persons who were to go. I myself was picked out by Volkenrath on a selection parade for the gas chamber, but managed to escape at an opportune moment. Others selected by Volkenrath were sent to Block 25 of Camp A for transfer to the gas chamber. Persons so selected and sent to this block were not seen again.

8. I identify No. 2 on photograph 37 as an S.S. supervisor of Kitchen No. 2 at Belsen. I have now been told that her name is Frieda Walter. I have seen this woman beating women prisoners who approached the kitchen, practically every day. I have seen her beat prisoners, usually over the head and face, with her hands, with a hosepipe or anything handy at the time, and sometimes kick them. I did not see anyone killed or rendered unconscious by this woman.

APPENDIX L: DEPOSITION OF BENEC ZUCKERMAN

DEPOSITION OF BENEC ZUCKERMAN (Pole)

2. I identify No. 8 on photograph Z/4/3 as an internee Lagerältester in No. 2 Camp, Belsen. I have now been told that his name is Erich Zoddel. He wore a green triangle on his blouse, which denoted that he was a criminal. He was very brutal and always walked around carrying a wooden stick, with which he used to beat other prisoners. One day in March, 1945, after the food had been served in the open in No. 1 Camp, Belsen, I tried to get a second helping. Zoddel was standing next to the food containers watching the food distribution. When I approached the food containers he jumped on me and, with the stick which he was carrying, struck me several times, very hard and mostly on the head. At first I did not run away and he kept on beating me very hard. Then I started to run, but being very sick, I could not go very fast. Zoddel ran behind me through the courtyard of the camp beating me the whole time. I was bleeding heavily and blood was running all over my head and face. I was later bandaged by the camp doctor and had to remain in bed for three days as a result of this treatment.

3. On many occasions I have seen Zoddel beat sick internees for no apparent reason. I have seen them fall to the ground. Some of these victims were merely unconscious, but others, I know, died as a result of this brutal treatment, because I have later seen their corpses collected.

APPENDIX M: STATEMENT OF ROZALJA SZPARAGA

STATEMENT OF ROZALJA SZPARAGA (Pole, aged 27) (Not Sworn)

I came to Auschwitz, January, 1943, and was sent into Block 26 on February 8th, 1945, where Stanislaw Starostka was Block Leader. She was the only Polish woman who had the position of a Block leader, because that position required the confidence of the camp authorities, and was the result of her special merits. She was the ruler of life and death of all the women prisoners of her block. She had chosen the candidates for the crematory, she issued hunger rations, nobody was allowed to claim better food without risking to be beaten; she created the atmosphere of fear in the whole block. She denounced to the German authorities on the smallest offence, e.g. at the checking the kits without the presence of Rapportführerin (German roll-call leader), she found a verse; a little poem about the situation at Auschwitz, and in spite of our demands she gave that verse to the German authorities and by consequence the possessor of that verse, Mrs. Dada (the Polish officer's wife from Warsaw), was sentenced for one year of punishment company and 6 weeks in bunker. In our camp there was a secret relief organisation: Starostka discovered that organisation and, during the inquisitory police enquiries in order to discover great groups of people, she was the executor; she beat and ill-treated the people. It happened many times and all the women prisoners can prove it and give more than 10 examples. Starostka was held in worse opinion than S.S. women. In autumn, 1943, in view of her special merits in exterminating, she had got a rank of Lagerälteste, It was the highest position in the women's section of the camp which a prisoner could obtain. She was perfectly free to move within the camp confines without any guard; that constituted the privilege only for people entrusted with confidence by the Germans. One day as the prisoners were indignant at the behaviour of Starostka, during the roll-call we were informed that Starostka was the truster of camp authorities, that she was the "right hand" and was above any criticism. All opposers risked the death. She acted in this position until January, 1945. That was the time of the evacuation of Auschwitz. I recognised Starostka in our camp at Glinde on 28th June, 1945, at a dancing party and spoke to her. I was quite sure that she was the same person. Now I have heard that Starostka had a responsible position in the Camp Wentorf. I know her past and as a Pole I find it to be my duty to make this report, because this person ought to be prosecuted for killing and torturing 1000 Polish women at Auschwitz. I do it also to prevent any harmful acting of hers in this Polish camp. Therefore I request to prosecute Starostka and punish her for having killed thousands of Polish women in the Camp Auschwitz, for beating and torturing the women prisoners, and for the denouncing.

APPENDIX N: DEPOSITION OF DORA SILBERBERG

DEPOSITION OF DORA SILBERBERG (Pole, aged 25)

2. I recognise No. 3 on photograph 19 as an S.S. woman at Auschwitz. I knew her by the name of Bormann. I have now been told that her full name is Juana Bormann. On 15th June, 1944, whilst at Auschwitz, I was working with a working party outside the camp. Working with me was a good friend of mine named Rachella Silberstein, aged 21 years, from Łódź, Poland. On this day she felt very sick and could not walk on her own to the working site. We had to assist her and on arriving at the working site she sat down because she was so weak and suffered from very severe pains. Bormann, who was supervising the party, ordered my friend to go to work immediately. Because my friend could hardly speak through pain I intervened and told Bormann that Silberstein was too ill to work. Bormann hit me in the face with her fist, knocking out two of my teeth, and told me to go back to work. As I moved away she hit me all over the body with a thick stick which she carried. She then ordered a big dog, which always accompanied her, to attack Silberstein, who was sitting the ground. The dog grasped her leg with its teeth and dragged her round and round until she finally collapsed. Bormann then ordered the dog to let go of my friend. After about ten minutes Silberstein recovered consciousness, but lay all day on the ground. I could see no open wounds, but the leg which had been gripped by the dog became very swollen and blue-black in colour. I had the impression that it was blood-poisoning. When we marched back to the camp four girls had to carry Silberstein, and on her arrival they took her to the hospital. On the following day I went to visit her and she was very weak. She could neither speak nor eat. When I went to see her on 17th June, 1944, the warden told me that she had died. He said that the dead body was in the yard and I went there and saw a corpse covered with blankets. I lifted the blankets and recognised my dead friend.

APPENDIX O: DEPOSITION OF ADAM MARCINKOWSKI

DEPOSITION OF ADAM MARCINKOWSKI (Pole, aged 21)

2. On 20th June, 1945, I was shown by No. 14573509 Sergeant Edward Dinsdale, 86 Special Investigation Section, Corps of Military Police, a man whom I recognised as a Kapo in Drütte Camp, and as Stubenältester of Block 19 at Belsen Camp. I knew him by the name of Medislaw and I have now been told his full name is Medislaw Burgraf. He was a Polish soldier.

3. I remember the following incident which occurred at Belsen Camp. On 12th April, 1945, at about 3 p.m., a friend of mine, George Grabonski, who lived at Warsaw, and who, like myself, then lived in Block 21, went to Block 19 which was about eight metres away. Burgraf stood at the door of Block 19, I was at a window of Block 21 and heard my friend ask Burgraf for permission to enter Block 19 to see a sick friend. Burgraf refused, and when my friend asked him, Burgraf, who was standing at the top of the steps leading into the block, struck my friend Grabonski, who was then standing at the foot of these steps, a two-handed blow with a square table leg which he always carried. The blow fell at the back of my friend's head and he immediately collapsed. When I saw this I immediately went down and dragged my friend into Block 21. By the time I had arrived downstairs Burgraf had re-entered his block. Grabonski had an open wound at the back of his head. I attended to him for about three hours, but at the end of that time he died. I carried his body and put it on the pile of corpses already outside the block. Other people also saw this incident, but I cannot at present name any of them.

4. From my block, at Belsen, I sometimes watched the distribution of soup at meal-times outside Block 21. This distribution was done by a prisoner, who was supervised by Burgraf. During the short period I was at Belsen very little food was given to the prisoners, and as the men were very hungry when food was distributed, they rushed to be served first. Burgraf would then beat them indiscriminately with the table leg. I have seen very weak men fall down and later on be dragged by their comrades to the piles of corpses. I can say that I have personally seen Burgraf beat about 50 persons to death in this way over a period of four or five days.

APPENDIX P: DEPOSITION OF DR. PETER LEONARD MAKAR

DEPOSITION OF DR. PETER LEONARD MAKAR (Pole, aged 37)

1. I am 37 years of age and a Doctor of Medicine. I escaped from Poland in January, 1940, as I was wanted by the Germans for spreading British propaganda. I went to Yugoslavia, where I was captured by the Italians and put to work in a hospital at Zagreb. In January, 1941, I escaped and went to Cirvenica, where I worked as a doctor in a hospital. In June or July, 1943, I was recaptured by the Italians and sent to Malinski, and when the Germans took over Malinski on 11th January, 1944, I was taken to Dachau, I was transferred to Belsen Camp on 20th July, 1944.

2. I recognise Juana Bormann, No. 3 on photograph 19, as being an S.S. woman usually in charge of a pig-sty at Belsen. I saw her on two occasions in March, 1945, beat women prisoners. On the first occasion she beat a girl, whose name I do not know, on the face and head with her fists because she had caught her stealing vegetables. The girl fell to the ground and was helped away by her friend. On the second occasion a girl tried to steal clothing from the clothing store, so Bormann beat her on the face and beat with her fist. When I walked away, the girl, whose name I do not know, was still being beaten.

3. I recognise Klara Opitz, No. 1 on photograph 37, as being an S.S. woman in charge of female working parties at Belsen. On one occasion I was passing a party when I saw Opitz kicking a girl and beating her on the face and body with her fists. I have often heard from other prisoners that she made a particular habit of beating the girls.

6. Müller was an ex-Gestapo agent and he was in charge of people who were detailed for a bath. After the bath they would be given a change of underwear, and some would try to get an extra suit. Müller would then beat them with a leather strap on their bodies until they collapsed. He would then kick them as they lay on the ground. The bodies would be taken away by other prisoners on a cart and I cannot say that any died, though I have been told that some did. I have been present when these beatings have occurred. I should describe Müller as aged about 36, height 5 ft. 10 in., fat, blue eyes, fair hair, round and red face.

7. Between June and August, 1944, I estimate that between 400 and 500 prisoners died in Belsen from injections, and for which Hauptsturmführer Dr. Jaeger was responsible. I have heard him give orders to a German prisoner named Karl Rothe, a confirmed criminal, to give injections to certain prisoners whose numbers he [Jaeger] would give him. He also gave permission to Rothe to inject anyone else he wanted. Those chosen by Jaeger were mostly political prisoners. These people were told to report to a special room in a block, but they knew the reason for their having to go, so they refused. They were then beaten on S.S. orders by other prisoners. While they were on their beds suffering from the effects of the beating, Rothe injected them over the heart. They would cry out, and to smother the cries Rothe and the other prisoners detailed for the job would grasp them by the throat and in about four minutes they would be dead. I have seen the liquid used for the injections brought into the hospital by a German medical orderly and given to Rothe. The prisoners would sometimes fill their cigarette lighters with it. I have smelt it and it smelt like petrol [Comment: Phenol]. I once asked a patient who was moaning, "What is wrong?" and he answered, "They have injected me twice over the heart." The symptoms were difficult breathing, excruciating pain and slowing down of the pulse. A prisoner named Eric Boerfler used to help

Rothe with the injections and he left the camp with the S.S. before the English [British] came. Rothe has been hung by his fellow prisoners. When Jaeger left the camp in December, 1944, the injections ceased and Doctors Schnabel and Klein took over his duties.

APPENDIX Q: DEPOSITION OF SOPHIA LITWINSKA

DEPOSITION OF SOPHIA LITWINSKA (Pole, aged 28)

1. I am 28 years of age and was arrested on 19th May, 1941, at Lublin. I was arrested because I was a Jewess; my husband, who was an Aryan and a Polish officer, having been arrested in 1940. He was taken to Auschwitz, where he died. The reason my husband was arrested was because he married a Jewess. On my arrest I was taken to Lublin prison, where I remained, for one year before being taken to Auschwitz. I was taken to Auschwitz in company with other Jews who were said to be partisans. On arrival I was made to have a bath and had my hair cut off and was then placed in quarantine for six weeks.

2. At Auschwitz, on 24th December, 1942, I was paraded in company with about 19000 other prisoners, all of them women. Present on parade were Doctors Mengele and König and Rapportführer Tauber. I was one of the 3000 prisoners picked out of the 19000 by the doctors and taken to our huts, where we were stripped naked by other prisoners and our clothes taken away. We were then taken by tipper-type lorries to the gas chamber chute. They were large lorries, about eight in all and about 300 persons on each lorry. On arrival at the gas chamber the lorry tipped up and we slid down the chute through some doors into a large room. The room had showers all round, towels and soap and large numbers of benches. There were also small windows high up near the roof. Many were injured coming down the chute and lay where they fell. Those of us who could sat down on the benches provided and immediately afterwards the doors of the room were closed. My eyes then began to water, I started coughing and had a pain in my chest and throat. Some of the other people fell down and others coughed and foamed at the mouth. After being in the room for about two minutes the door was opened and an S.S. man came in wearing a respirator. He called my name and then pulled me out of the room and quickly shut the door again. When I got outside I saw S.S. man Franz Hoessler, whom I identify as No. 1 on photograph 9. He took me to hospital, where I stayed for about six weeks, receiving special treatment from Dr. Mengele. For the first few days I was at the hospital I found it impossible to eat anything without vomiting. I can only think that I was taken out of the gas chamber because I had an Aryan husband and therefore was in a different category from the other prisoners, who were all Jews. I now suffer from a weak heart and had two attacks since being at Belsen. I do not know the names of any persons who went into the gas chamber with me.

3. After recovering I worked in the kitchen at Auschwitz and while there I often had to undress other people who had been selected for the gas chamber. I left Auschwitz in November, 1944, and went to Breslau, where I stayed for three months, working in a munitions factory. After leaving there I went to various places, working in similar factories until I came to Belsen in March, 1945.

4. Whilst at Belsen I saw Herta Ehlert, whom I identify as No. 5 on photograph 22, shoot a woman dead outside the cookhouse. I do not know the woman's name, but she had apparently stolen one potato from outside the cookhouse. I am quite sure the woman was killed as I later saw the woman's body dragged away by two other prisoners. This occurred about two days before the English [British] came, which was 15th April, 1945.

5. I was told that there were altogether seven gas chambers at Auschwitz, each with a crematorium attached.

APPENDIX R: STATEMENT BY ANTONI AURDZIEG

STATEMENT BY ANTONI AURDZIEG (Pole) (Not sworn)

I acknowledge having been Stubendienst from 23rd March, 1945, until 15th April, 1945, in the camp at Bergen-Belsen. I had about 1200 prisoners under my orders.

I acknowledge having beaten the prisoners on their arrival in my Block (12).

I acknowledge having beaten a Pole, whose name I do not know, on the morning of 12.4.45 until his death ensued.

I acknowledge having - with several of my comrades (3), amongst whom was one named Adam Bartschinski, Kapo, 1st Orderly (or first on duty), on the morning of 15.4.45 - beaten a Russian prisoner until he fell dead on the ground. We then immediately, transferred his corpse to another block.

I acknowledge having assisted Kapo Adam in his thefts of money or jewels from the prisoners, Jews in particular, to whom we had promised an extra helping of soup by way of exchange. In the end, they received nothing but blows when they claimed it.

FURTHER STATEMENT BY ANTONI AURDZIEG (Not sworn)

The Polish Jew, Adam Bartschinski, Kapo. 1st Orderly Room, address unknown, was entrusted with the handing out of food supplies. He wore a white armband (or brassard) with the word "Stubendienst," and often beat about ten prisoners a day, either with a stick, an iron bar, or with a bludgeon, etc. This Pole never gave any food to the prisoners except against the delivery of jewels, gold, etc. *Description:* About 1 metre 75 (height), medium build, about 22 years of age, black hair, black eyes, round face, scar on the right side of face running from the eye to the cheek.

I also had two Polish comrades in this camp. Here are their names: Jan Polyt, who was at Stöcken and should be found there or at Diepholt. The other, whose Christian name was Stanislaw, should be at Stöcken Lager 21 or at Diepholz.

There was also a Pole, whose name I do not know, working with the S.S. Kapo, who killed about 10 to 12 prisoners per day. I know that he presented himself at the Rathaus for the purpose of obtaining ration cards. He lives at Hanover [Hannover] (address unknown), but I know by sight the hospital where he was treated (for 1 month), as he had caught typhus. *Description:* About 27 years of age, burly figure, black hair, bronzed skin.

APPENDIX S: STATEMENT OF S.S. FRANZ HOESSLER

STATEMENT OF S.S. OBERSTURMFÜHRER FRANZ HOESSLER (German, aged 39)

I want to tell you all I can and I am willing to assist your investigations in any way.

I am 39 years of age and was born in Kempen, Argau. I am a married man with three children and by trade was a photographer. As I was out of work I joined the S.S. when the Nazi Party came into power on 30th January, 1933. I volunteered for this service. From 1933 to 1935 I was in the S.S. barracks at Dachau doing military duties. In 1935 I took over as cook at the concentration camp at Dachau and I held this position until 1941. Whilst I was there, up to the end of 1935 the Kommandant was a man named Bicke, and from 1935 until 1938 or 1939 this position was held by Oberführer Loritz. I cannot remember the name of the Kommandant after him.

In 1941 I went to Auschwitz Concentration Camp, where I established a kitchen and I remained there until 1942. I then went to Minze-Brocha in Poland building special huts for the hospital. I took a working party from Auschwitz Concentration Camp of about 60 and I was in charge. We were there for about nine months and I then went back to Auschwitz. After being in charge of working parties there for a while, I left in July, 1943, for the women's camp at Birkenau near Auschwitz. The conditions here were very bad; the camp was overcrowded and sanitation was also very bad. The food was better than the men's camp. The camp was in the charge of Obersturmbannführer Hoess. I asked to be moved from this camp because of the conditions. The job of the men was to build roads, more huts and make those huts already there habitable. The S.S. woman in charge was Oberaufseherin Mandel. Whilst I was there many died from spotted fever (cerebral-spinal-meningitis) and typhus. Amongst these were guards well as inmates. I made many complaints to Hoess and as a result beds were made, but not enough to accommodate all the prisoners in the camp. The women in this camp did agricultural work. Whilst I was there the place was inspected by Obergruppenführer Glücks from Berlin in summer, 1943. He went through the camp by car and said that everything would be altered, but nothing was done. At all camps the inspection was the job of the Amtsgruppen D., Berlin, and Glücks was in charge of this department I believe. He took his orders direct from Reichsführer Himmler. The camp at Birkenau was also inspected by Himmler whilst I was there in summer, 1943, who said the same - that conditions would be altered - but again nothing was done.

After about two or three months there, in January, 1944, I was moved to Neckarelz near Baden. This was a small camp for about 500 prisoners and the labour was supplied from Dachau Concentration Camp. I held the position of Kommandoführer. All the men under my command lived in a three-storey-high school building, but there were others in a nearby camp. All were engaged on building an aeroplane works in the mountains, but it was never completed when I left.

In June, 1944, I went back to Auschwitz, where I became Lagerführer, and I stayed there until it was being cleared in January, 1945. This was because the Russians were advancing, and the whole camp was cleared. The Kommandant when I arrived, and up to the time I left, was Baer. Kramer was at Birkenau. I then went to Dora Camp at Nordhausen, where I remained until April, 1945, when that was also cleared I came to Bergen-Belsen. I have no knowledge of sterilisation

of women and no orders were given by me that this should be carried out. In fact I did not know that this was being done and I was never allowed in the hospital.

Everyone in the camp knew about the gas chamber at Auschwitz, but at no time did I take part in the selection of prisoners who were to go to the gas chamber and then be cremated. Whilst I was there selection of prisoners for the gas chamber was done by Dr. Klein, Dr. Mengele and other young doctors whose names I do not know. I have attended these parades, but my job was merely to keep order. Often women were paraded naked in front of the doctors and persons selected by the doctors were sent to the gas chamber. I learnt this through conversation with the doctors. I think those selected were mostly those who were not in good health and could not work. When transports of prisoners arrived the prisoners were taken from the train and marched to the camp. On arrival they were paraded in front of the doctors I have mentioned, and persons were selected for the gas chamber, the remainder being sent to the concentration camp. I have also attended these parades, but only when I have been Orderly Lagerführer, as this was part of his duties. Train-loads of 2000 and 3000 arrived at the camp and often as many as 800 went to the gas chamber. The doctors were always responsible for these selections.

Whilst I was at Auschwitz the Kommandant, until June, 1944, was Hoess and he was succeeded by Baer. I made many complaints to Hoess about the way people were being sent to the gas chamber, but I was told it was not my business. The camp was inspected once a year by Himmler and also Obergruppenführer Glücks and Obergruppenführer Pohl from Berlin.

Himmler knew people at Auschwitz were gassed, because it was he who gave the orders that this would be done. These orders could only have come from the top. Hitler must also have known that this was going on as he was the head of the country.

At many of the camps, and to my knowledge at Auschwitz, brothels were run according to instructions given by Himmler. The girls for these brothels were selected by doctors at the camp. Dr. Klein and Dr. Mengele have to my knowledge made these selections from volunteers whom I have selected. Men who were in working parties were paid token money which sometimes amounted to as much as ten marks a week. With this money they were able to pay the girls one mark a time. Of this money 10 pfennigs went to the woman in charge of the brothel and 90 pfennigs to the girl herself.

Whilst I was at Dora Camp, Nordhausen, I received complaints from the prisoners that they were not receiving their Red Cross parcels. In view of this, I personally saw that the prisoners did get their Red Cross parcels. The parcels had to be opened for censoring, but I made sure that no articles were removed.

The food at Dora Camp, Nordhausen, was not good, although the prisoners received more food than at other camps because of the fact that they were working. There was not enough fat in the food for the men to live on. The food may have been enough for eight hours' work, but not enough for twelve. The food had to be reduced on account of bombing. I complained about the shortage of food whilst I was there to Kommandant Baer. Prior to Baer's arrival at the camp the Kommandant was a man named Firschner. I also made a complaint to Werwaltungsführer Brenneis, who was also at Dora Camp representing Obergruppenführer Pohl. As a result of this a field bakery was built in Dora Camp.

When the English [British] were advancing, Dora Camp was closed and the prisoners eventually came to Bergen-Belsen. Actually, they should have gone to Neuengamme near Hamburg, but when trains got there they were sent back to Bergen-Belsen. One train-load of these people, about 5000 strong, never arrived at Belsen, so I cannot say what happened to them. I went on in advance of the trains and reported to Kommandant Kramer, and enquired if the prisoners had arrived. He said they had not, and in any case he had no room in the camp for them. He sent me to Oberst Harries of the Wehrmacht, whom I saw and who told me that the Wehrmacht were leaving the barracks and that I could take over part of the barracks to house my men. I did this and so the men under my charge did not go in the Bergen-Belsen Camp, where there was so much typhus and disease. I was Lagerführer in charge of this small camp.

I met the transports from Nordhausen at Bergen-Belsen station. At the time of each train was a doctor and an ambulance wagon in which the sick were carried. About 20 to 25 died on the way from cold, undernourishment, and being weak on a train I saw of 3000 and 5000 prisoners. These bodies were taken to Belsen Camp and buried there. I did not go in the ambulance wagon nor did I give any instructions that sick people were to be shot. I did not see the prisoners leave the station as I went back to the camp by car and the prisoners walked.

I did hear from the prisoners in the camp that several people in a transport that walked from Dora Camp were shot. These prisoners were under the command of Hauptscharführer Sterful (Stofel) and Unterscharführer Dorr. I mentioned these shootings to these men, but both denied all knowledge of them and I never had a chance to continue the conversation.

We were not allowed to shoot prisoners unless they tried to escape or attacked the guards. Beatings were also not allowed. I have never seen anybody shot or beaten whilst I have been in concentration camps, although I have seen people chosen for the gas chamber at Auschwitz.

I have never had occasion to shoot anyone, or beat anyone, nor was I ever attacked. I have always tried to be kind to the prisoners and to help them. I once made an application to leave the S.S. because of what was happening in concentration camps, but my request was refused. It was not nice to be a Nazi nor was it a privilege. The S.S. were always watched by the Gestapo and we were forbidden by Baer and Hoess to talk of conditions in the camp to anyone. I never even told my wife. I only volunteered for the S.S. for four years, but in 1936 it was made compulsory for twelve years and it was impossible to leave.

When the English [British] were arriving near Belsen I was told by Oberst Harries that the English [British] would shoot all S.S. on sight who offered resistance. In spite of this I volunteered to stay behind with five others, who were Wilhelm Dorr, Paul Fritsch, Eugen Hahnert, George Kraft and Franz Stofel, and in addition two cooks whose names I do not know. The camp I was at was guarded by Hungarians. Bergen-Belsen Camp was being guarded by the Wehrmacht during the truce, having relieved S.S. About twelve to fifteen S.S. escaped from the camp and a lot also left from the other camp.

The food for prisoners at Belsen was obtained from the Army food place through Oberst Harries. The prisoners should have got 300 grammes of bread daily, but sometimes they only got 200 or

100 grammes. In addition they got potatoes, turnips, beetroot and some grease. Sick people got rice and milk if it could be obtained. There was not sufficient food for the people to live on, and the responsibility lies with the Wirtschaftsamt, of which Pohl was in charge. I do not think that it was the intention of the country to starve these people, but there was a general shortage owing to bombing. I did not know myself that conditions were so bad in Bergen-Belsen Camp until I was sent there by the British to assist in burying the dead, when it was a great shock to me to see what had been happening.

APPENDIX T: STATEMENT OF OBERSTURMFÜHRER DR. FRITZ

STATEMENT OF OBERSTURMFÜHRER DR. FRITZ KLEIN (Rumanian, aged 58)

I am aged 58 years and a Rumanian by birth. Before volunteering for service in the S.S. in June, 1943, I was a general practitioner at Zeiden near Kronstadt in Rumania. On joining the S.S. I was sent to Yugoslavia as recruiting doctor. On the 15th December, 1943, I went to Auschwitz as a doctor in the concentration camp. On the 15th December, 1944, I was transferred to Neuengamme near Hamburg. I was only in Belsen Camp for about 6 to 8 weeks before the British came, having been loaned to them because their own doctor (Dr. Schnabel) was ill. I was acting as doctor for the S.S. men and only went into the camp three days before the British came, to take the place of Hauptsturmführer Dr. Horstmann, who was sent away by Kommandant Kramer.

When I arrived at Auschwitz the S.S. officer in charge was Kommandant Hoess; he was succeeded by Kommandant Liebehenschel, and then in June, 1944, Kommandant Baer took over. There were several doctors in that camp, the chief one being Dr. Wirtz; others whose names I can remember are Dr. Fischer, Dr. Kitt, Dr. Lucas, Dr. Mengele, Dr. Thilo, Dr. Rohde and Dr. König. When transports arrived at Auschwitz it was the doctor's job to pick out those who were unfit or unable to work. These included children, old people and the sick. I have seen the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz, and I knew that those I selected were to go to the gas chamber. But I only acted on orders given me by Dr. Wirtz. I cannot say from whom Dr. Wirtz received his orders and I have never seen any orders in writing relating to the gassing of prisoners. All orders given to me were given verbally. All the doctors whom I have previously mentioned have taken part in these selections, and although S. S. guards were on parade they took no active part in choosing those who were unfit to work. I never protested against people being sent to the gas chamber, although I never agreed. One cannot protest when in the Army. It was not a pleasure to take part in these parades, as I knew the persons selected would go to the gas chamber. Persons who became pregnant whilst in the camp and therefore unfit for work were also selected on later parades. I have heard that Himmler had visited Auschwitz camp, although I have never actually seen him. It was certainly known to the higher-ups that these methods were being used at Auschwitz Camp.

Brothels were run at Auschwitz Camp for the benefit of the prisoners. Girls who went in these brothels did so quite voluntarily. It was one of my duties to select girls for this job and about fifteen would be brought before me, and I selected what were, in my opinion, the ten best. The girls in the brothels were inspected twice a week by a Polish doctor who was himself a prisoner. I know that, on orders from Berlin, certain individuals were sterilised, but I never took any part in it as I am not an expert. Those who were sterilised were usually mental cases, as far as I know. I cannot say who gave the orders.

Whilst at Belsen I made several complaints to Kommandant Kramer about the conditions there. I was told that I was only a doctor and that it was nothing to do with me. Three days before the British came, when I took over the camp, I had a talk with Kramer about the conditions. I told Kramer that the corpses should be removed, and that water should be supplied to prisoners as many were dying from thirst. Kramer said he did not take orders from me. I told him, had I been the English [British] officer taking the camp over, I would have taken the Kommandant and the

doctor, put them against the wall and shot them. The food was not much and hardly enough to live on. The person who was responsible for the distribution of food was Hauptsturmführer Vogler. I do not think more food could have been given as there was a general shortage in Germany, although we S.S. lived quite well. Belsen Camp was very overcrowded. It was originally built to house 14000 people and was used as a convalescent camp for those prisoners who were unable to work. I understood that after a period there they should have returned to working camps.

I have seen people shot by the S.S., but I cannot remember the names of people who had done the shooting. I have also seen people beaten by the S.S. and by prisoners, and I have submitted reports to the Lagerführer about this. I cannot say whether anything was ever done about it.

I realise that I am as responsible as those from the top downwards for the killing of thousands in these camps, particularly at Auschwitz.

APPENDIX U: STATEMENT OF JOSEF KRAMER

STATEMENT OF JOSEF KRAMER (German, aged 39)

I was born on 10th November, 1906, at Munich. I am married and have three children. I volunteered for the S.S. in 1932; I had no training whatsoever, and was detailed for duty in a concentration camp. I did not volunteer for this specific kind of duty. When war broke out the S.S. was taken over by the Army and I volunteered for active service, as I would have preferred a fighting job, but I was told that I would have to do the job for which I was detailed. My first rank was Unterscharführer and my promotion to Scharführer and Oberscharführer was in 1934 and 1935. I cannot remember the dates.

Dachau. In 1936 I was in the office of the concentration camp at Dachau. The Kommandant of that camp was Standartenführer Loritz. There were only German prisoners in the camp. I cannot be absolutely certain, but as far as I can remember, they were all German. The S.S. Unit was Wachtruppe, Ober-Bayern. There were only political prisoners, criminals and anti-socials in this camp. Anti-socials are people like beggars and gypsies and people who do not want to work. No death sentences were carried out in the camp. The only cases in which people were killed was when they were trying to escape, in which case the guard had orders to shoot. In the case of any shootings, whilst prisoners were trying to escape, investigations were made by the Police. I left this camp at the beginning of June, 1937.

Sachsenhausen. From Dachau I went to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. I had been promoted to commissioned rank, outside the establishment, to Untersturmführer. When I went to Sachsenhausen I was on the establishment there. The prisoners at Sachsenhausen consisted of the same three types as at the previous camp. The Kommandant of the camp was Standartenführer Barantowsky. There were no death sentences carried out in this camp. I was in charge of the mail department and therefore did not know everything that was going on, but have heard occasionally that people have been shot while trying to escape.

Mauthausen. My next concentration camp was Mauthausen in Austria. This camp was just being built when I arrived. The Kommandant was Standartenführer Ziereis. Here I had the same rank as before. Whilst in this camp I was promoted to Obersturmführer. I think this was in January, 1939. I was a sort of adjutant in charge of the office and at the disposal of the Kommandant. The prisoners were all Germans and of the same three types as I have described before. The last type, i.e. rogues and vagabonds, were mainly Austrians, as there seemed to have been many, when Austria was taken over by Germany. There were between 1500 and 2000 prisoners and they were all men. This includes Jewish prisoners. There was sufficient room in the camp for all prisoners when I was there. None of the prisoners knew at the time they arrived when they were going to leave. There were only a few who had a sentence like three months or six months, and the biggest part of the prisoners were there for an undefined period. Solitary confinement and solitary confinement with bread and water, or extra work on Sundays, were the sentences awarded for breaches of discipline. The prisoners were never beaten, nor do I know of any case of shooting. There were prison-breaks, but I was never present when somebody tried to escape. I was in the office and the telephone would ring and one of the guards would report that of the prisoners had tried to escape. It was my duty then to go out and see where the prisoner worked and how it was possible for him to escape. We then notified the police and gave particulars of the person who had escaped. The instructions were that no prisoners had to go beyond a certain

border-line. If a prisoner did, the guard had to challenge him three times with the words, "Halt, or I shoot," then first fire a shot in the air and only the second shot to kill. It is difficult to say how many shootings of this kind took place whilst I was at the camp because it is such a long time ago. I think that 10 to 15 people were shot, but I cannot say exactly. Every case of shooting had to be reported to the authorities at Mauthausen and at Linz. The nearest big town carried out an investigation. If someone was shot at, or shot whilst escaping, the guard was immediately put under a sort of open arrest, but none was ever convicted of wrongful shooting. Most of the people who were shot in this manner were criminals or vagabonds, the reason being that the larger part of the inmates of the camp belonged to that category.

The deaths that occurred were mostly from natural causes. When somebody died his relatives and the authorities, who had sent him to the concentration camp, had to be notified. There was one very severe winter when the deaths rose, but otherwise there were very few deaths. The prisoners were kept in wooden huts with three-tier beds, 250 to 300 in a hut. Whilst I was at this camp, Obergruppenführer Eike, who was in charge of all concentration camps, visited the camp three or four times, but I cannot remember the dates. There were no war prisoners in this camp. A few more political prisoners came in, but there were no great increases. Their nationality was mostly Austrian. There was no member of the former Austrian Government or of Schusnigg's Party either in Dachau or Mauthausen. I was in charge of the office and I dealt with the incoming and the outgoing mail on behalf of the Kommandant. I would read the mail to him and he would give me his orders, which I would pass on to the various sub-commanders. The powers of the Kommandant, with regard to punishment of prisoners, were not exactly laid down, but I think he could give up to 21 days. He was the only one who had disciplinary powers. I do not know the number of prisoners when I left in 1940, but the camp was full. The strength was recorded every day, but I cannot remember now what the number was. Some of the prisoners were sent away to other camps. These transfers were made not according to the type of prisoners but according to the type of work we wanted done, and according to their trades. Whilst I was there, some people were released back to freedom. I cannot remember whether they were political prisoners or others, but I remember that on Hitler's birthday, 20th April, 1940, I saw 50 prisoners in the courtyard who were going to be released.

Auschwitz. I went to Auschwitz in May, 1940. I lived outside the camp in a village with my family. I had an office in the camp where I worked during the day, The Kommandant of the camp was Obersturmführer Hoess. I was adjutant. I do not know what the number the staff was when I came. The biggest part of the prisoners at Auschwitz were political prisoners of Polish nationality. There was very little there when I arrived, as the camp had just been built. All that was there when I left, four months after my arrival, were stone buildings which had been built by the Poles. There had been men, women and cattle living in the wooden buildings. The stone buildings were empty. The former inhabitants of the wooden buildings were shifted. When I first started, the camp staff consisted of only myself and one clerk, and there was only one S.S. Company for guard there. I cannot remember the name of the company, but they were referred to as "Guards Company Concentration Camp, Auschwitz." This company had no "Feldposte" number. The highest ranking officer was the camp Kommandant, after him came the Kommandant of the Guards Company, Obersturmführer Plorin. There were no officers, apart from the company commander. The platoons were commanded by warrant officers. There were three platoons per company and between 30 and 40 men in a platoon. This varied as required.

Besides the camp Kommandant, myself the clerk and the S.S. Company, there was nobody there. A second clerk came later. There were 40 or 50 S.S. men who did not belong to the Guards Company, who had administrative duties in the camp, such as in charge of the kitchen and of the barracks, etc.

I do not know the number of prisoners in that camp. It may have been between 3000 and 4000, but I would not like to commit myself. Untersturmführer Meyer was in charge of administration. I cannot remember his Christian name as I always kept well away from the others. The reason for that was that I had my family there. There was a doctor there and I think his name was Potau. He came from Upper Silesia. He died later on, but I cannot recollect this very well. There was another Untersturmführer, by the name of Meier (or Meyer), who was in charge of the prisoners. I think his Christian name was Franz. The Kommandant issued orders to the S. S. officer in charge of the guard. His orders came from the next highest S.S. formation. This formation was S.S. Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt, Berlin, Amtsgruppe D, Berlin, Oranienburg.

When prisoners arrived we were notified by the Gestapo in Katowice. There were cases when prisoners came in who were brought by ordinary policemen, and they also brought files relating to them. They came mostly in batches. They arrived by train at Auschwitz station and were collected by car from there. The prisoners were all men. There were no questionings by the Gestapo in the camp. All the questioning was done before the prisoners arrived. There was one official of the police on the camp staff who dealt with criminals against whom proceedings had been taken before. I cannot remember his name. He only stayed a short while and was then exchanged for another one. When the prisoners arrived, some were healthy and some were not, but none showed any signs of ill-treatment or malnutrition. I think that during the time I was there there were no cells for solitary confinement, but, as I say, the camp was only in its initial stages. The same rules as to German political and German prisoners were applied to the Poles and, later, to the Russians. There was no difference. One of the stone buildings was reserved for a hospital. This stone building did not differ in any way from the other buildings. Besides the one doctor I have mentioned, there was another doctor supplied from the interned people, among whom there were many doctors and medical students. It was not within my power to give any orders to the medical staff as the doctors came immediately under the Kommandant. The rate of death was roughly one per cent in the summer or possibly one and a half per cent - this was a weekly average. These were natural deaths and it depended upon what was wrong with them when they came in. Reports were made by the camp doctor and I, as adjutant, saw them. I received an average of 30 of these reports per week. The prisoners who had died were burnt. There were prisoners working in the crematorium under orders of guards. The ashes were sent to the relatives if they required them.

There were very few releases from this camp whilst I was there. These releases were authorised only by the Gestapo in Berlin, for political prisoners; or by the police authorities for ordinary criminals. The Gestapo organisation who dealt with the camp was the Gestapo Departmental Headquarters at Katowice. Whether there was another Headquarters between Katowice and the Central H.Q. in Berlin, I do not know. The Gestapo men were either civilians in plain clothes, or uniforms, with no distinguishing marks. Some of them wore an S.D. badge. The S.D. and the Gestapo were two different things. I depended upon the S.S. for my orders. So did the Kommandant of the camp. The Gestapo, however, dealt with the political prisoners within the camp. All corporal punishment had to be authorised from Berlin. The camp authorities could not

authorise any corporal punishments. In the beginning, corporal punishment was administered by the guards, but, later on, this was forbidden by Berlin, and the prisoners had to administer the punishment themselves. I do not know why this order came from Berlin. It was signed by Gruppenführer Glücks and came from Oranienburg, Berlin.

Dachau. Between 15th and 20th November, 1940, I went back to Dachau. So far I had always been employed in the office, first as clerk, then as an adjutant, and now I should get to know the work immediately connected with the prisoners. I was to be trained to become a Lagerführer. My transfer was authorised by the Central S.S. organisation in Berlin. When I arrived in Dachau the camp was in perfect running order and consisted of 30 or 32 wooden buildings, all told, for housing the prisoners, including the hospital, etc. The number of prisoners in one barrack varied between 300 and 450. The total number of prisoners was between 13000 and 14000. There were three companies of S.S. men (120 to 150 in each company) to guard them, and the administrative personnel consisted of about 100 or 120. The officers of the Guards Companies were not professional S.S. They were people who had been called up from trades or professions, put in the Army, and then detailed to S.S. They were then from the S.S. detailed to their particular duties, e.g. concentration camps; they did not volunteer for these particular duties. They received their orders from the Kommandant who, in turn, received his orders from Berlin, Oranienburg. The Kommandant's name was S.S. Obersturmführer Piorkowski. The next in rank after the Kommandant was the Lagerführer, Hauptsturmführer Eill. I do not remember his Christian name. There was one officer in charge of administration, Hauptsturmführer Wagner. Then there were three company commanders whose names I cannot remember.

The prisoners were all men and consisted of criminals and political prisoners as before, and a new type, namely Poles and Russians, who had been prisoners of war and who were detailed for certain work, e.g. farming jobs, and who had committed minor crimes such as trying to escape or refusing to work, and they were therefore sent to the concentration camp. These prisoners of war were interned because they had committed these crimes. At this time there were only prisoners from the Eastern front, namely Poles and Russians. It has been pointed out to me that the war in Russia only broke out in June, 1941, whereas I left again in April, 1941. If this is so I must have mixed it up with Auschwitz. I was only there a sort of trainee and had very little to do with the organisation of the place. I cannot remember any prison-breaks. The death rate I cannot remember because it had nothing to do with me, but I know it was a very good camp. There was a furniture factory and prisoners worked as carpenters and joiners, also as tailors and cobblers. Prisoners were only allowed out outside the camp in exceptional cases, such as for gardening. There were about forty to fifty new intakes per week whilst I was there. There were few transfers and very few releases. The prisoners came from the Gestapo in Munich. If they were criminals they came from the Police, also in Munich. Parties, organised by the camp administration, who visited the camp and going round the camp, were a regular feature about two or three times a week. These parties were formed mostly of prominent guests from abroad, statesmen and politicians from countries allied to Germany. No high-ranking German officials ever visited the camp.

Natzweiler, April, 1941, to 10th or 15th May, 1944. My appointment at Natzweiler was Lagerführer and in October, 1942, I was appointed camp Kommandant. I had been promoted to the rank of Hauptsturmführer before I was appointed Kommandant. When I arrived at the camp

the Kommandant was Sturmbannführer Huettig. The officer in charge of administration was Obersturmführer Faschingbauer. The doctor was Obersturmführer Eiserle. The O.C. Guards Company was Obersturmführer Peter. The administrative personnel consisted of 20 to begin with, and 70 to 75 in the end. The camp is a very small one. There were no prisoners when I arrived as the camp had just been built. When I left in May, 1944, there were 2500 to 3000 prisoners, comprising the three usual categories: political, anti-socials, criminals and, later, Polish and Russian prisoners of war who had committed minor crimes or tried to escape or refused to work. There were also a few hundred prisoners from Luxembourg. I cannot quite say for certain whether there were any French prisoners there or not. The prisoners arrived with papers and their nationality was on these papers, but I cannot remember any details because I did not go through the papers myself. None of these people came into the camp direct; they all came from other concentration camps. I can, therefore, not say what they were in for, but as far as I know they were of the same three types as I have described before.

I cannot remember that, at any rate, prisoners have been lent for experiments to a doctor in Strasbourg. I cannot remember Professor Pickard of Strasbourg. It is quite impossible that experiments of any kind on prisoners have been carried out without my knowledge, as in both my appointments as Lagerführer and later as Lager Kommandant, I would have known. Obergruppenführer Glücks from the Ministry in Berlin came to inspect the camp twice in the beginning, once in the summer of 1941, and once in the spring of 1942. The visit of Gruppenführer Pohl took place at the end of April or the beginning of May, 1944. The only things that Glücks enquired into were how many political prisoners, how many anti-socials there were. Foreigners figured as political prisoners. He did not ask for their nationalities. I do not know of any British prisoners having been there. I have never seen a document which shows British as the nationality of any prisoners in the camp.

There were 15 wooden barracks in the camp and up to 250 prisoners to each of these barracks. The camp was on top of the hill and my office was in the camp boundary. I lived in the village at the bottom of the hill with my family. The officers were all married and lived with their families in the village. One change in the personnel which I can remember was that Obersturmführer Peter, who commanded the company of guards, was transferred and replaced by an Obersturmführer called Meier. I do not know any of the Rottenführer who were there. There was a crematorium at the camp. The death rate depended upon the season. There were about 7 to 8 per week in the good season and about 15 to 18 in the bad season. They all died natural deaths. The same procedure of informing the relatives and the authority that had sent them to the camp was followed in this camp as in the others described here.

There was only one medical officer on the staff (Obersturmführer Eiserle), and four or five medical orderlies (German). There were doctors and medical students among the prisoners who assisted the M.O. Many persons of over 50 years died of natural causes, such as heart diseases. Compared with other camps, the death rate in this camp was very low. I used to go into the doctor's surgery and he explained the various things, like medical supplies, he had there, but as it was in Latin I did not really know what it was all about. He never complained about any lack of medical supplies. There were two barracks set aside for the hospital, one for the people who were only weak and the other one as a real hospital. There were 60 to 75 beds in the real hospital. The surgeon had facilities for carrying out minor operations but not major operations. For these

people were sent to Strasbourg. A document was signed when a person went there and it was signed again when he returned, and the death rate was shown in the books of the camp.

There were 20 to 25 prison breaks whilst I was there, and ten of the prisoners who tried to escape were shot. Eight or nine were recaptured and brought back and the others got away. The eight or nine who were recaptured got between 14 and 21 days' detention, according to their age and physical condition. In four or five cases out of twenty, they were either whipped or beaten. The culprit got 10 or 15 lashes in each case. This was supervised by the Lagerführer and the camp doctor. When I was Lagerführer I supervised this myself. Generally speaking, when corporal punishment was administered, the number of lashes given varied between 5 and 25. The number was laid down in the order coming from Berlin. Twenty-five was the maximum. The doctor had to be present when corporal punishment was administered. I cannot recollect where a prisoner was unable to stand his punishment and fainted. If such a case had arisen, it would have been the doctor's duty to interfere as that was why he was there. The punishment was administered with ordinary wooden sticks, 3 or 4 feet long and about as thick as my thumb. The sticks were made of solid wood, as you find them in the woods around the camp. The punishment was administered by another prisoner, who was chosen at random, and in the following manner: the prisoner was made to bend down over a table, and the lashes were given on his backside, without his clothes having been removed previously. I never had any difficulties with prisoners who had to administer this punishment. They were given the order and they complied with it. If they had refused to comply with the order I could not have punished them for this refusal. The orders from Berlin were that so many lashes had to be administered by another prisoner, but the order did not say what should be. There were no set rules for what crimes corporal punishment could be administered. It was up to the Kommandant to apply to Berlin for authority for corporal punishment to be administered. The application to Berlin had to say what kind of offence the prisoner had committed and what punishment he had been given already for offences committed previously. This letter had to be signed by the Kommandant. The sort of offences for which I would have applied to Berlin for authority for corporal punishment to be given was: "This prisoner has already three or four times stolen food from his fellow prisoners" or for untidiness or for disobedience or for attacking a guard. The first thing that happened when somebody broke out of the camp and was brought back, was that the Criminal Investigation Department made investigation to find out whether he had committed any crimes whilst at large, and then he was brought before the Kommandant without any trial and the Kommandant ordered punishment. Every man who tried to escape had to be reported to Berlin and likewise had to be reported when he was brought back. The Kommandant could give him 21 days' detention without referring to higher authority, but could give corporal punishment only with authority from Berlin. Every member of the guard was armed with a rifle and there were machine-guns on the turrets. Whips and sticks were forbidden. The guards just carried rifles.

When the prisoners came in in a bunch they were all put in the same block. Eventually, they were sorted out into three groups, politicals, anti-socials and criminals, but never according to their nationalities. There were no strict rules as to that point, but it developed like this as we went along. The three above-mentioned categories were kept apart only in their living quarters. They worked together, fed together and could talk to each other. In the beginning the prisoners worked only in the camp itself. Later we opened a quarry near by. Other work that was done was that aeroplane engines were taken to pieces and those parts were salvaged which could be used again.

Fifteen to twenty prisoners were released while I was there. The order for releases came from Berlin. I do not know why the order came. They were all political prisoners and of German nationality. I'd be done if one of the prisoners refused to beat one of his comrades.

The camp was surrounded by barbed wire - 3 metres high. There were towers at the corners of the camp with machine-guns. There was one row of barbed wire where the guards patrolled and then another row of barbed wire. The wire was not electrified in the beginning because there was no current but later, when current was available, this was done, in the spring of 1943. I was Kommandant then. Two months before I left the camp eight or nine dogs arrived, who were used to assist the guard. They were mainly employed in the quarry to prevent prisoners from escaping. They were controlled by the guards. I remember two incidents where prisoners tried to escape from the quarry, but I cannot remember that they were shot. During the whole of my three years I had only two shootings in the quarry. The other eight prisoners who tried to escape, whom I have already mentioned, tried to escape from the camp itself and not from the quarry.

The only hanging that took place was in the summer of 1943 and it was done on orders from Berlin. Two Gestapo agents brought a prisoner to the camp and showed me an order, signed by somebody in Berlin, saying that this man had to be delivered to my camp and had to be hanged. I cannot remember by whom this order was signed. I therefore detailed two prisoners to carry out the execution. A scaffold was built in the camp and the execution was carried out in my presence. The people present were: the camp doctor, (Obersturmführer Eiserle), who certified that the cause of death was hanging, the two Gestapo agents who had brought the prisoner, the two prisoners who carried out the execution, and myself I cannot remember the name of the prisoner; I think his nationality was Russian. I cannot remember his name because he never appeared in my books. He was only delivered to be hanged. It is quite impossible that any other executions took place whilst I was camp Kommandant. The other prisoners of the camp were not paraded for this execution. No authorised shootings or any other executions took place at the camp on orders from Berlin. I have never heard of any special, narrow cells where men were hanged by their arms. There were no special buildings for prisoners who were under arrest, and no solitary confinement cells. It is quite impossible that any execution by hanging prisoners by their arms was carried out without my knowledge. The only prison we had was a block which was separated by barbed wire from the rest and this one was used for people who had contravened camp discipline.

All the prisoners in this camp were men. I have never heard of a prisoner called Fritz Knoll at this camp. He was not a foreman, but he may have been one of the prisoners. I cannot remember his name. If someone had died on a working party it would have been reported to the office and the office would have reported to me, but cannot remember such an incident having occurred. Every instance of a prisoner dying at work or through any other cause would be reported to the office, by the office to the Criminal Investigation official and by him to the Kommandant. My command and control over all happenings in the camp at Natzweiler was so complete, and my staff had such definite orders, that the execution of any prisoners without my knowledge during the time when I was Kommandant is an utter impossibility.

Only S.S. personnel were allowed to inspect the camps. Nobody else was allowed anywhere near it. This included army officers who were forbidden to enter any concentration camp. One could

only go into a concentration camp with authority from the S.S. General Commanding in Berlin. S.D. personnel were not allowed in the camp either, without authority from Berlin. With the exception of Gruppenführer Glücks, who came from the Ministry in Berlin, and Obergruppenführer Pohl, nobody visited the camp for the two years I commanded it. Apart from these visits, I was answerable to no one, except on paper, to Berlin. I cannot remember any particulars of the visit of Obergruppenführer Pohl at the beginning of May, 1944. He came to inspect the camp and just had a good look round.

During the time I was Lagerführer I received the Kriegsverdienstkreuz (2nd class) in the spring of 1943. There was no particular reason for this decoration. It was mainly for being Lagerführer for two years in that camp. I was put forward for the decoration by the Kommandant. I have also got the Kriegsverdienstkreuz (1st Class), which I received in January, 1945. During the whole of the time I was at Natzweiler I was responsible for the camp. When I left I handed over to my successor. He was Sturmbannführer Hartjenstein. The handing-over proceedings took place in my office, and I handed over the whole camp to him. The books were not handed over formally to my successor, they were not mentioned.

Auschwitz, 10th to 15th May, 1944, till 29th November, 1944. Auschwitz was an enormous camp to which many smaller camps in the vicinity belonged. As the responsibility for the whole camp could not be taken by one man, it was split, and I was put in charge of one part of the camp. I was Kommandant of that part, but as I came under the supreme commander of the whole camp, who was my superior officer, my duties were those of a Lagerführer, though my appointment was called Kommandant. I had under me in my part of the camp the hospital and the agricultural camp, which was an enormous camp and contained many thousand acres. The number of prisoners under my immediate control varied between 15000 and 16000 and 35000 and 40000 comprising male and female.

There were between 350 and 500 deaths a week. The death rate was higher among the men, the reason being that the influx from the working camp consisted mainly of sick people. When I speak of the death rate in Auschwitz, I mean that all these people died of natural causes, that is to say either from illness or old age. The death rate was slightly above normal, due to the fact that I had a camp with sick people who came from other parts of the camp. The only reason I can see for the higher death rate, not only at Auschwitz but at all concentration camps in comparison with civil prisons, was that prisoners had to work, whereas in civil prisons they had not to work.

In Auschwitz the prisoners went out to work at 5 a.m. in the summer and returned at 8 p.m., sometimes even later. They worked seven days a week, but on Sundays they returned at 1, 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The work was of an agricultural nature and all the work there was done by prisoners. The whole camp contained about 90000 to 100000 prisoners, but this is only a rough estimate. My superior officer, and the Kommandant of the whole camp, was Obersturmbannführer Hoess. There were men, women and children in the camp. The majority of prisoners under my immediate control were Easterners, i.e. Poles and Russians. I have no reason to believe that there were any prisoners of war among them, although there might have been without my knowing it. As far as I can remember there were no British internees. I think the British prisoners were in the concentration camp at Sachsenhausen and in another camp near

Hamburg called Neuengamme. It is possible that there were some French people in my camp, but I cannot say for certain. There were more women than men prisoners.

I had three companies of S.S. under me to guard the camp. Some of the guards were men of the Waffen S.S., and there were women employed by the S.S as wardresses. There were roughly 420 male S.S. guards and about 40 to 50 women guards. The men and women prisoners who were outside the camp in the agricultural part were invariably guarded by men. The women guards only guarded the prisoners within the compound. There were about 10 to 14 doctors for the whole camp, out of which two were detailed to my particular part of the camp. I cannot say exactly how many beds there were in the hospital; this depended on how close you could put the beds together.

Prisoners were housed in wooden buildings with three-tier beds. The men were separated from the women and the children were with their mothers. Married people were separated. There were 150 buildings all told, men and women camps together; about 80 or 90 were for men and about 60 for women; 25 or 20 buildings were set aside for the hospitals. The camp was only being started, and it was planned to enlarge it considerably.

All prisoners who died were cremated. There was no sort of service held when they died. They were just burnt. The cremations were carried out by prisoners. All I had to do when a prisoner died was to inform Obersturmbannführer Hoess and he would deal with it. I had no administration in Auschwitz. All the prisoners were known by numbers only. I had nothing to do with meting out punishment in Auschwitz; that was all done through Hoess. When I came to Auschwitz there was no corporal punishment for women, but I have heard it mentioned, and it was talked about in the camp, that there had been corporal punishment for women before, and that it had been abolished. The only way in which I was informed corporal punishment for women was not allowed was that conversation in the camp to which I have referred. I cannot remember with whom this conversation took place. If a case would have arisen in which a woman would have committed one of the crimes for which a man would have been beaten, I would have pointed out to the woman guards that corporal punishment could not be administered to women. The only authority on which I could have placed this was that conversation shortly after my arrival. Even if corporal punishment for women would have been allowed, I would never have put it into practice, as such a thing is inconceivable to me. The punishment administered to women, if they had committed any of the crimes for which men were beaten, was that they were transferred to another working party where they had a dirtier type of work or longer hours.

When a request for labour came from Berlin, the prisoners had to parade before a doctor. I was very often present at these parades, but not always. The examination took place by the prisoners filing by the doctor without undressing. Then the decision whether a man or a woman was fit enough to be sent to work was made. If, however, somebody had to be examined to ascertain whether he was fit to receive corporal punishment, a proper medical examination was carried out. The reason why no proper medical examination could be carried out in the case of detailing people for labour was that the requests ran into thousands and the doctor would have been busy for days. This method of choosing people for work was the normal method applied in all concentration camps. There was nothing unusual about it.

There were four or five cases of people trying to escape whilst I was there. These attempts were made separately. Some of these prisoners got away. No prisoners were shot trying to escape in my part of the camp. No prisoners were flogged; there were no executions, shootings or hangings in my part. I went through the camp frequently on inspections. The doctor alone was responsible for certifying the cause of death if a prisoner died. The doctors changed continuously. One of these doctors was Hauptsturmführer Mengele. I carried out inspections of the bodies of people who had died through natural causes in my capacity as Kommandant when I was wandering round the camp. Whoever died during the day was put into a special building called the mortuary, and they were carried to the crematorium every evening by lorry. They were loaded on the lorry and off the lorry by prisoner. They were stripped by the prisoners of their clothes in the crematorium before being cremated. The clothes were cleaned and were re-issued where the people had not died of infectious diseases. During my inspections I never saw prisoners who had died through physical violence. When a prisoner died, a doctor had to certify the time of death, the cause, and the details of the disease. A doctor signed a certificate and sent it to the Central Camp Office. These certificates did not go through my hand. The two doctors worked daily, from 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 or 9 at night. All efforts were made by these doctors to keep the prisoners alive. Medical supplies and invigorating drugs were applied. Two different doctors took charge of my part of the camp every day. I remember one very well, because he had been the longest period in my particular part of the camp and he had also served under my predecessor, Hartjenstein. I do not know how long he had been there. His name was Hauptsturmführer Mengele, as mentioned before.

The camp wire was electrified and the dogs were only used outside the camp compound to guard prisoners who were working on agricultural jobs. It was never reported to me that prisoners had to be treated for dog bites. No interrogations were carried out in the camp, and I have never done any interrogating at all whilst I was Kommandant. I sometimes sent people away for interrogation to the criminal Investigation Officer, in which case they went to the Central Camp Office and were brought back after the interrogation had been completed. I do not know who did the interrogating. I have heard of the allegations of former prisoners in Auschwitz referring to a gas chamber there, the mass executions and whippings, the cruelty of the guards employed, and that all this took place either in my presence or with my knowledge. All I can say to all this is that it is untrue from beginning to end.

Belsen, 1st December, 1944, till 15th April, 1945. On 29th November, 1944, I went to Oranienburg, Berlin, to report to Gruppenführer Glücks. His appointment was Chef der Amtsgruppe D, which means that he was the officer in charge of the organisation of all concentration camps within the Reich. He was responsible to Obergruppenführer Pohl, whose appointment was Chef des Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamtes des S.S. (head of the Administration Department of the S.S. at the Ministry): equivalent to a General in the Army. He said to me: "Kramer, you are going to Belsen as Kommandant. At Belsen there are, at the moment, a lot of Jewish prisoners who will eventually be exchanged." It was later, when I was in Belsen, that I learned that these Jewish prisoners were being exchanged against German nationals abroad. The first exchange took place between 5th and 15th December, 1944, and was carried out under the personal supervision of an official who came from Berlin for that purpose. I cannot remember his name. His rank was "Regierungs Rat." The first transport contained about 1300 to 1400 prisoners. Glücks said to me at the interview in Berlin, "It is intended to turn

Belsen into a camp for sick prisoners. This camp will take all sick prisoners and internees from all concentration camps in Northern and North-Western Germany, and also all sick persons among these prisoners who are working either in firms or with industrial firms." He was referring to Arbeitseinsatzstellen, which means prisoners who have been allotted to peasants or industrial firms, coal mines, and the quarries for labour and for whom special camps have been erected on the premises. Responsibility for feeding and for accommodation is entirely the responsibility of the firm. Responsibility for administration remained with the parent concentration camp. He said: "There are considerable numbers of prisoners working with industrial firms who are sick or physically unfit to do the work they are detailed for. All these prisoners will be drafted into Belsen Camp. It puts an unnecessary burden upon the industrial firms concerned and therefore these prisoners must be transferred. Which prisoners and how many Belsen is eventually going to hold I cannot tell you at the moment, because that will have to be worked out as we go along. The general rule is to be that every prisoner who through illness is absent from his work for more than 10 or 14 days will be transferred to Belsen. If and when these prisoners recover in Belsen, they will either be formed into new detachments and sent out to new jobs or returned to their old work, whichever may be more expedient. You see that this is going to be a very big task for you. I suggest that you go to Belsen now to look at the camp and see how you get along. If you want any help you can either come back to Berlin or write."

This is where the duty conversation came to an end. Glücks then asked me how my wife and children were, and I enquired into the well-being of his family. I also asked whether it would be possible when I took over Belsen Camp to move my family there. He told me that I would have to go to Belsen and have a look. If I could find a suitable house I should write to him and he would authorise the move of my household. This conversation took place between Gruppenführer Glücks and myself, there was nobody else present. These were the only instructions I received and I did not ask for any more. I did not think I would require any more instructions and was quite satisfied with my orders.

After the interview with Glücks I spoke to three officers whom I knew personally. They were: Standartenführer Maurer (he was in charge of the allocation of prisoners to camps and for labour); Hauptsturmführer Sommer (he worked in Maurer's department); and Sturmbannführer Burger (he was the man who supervised the administration in the various concentration camps). I did not have any conversation on duty matters with either of the three above-named people. They were friends of mine, and as I happened to be in the house, I went to their various offices to say "Hallo." The leading doctor was a Standartenführer Dr. Lolling. He was the M.O. in charge of all concentration camps. I cannot remember any names of other people, but I can remember these four names because they either came to visit the camps or I saw their names on various letters coming from the Ministry.

I then travelled to Belsen, where I was received by Obersturmführer Schaaf. He was the officer in charge of administration. The next morning I went to the office and met Sturmbannführer Haas, the Kommandant, who knew that I was arriving from Berlin to take over complete charge of Belsen. I asked him how many prisoners the camp contained, and he said, "Roughly 15000." He said that it was not much use to discuss matters in the office and suggested a tour through the camp. On that tour he pointed out changes and improvements which he still wanted to make. The

camp was about 1 ½ kilometres long and between 300 and 350 metres wide. There were roughly 60 barracks, including accommodation for guards and stores; 40 to 45 were for the accommodation of the prisoners. The prisoners were made up of men, women and children; families were allowed to live together; otherwise men were separated from women. Six buildings in the men's camp, three in the family camp, and two in the women's camp served as hospitals. There was a crematorium in the camp.

I do not know of what nationality the prisoners were when I arrived, because there were no files or papers of any kind in the camp. It was impossible for me to know what kind of prisoners there were as they had been sent to Belsen because they were ill, from all concentration camps over the country. Many of them had lost their identification marks, and as there were no records it was absolutely impossible to tell who was who. I started to keep my own records of the prisoners, but these records were all destroyed on orders which I received from Berlin about the end of March. I do not remember who signed these orders.

The personnel consisted of one Guard Company S.S. The O.C. of the Company was Hauptscharführer Meyer. He came from somewhere near Hanover [Hannover]. He was of average height, about 1 m. 70; he wore spectacles, had hardly any hair and was about 50. Then there was Hauptsturmführer Vogler. He was the officer in charge of administration who took over from Schaaf, whom I mentioned before as officer in charge of administration on my arrival. The officer in charge of the Criminal Department was Untersturmführer Frericks. The Lagerführer (Obersturmführer Stresse) was transferred a few days after my arrival, and I was without a Lagerführer for over two months and had to do the job myself with only one N.C.O. as assistant, whose appointment was Rapportführer; he was Oberscharführer Reddhaser. The M.O. was Sturmbannführer Schnabel. A Hauptscharführer acted as dentist. He was later on promoted Untersturmführer. His name was Linsmeier. There were no other officers and I had no Adjutant. There were 60 to 70 N.C.Os., 20 to 25 of whom were in the Guards S.S. Company and the others employed on administrative duties. One of the N.C.Os. employed was the N.C.O. who was Office Clerk to the Officer in charge of Administration. He was Unterscharführer Kuckertz. There was another senior N.C.O. in my office. His name was Unterscharführer Rang. He acted as Untersturmführer and Adjutant. Other N.C.Os. whom I remember are Oberscharführer Hilmer (N.C.O. Administration); Unterscharführer Lademacher (also N.C.O. Administration); Unterscharführer Wille (also N.C.O. Administration); and Unterscharführer Müller, who was in charge of the food stores. When I took over Belsen there were six officers, including myself. I had no senior N.C.Os. When I took over there were three women on the staff. I cannot remember their names at the moment.

The death rate when I arrived was between 40 and 60 a week. When I entered the camp the Lagerführer had to report to me and had to say: "There are so many in the camp; so many died yesterday; which leaves so many." On my arrival a book was kept in which these figures were entered, but was later dispensed with. This book I had taken over from my predecessor. It was kept by the acting Lagerführer in his office. There was also another book in which the strength was recorded. The acting Lagerführer held a parade every morning to count the prisoners. On this parade every Blockführer reported the strength of his unit and the number of deaths that had occurred the previous day, and the Rapportführer added up the strength of the of the various

blocks on a sheet of paper, making a grand total. This report included the number of deaths that had occurred the previous day. There were approximately 40 Blockführer on parade every day.

In January I took over a new camp, adjoining the old camp, in which there were 40 to 50 new blocks. I did not get any more staff when I took this camp over. Only later, when camps in Silesia were evacuated, guards arrived with prisoners, thus putting up the strength of personnel. I was not always informed when transports of prisoners arrived; especially transports of prisoners evacuated from Silesia arrived without warning. There were transports with only 100 or 200 people, and others with 1500, 2000, 2500, etc. I had food reserves in the camps, and when a new batch of prisoners arrived I had to fall back on these reserves until I had reported the new strength and thus got additional food for the highest number of prisoners. There was no regular food transport; the railway should have brought the food whenever there was a train available. I am unable to say how many prisoners I had after this month because it was my orders that I had to send out prisoners for work as fast as possible. The incoming prisoners were therefore balanced by those being sent out for work and the figures fluctuated every day. Every prisoner who was fit to work was sent out with working parties ("Arbeitseinsatz") to industrial firms. The other prisoners worked only inside the camp and for the maintenance of the camp.

On 1st December, when I took over there were roughly 15000 people in the camp; roughly 200 died in December; on 1st January there were roughly 17000 people in the camp; 600 died in January; on 1st February there were 22000 prisoners in the camp. From the 15th February onwards I am unable to say how many prisoners I had as no more books were kept, as this proved utterly impossible in view of the transports streaming in from camps in Silesia which were being evacuated and, as I have already said, the records which I had maintained I destroyed in March.

I do not know the number of deaths which occurred in this period at all, but the conditions in Belsen got worse from the middle of February till the middle of April, 1945, when the Allies came. I inspected the camp daily during this period and was fully aware of the conditions and the great number of people who were dying. The death rate during the months of February, March and April gradually mounted until it reached 400 or 500 a day. This figure was due to the fact that if people were healthy I had to send them out on working parties and only retain the sick and dying. I was notified by the Stationmaster that a transport had arrived and I would have to collect the prisoners. The transports arriving were checked in by the guards only by numbers and not by names. About twice a week food was indented for from local depots and a return sent to the Ministry in Berlin, which was based on the figures given by the guards, who checked the people on entering the camp.

All prisoners received three meals a day. I cannot tell what the daily ration was as this was laid down by the food depot and was standardised. I never checked up on the rations from the depots, but I made sure that each prisoner had one litre of vegetable stew for the main meal, and in the morning the prisoner had coffee and bread, if available, and for the evening meal coffee and bread, again if available, and cheese or sausage. If the prisoners had worked on this diet it would have been insufficient for them to survive, but as they did not work I think it was enough to keep them alive. I thought they could stand this diet for about six weeks and after six weeks I was hoping to get some more food. The rations described above were the normal rations in any concentration camp at that time. The main point on which the food deteriorated was bread, as

this was lacking entirely for two or three days running several times. It was absolutely impossible for me to procure enough bread to feed the number of prisoners I had. In the early days the bread had been supplied by local bakeries at Belsen. Later there were so many prisoners in the camp that the local bakeries could not supply the required quantity any longer, and I sent out lorries to Hanover [Hannover] and other places to fetch bread, but even then I was not able to get half the bread I required to feed prisoners on normal rations. Apart from bread, the rations were never cut down. Flour was supplied in lieu of bread and was employed in making meals. It turned out, however, that had we made bread of this flour the death rate would not have been so high. I went to the depot in Celle and then to the next higher authority in Hanover [Hannover] and put them in the picture as to what was going on in Belsen. I also pointed out to them that if a catastrophe was going happen, I would not only disclose the facts but also make them responsible. I cannot remember whom I saw at either of these places. I have never applied to Berlin in these matters because they could not have helped me in any way. This was entirely a matter for the ration people in Celle and in Hanover [Hannover]. My visits to these depots resulted in extra rations of potatoes and turnips arriving some time later.

I remember one case of cannibalism quite well. It was reported to me that a prisoner had entered the mortuary and that parts of one body there were missing. I put a guard on the dead bodies at night and that guard arrested a man the same night who had approached a dead body. This man was arrested, but before he could be interrogated next morning he hanged himself. Whether there were more cases of cannibalism I cannot tell, but I put a guard on the mortuary from that night onwards. That guard consisted of prisoners. I thought that the prisoners would guard the bodies against other prisoners. Whether they did or did not do so I cannot tell. The mortuary was not always in the same building, as prisoners fluctuated to such a great extent. I had to shift the accommodation continuously and therefore the building detailed as a mortuary was not always the same. If changes took place, this building was cleaned by the prisoners and used for their accommodation the next day.

The camp doctor reported sick and was replaced by Dr. Klein at the middle of February. Roughly, on 1st March another M.O. arrived. His name was Hauptsturmführer Horstmann. Two days before the Allies arrived Horstmann left with the troops and only Dr. Klein remained. Apart from these two (Klein and Horstmann) there were no S.S. doctors in the camp. At the end of January Dr. Lolling, from the Ministry in Berlin, arrived on an inspection tour. I pointed out to him that if, as I was told in Berlin, Belsen was going to be a camp for sick people, I needed more doctors. He said that there were none available at the moment, but that as soon as he had some he would send them. Dr. Lolling inspected the camp and was fully aware of the conditions prevailing there at the time when he inspected it. He spent a whole day walking through the camp with Dr. Schnabel and inspected it thoroughly. The measures taken were that Dr. Lolling took a list of requirements with him and said he would see to it that we got the necessary medical supplies. Even though I was Kommandant I did not know anything about the supply of medical equipment and medical stores. This I left entirely to the M.O. All medical supplies were asked for direct from Berlin (Dr. Lolling's department). This is all I know about this matter.

During my stay at Belsen there were 15 to 20 prison-breaks. Some of the prisoners trying to escape were shot whilst trying to escape. I do not know how many. Towards the end of

December an order arrived from Berlin forbidding corporal punishment altogether. From that moment onwards no corporal punishment was meted out.

Between 20th and 28th February the M.O. notified me that spotted fever had broken out in the camp. This fact was verified by a Bacteriological Institute in Hanover [Hannover]. I therefore closed the camp and sent a report to Berlin. The answer from Berlin was that I had to keep the camp open to receive transports coming from the East, fever or no fever. The second time I wrote to Berlin was between 1st and 10th March, when I sent a complete report on the conditions prevailing in the camp. These two occasions were the only occasions on which I ever made any representations to higher authority. These two letters were addressed to the Verwaltungsgruppe B in Berlin. I did not go to Berlin myself as I was instructed at my interview in November, because that would have taken three or four days and there was nobody to carry on in my absence.

As far as I can remember, Gruppenführer Pohl inspected Belsen Camp about 20th March. He came with one other officer. I conducted Pohl right through the camp and pointed out conditions as they were. He did not come because of the letter I had written. He came on a routine inspection tour - "Just to have a look at the camp." Whether the letter I had written to the Central Office in Berlin was mentioned during our conversations I cannot tell. I pointed out conditions to him, and he said that something must be done. The first measure he suggested was to close the camp and put no more people into it. I suggested two measures to Pohl to cope with the situation: (a) no further transports to come in; and (b), the exchange of the Jews in the camp to take place immediately. The result of this was that he dictated a letter from my office, addressed to Berlin, saying that the exchange of Jewish prisoners had to take place immediately. This exchange did eventually take place during the last days of March. I do not know against whom these prisoners were to be exchanged, but they left Belsen going to Theresienstadt. Between 6000 and 7000 people were sent away to be exchanged (three train-loads). These 6000 or 7000 constituted the entire number of Jewish prisoners who were to be exchanged. They were transported in three train-loads, each train consisting of 45 to 50 trucks. I had orders to send off three consignments on three different days. Each time I detailed a few guards - I cannot remember how many - and there was an N.C.O. in charge of each train, probably a Scharführer, but I cannot remember. I do not know to whom these N.C.Os. had to report at the other end. All I knew was I had to send off three train-loads. I never saw these N.C.Os. whom I sent away, again.

I pointed out to Pohl that I wanted more beds and more blankets, and he agreed that in this matter, like as in the other matters, immediate help was required. The doctor and the officer in charge of administration also spoke to Pohl. The officer in charge Administration pointed out his difficulties in obtaining food, whereas the doctor was satisfied with the position as he had just received a new consignment of medical stores. Pohl held his appointment in Berlin for roughly two years. Glücks was there much longer as he had been there already under Eike. Eike was later sent to the Western Front and afterwards to the Eastern Front, where he was killed.

I do not know what nationality any of the prisoners were of at Belsen as there were no papers sent with them and the only check was done by numbers. I therefore cannot tell whether there were any British subjects among the prisoners, but it is possible that there were. I have never heard of a prisoner called Keith Meyer [Mayor], who was a British subject.

The female staff increased in number, the same as the male staff, as women guards arrived with women transports from the East. All women in the camp were under my command, the same as the men. Twenty to 22 wardresses were still at Belsen when the Allies arrived, and approximately 26000 women prisoners. Unless I received complaints from the prisoners themselves I had no means of ascertaining what treatment was meted out by the female guards, but I had complete confidence in those guards. The only criticism I had to make was that they were a bit too familiar with the female prisoners. I had the same confidence in the male guards. They were 100 per cent correct, and I have never received any complaints from the prisoners. In February or March - I cannot remember the exact date - Oberaufseherin Volkenrath arrived and was put in charge of the women guards. I had complete confidence in her.

There was a crematorium in the camp and as long as coke was available all dead bodies were cremated. When there was no more coke available they were buried in mass graves. I have never seen a Red Cross official in any of the camps I have been to. I cannot tell why not. If a Red Cross official had called I would have rung up Berlin immediately to ask whether he was permitted to enter the camp as nobody could enter the camp without permission from Berlin. What the answer would have been I cannot tell.

There were no standing orders from Berlin for any of the concentration camps I have been to as to: (a) the space allotted to individual prisoners; (b) sanitation, or (c) working conditions. This was completely left to the discretion of the Kommandant. I can remember no standing orders or instructions from Berlin except with regard to visitors to the camp and to punishments. In all other matters the Kommandant had complete discretion. When Belsen Camp was eventually taken over by the Allies I was quite satisfied that I had done all I possibly could under the circumstances to remedy the conditions in the camp.

APPENDIX V: DEPOSITION OF HERTA EHLERT

DEPOSITION OF HERTA EHLERT (German, aged 40)

1. I am 40 years of age. I was occupied as a bakery saleswoman until 15th November, 1940, when I was conscripted into the S.S. I do not regard myself as a member of the S.S. because I was not in sympathy with them, but I have worked as an Aufseherin with the S.S. since that date. I would be ashamed of belonging to the S.S. because so many things happened which were terrible.

2. I reported to Ravensbrück, where I remained for two and a half years as Aufseherin. In autumn, 1943, I was sent from Ravensbrück to Lublin. I stayed there until spring, 1944, as Aufseherin in the laundry, and I was then sent to Cracow [Kraków] Work camp and Concentration Camp. In November, 1944, I went to Raisko, which was a dependency of Auschwitz. On the 15th January, 1945, I was sent to Oranienburg and thence to Belsen early in February, 1945. At Belsen I continued to be an Aufseherin, and Elisabeth Volkenrath, who was the chief of the S.S. women, made me her assistant.

3. The conditions in Belsen were a shame and a disgrace. I consider that the people chiefly responsible, were Kramer the Kommandant, Dr. Horstmann, Untersturmführer Klipp, who was for a time Kramer's second in command, and Hauptsturmführer Vogler, who worked in Kramer's office and was responsible for food supply. I say that Kramer was responsible for the conditions, among other reasons, because on one occasion when I complained of the increasing death rate to Kramer he replied, "Let them die, why should you care?"

4. I have no knowledge of any shooting of inmates at Belsen when I was there, except for one girl who was shot trying to escape from an outside working party, and a nurse who was shot and killed from one of the guard towers when a window was not blacked out quickly enough during an air raid alarm. I do not know the names of either of the victims or of those who did the shooting.

5. I have often seen prisoners beaten at Belsen. One of these I have seen beating prisoners is Rapportführerin Gollasch. When Gollasch beat people she did it very heavily and always with a weapon such as a walking-stick, piece of wood or anything she could find. She hit them on the head, on the back, or on any part of the body. I do not know whether prisoners died as a consequence of their being beaten, but I have often seen her continue until blood came from the victim's mouth and nose. The victims were in such a weak state that they would be very lucky to survive such beatings as I saw her give. Gollasch left Belsen six days before the English arrived and I believe that she went home to visit her people at Kotbus.

6. I remember some time in February a Polish prisoner called Korperova was being beaten by four of her fellow internees for having betrayed them, when Gollasch came into the room and continued to beat her with a stick to such an extent that I tried to make her stop. The victim was at least partly clothed, but I think she lost some of her clothing in the course of the beating.

7. I have never seen anybody else beat prisoners at Belsen. I myself have struck them only with my hand, never with a weapon.

8. I have been told by many of the prisoners that after the Hungarians took over guarding the camp, which was about a week before the arrival of the British, four nights in succession they shot at prisoners from the watch towers, giving as an excuse that the prisoners were trying to escape.

9. I remember an occasion at Belsen some time in February or March when an escaped prisoner, either a Polish or a German woman, was caught after trying to escape. Kramer, the Kommandant, questioned the girl in front of several of us S.S. women, and I saw him kicking shaking her and later hit her with a stick on her head and face and all over her body quite unmercifully. As a result of this she gave the names of two girls whom she said had helped her to escape. Kramer sent for these two girls and instructed Kasainitzky to give each of them five strokes on the bare behind to make them confess. I saw Kasainitzky carry this out with a walking-stick, and each of the girls was then made to stand in a corner while Kasainitzky took one of them into another room to interrogate her. I was present throughout these proceedings with Gollasch and Volkenrath, but left when the first girl was being interrogated and do not know what subsequently happened.

10. Although I have not witnessed any beatings of prisoners by other S.S., I have heard that Ilse Forster and Frieda Walter used to beat internees to a quite unreasonable extent. One young Rottenführer, whose name I do not remember but who was at Belsen for three or four days, told me on one occasion that he was on his way to complain to Unterscharführer Müller that he could not continue to work in the cookhouse while the brutality of the beatings given by Ilse Forster and Frieda Walter were allowed to continue. I also found Ilse Forster myself, when visiting the cookhouse, with a very red face and in an excited state, which she told me was due to her exertions in beating prisoners.

11. I have also heard that Irene Haschke and Herta Bothe have often beaten prisoners and that Gertrud Sauer and Gertrud Fiest had the reputation of being very severe. From my own knowledge of Juana Bormann and from working with her, I believe that the stories about her brutality to prisoners are true, although I have not myself witnessed it. I have often seen the dog which she had, and heard she used to let it loose on prisoners. Although I have not seen it I can well believe it to be true.

12. I should like to add that Hilde Lisiewitz and Elizabeth Fritzner, to the best of my knowledge and belief were always well behaved and treated prisoners really decently.

13. I believe that some of the prisoners are blaming us for things that were done by the Aufseherinnen who preceded us at Belsen. For instance, I remember that S.S. woman Sporn, who left Belsen about 20th February, 1945, because she was pregnant (according to what Volkenrath told me, as a result of a love affair with Kramer), has, on occasions, punished numbers of prisoners by making them kneel with bricks or stones on their heads, and their hands above their heads for as long as three hours at a time. I can speak of this of my own knowledge, since I saw it happen. I have often heard Kramer order similar punishment of individuals.

APPENDIX W: STATEMENT OF IRMA GRESE

STATEMENT OF IRMA GRESE (German, aged 21)

I am 21 years of age and come from Wrechen near Feldberg, Mecklenburg. From the age of 16 I worked as an assistant nurse in a hospital and remained there until I was 18 years old. I wanted to become a nurse but was made to join the S.S. as a supervisor at concentration camps. This was in July, 1942.

I first went to Ravensbrück, where I was made an Aufseherin and placed in charge of female working parties consisting of about 20 prisoners. In March, 1943, I was sent to Birkenau near Auschwitz, where I remained up to January, 1945. I then went to Ravensbrück for four weeks and arrived at Belsen in March 1945.

I know from the prisoners that there were gas chambers at Auschwitz and that prisoners were gassed there. Dr. Mengele came in the camp at Birkenau and sorted out the people unfit for work for these transports. I knew what was happening and have hidden mothers and children away in order that they should not be chosen. I was once denounced by the Jews for having done this and was put under arrest for two days in my room. Jews were used as spies in this camp and had certain privileges. I never took part in choosing people and was only on parade for roll-call and seeing that no one escaped.

I have never beaten or kicked any prisoners. It is true that I made people stand on Appell for long periods, but never until they dropped. I have seen people beaten by Rapportführer Tauber at Birkenau and by Rapportführer Drechsel. I was once told by Drechsel that if it was necessary I could hit prisoners, but I never did this. I cannot remember who was Kommandant at this time. Whilst I was there Hoess, Hartjenstein, Scharz and Kramer were Kommandanten.

Conditions in the concentration camps were bad for everyone, including the S.S. The only time I was allowed home was for five days after I had finished my training at Ravensbrück. I then told my father about the concentration camp and he gave me a beating and told me never to come home again. Himmler is responsible for all that has happened, but I suppose I have as much guilt as all the others above me. Conditions were very bad at Belsen, but there was little I could do, although I did all I could do to help.

FURTHER STATEMENT OF IRMA GRESE

1. I have said in a previous statement that I have never beaten or ill-treated prisoners. I have thought it over and I now wish to confess that I have done so and to tell the truth.
2. My duties at Belsen included taking Appell, or roll-call, twice a week. My rank was Kommandoführerin. I was employed as Aufseherin. In this capacity it was my duty to supervise tidiness and general cleanliness in the camp. My duties were in the women's camp only. I never struck prisoners during the 3 ½ weeks I was at Belsen.
3. While at Auschwitz I struck female prisoners on the face with my hand for using dixies as latrine buckets. Though I never struck prisoners in Belsen and I never saw anyone else do so, I remember seeing Rapportführerin Drechsel strike prisoners at Auschwitz. She did this with her

hand. I only saw it from a distance, but they were struck only on the head. I myself did not strike prisoners often, but quite frequently when they did something I didn't like.

4. On the whole I consider that I treated prisoners well. I did not think that any of them were hostile to me when I was working in the camp. I now find that they all appear to be hostile to me. I think that is because they were hostile to all S.S. because they cannot forget the number of people among them who were gassed at Auschwitz. I myself think they are perfectly right to feel hostile towards us.

5. I have been shown photograph B.U. 3746, showing a woman with bad scars on her face which I believe to have been caused by beating with a stick. I have never seen such a thing happen at Belsen, but I have definitely seen Unterscharführer Tauber beat people in this way at Auschwitz. He did it with a stick.

6. I have again reflected and I wish to add that I have, in fact, beaten prisoners other than with my hand as already described. This was at Auschwitz, when for at least a week several of us S.S. women had short whips made in the camp workshops, with one of which I several times struck prisoners before these whips were taken away from us as unauthorised. Arms were never carried or possessed by any S.S. women.

7. I also now admit that I punished prisoners by making them kneel on the grounds for periods of a quarter of an hour at a time. I did not, at the same time, make them hold their hands above their heads, but I saw this being done, when I have made my report to another part of the camp at Auschwitz. I do not know the names of the people in Auschwitz responsible for inflicting this punishment.

8. I remember saying in the first statement I made to an English [British] officer that "Himmler is responsible for all that has happened, but I suppose I have as much guilt as all the others above me." I meant by this that simply by being in the S.S, and seeing the crimes committed on orders from those in authority and doing nothing to protest or stop them being committed makes anybody in the S.S. as guilty as anybody else. The crimes I refer to are the gassing of persons at Auschwitz and the killing of thousands at Belsen by starvation and disease. I consider the crime to be murder.

9. I know about the gas chamber at Auschwitz because prisoners who worked in it told us about it. I only saw it myself from a distance, but I have no doubt that many were gassed there.

10. I recognise a number of people on photographs I have been shown of S.S. guards who were at Belsen. No. 3 on photograph 1 was a clerk at Auschwitz. I do not know his duties at Belsen. No. 4 on photograph 3 was an electrician at Belsen and Auschwitz. No. 1 on photograph 5 was a cook at Auschwitz and in the food store at Belsen. No. 2 on photograph 5 worked with No. 4 on photograph 3 as an electrician both at Auschwitz and Belsen. No. 4 on photograph 7 was a cook at Belsen. No. 5 on photograph is Doctor Klein. No. 3 on photograph 9 was a waiter in the Officers' Mess at Belsen. No. 1 on photograph 9 was only at Belsen a few days. He came from Mittelbau. I do not know how he was employed. Nos. 1 and 3 on photograph 12 were employed at both Auschwitz and Belsen in the guardroom checking prisoners in and out. On photograph 22

No. 6 was in charge of all S.S. women guards. No. 5 was No. 6's second in command. No. 3 was a telephonist. No. 1 was in charge of the bread store. On photograph 19 No. 6 was in the kitchen for a little while, No. 5 and No. 4 were Aufseherinnen. No. 3 looked after the pigs, No. 2 was a telephonist. On photograph 25 No. 5 was in charge of the wood cutting and chopping, No. 4 supervised outside working parties. On photograph 35 No. 5 was a telephonist, No. 2 was sick while I was there, No. 3 worked in the kitchen. On photograph 37 No. 2 was in the kitchen, No. 3 was also in the kitchen.

11. I never saw any of the beforementioned S.S. ill-treating prisoners in any way. I have now confessed to all the ill-treatment of prisoners of which I was guilty because it has been on my conscience. I have nothing else to admit.

FURTHER DEPOSITION OF IRMA GRESE

1. On further reflection I wish to say that in three respects the statements I made in my previous deposition were not accurate. First of all I previously stated that I never carried arms. In fact Aufseherinnen at Auschwitz did carry pistols, I among them. My pistol, however, was never loaded and I did not know how to use it nor did I ever do so. Second, when I stated that the only time I had used a weapon to beat prisoners was when I had a whip for a week; this was untrue. I did, in fact, always have a whip which I used consistently whenever necessary. Third, I admit that there was also a walking-stick which we kept in the Lagerältester's room and which, although it was unauthorised, we frequently used to beat prisoners. I usually used to beat them on the shoulders, but there were times when, because of the numbers involved, they were beaten on any part of the body that happened to be easiest. All the beatings to which I refer were immediate and I have never taken part in deliberately organised punishments. If it was desired to inflict an organised beating the prisoner had to be reported and confined in a special cell pending punishment. I never saw any such authorised punishment carried out.

APPENDIX X: STATEMENT OF HELENA KOPPER

STATEMENT OF HELENA Koper (Hungarian, aged 35)

1. I am 35 years of age. Neither my husband nor I are Jewish. I was arrested in Cracow [Kraków] in June, 1940, because the Gestapo suspected me of anti-German sympathies and found me in possession of an anti-German pamphlet. I was in prison for four months at the Gestapo prison, Cracow [Kraków]. I was sent to Ravensbrück Camp in October, 1940, and subsequently to Auschwitz-Birkenau in October, 1941, thence to Bergen-Belsen in December, 1944.

2. I recognise No. 2 on photograph Z/4/2 as S.S. Aufseherin Irma Grese. I knew her first in Ravensbrück in 1941, but I knew nothing against her during that time. She was Blockführerin in Auschwitz and subsequently in charge of the punishment company in Auschwitz from 1942 to 1944. She was in charge of the punishment company when working outside the camp, for six months in 1943. The remainder of the time she did not go outside. I was also in the punishment company and, during the time that Grese was in charge when working outside, we were employed outside the camp in a sand-pit. There were 700-800 women working in this company, some of whom were detailed to dig sand and fill iron trucks with the sand, and others had to push these trucks along a narrow gauge railway. The place in which we worked was surrounded by a strand of wire about three to four feet high and we were not allowed to go outside this wire boundary. There were twelve guards placed at intervals around the wire. It was the practice of Grese to pick out certain of the Jewish women prisoners and order them to get something from the other side of the wire. She always worked with interpreters. When the prisoners approached the wire they were challenged by the guard, but as Grese usually picked out non-Germans, they did not understand the order and walked on and were shot. Some even of the prisoners who did understand German and knew it was death to cross the wire, did so because they were too weary and ill to bother. Occasionally a guard would not shoot but would force the prisoner to return to the working party. I myself was called as a witness at an enquiry which was held by the Political Department on a guard who refused to shoot prisoners which Grese had ordered to cross the wire. At the enquiry I identified the guard, who was handcuffed. In my presence the guard stated that the women were being worked too hard and that Grese was purposely sending them to the wire so that they would be shot. The next day the guard was on duty again and Grese had gone. I next saw her in Belsen in February or March, 1945, as a Rapportführerin.

3. Whilst Grese was in charge of the working party she always carried a rubber truncheon. She was responsible for at least 30 deaths a day, resulting from her orders to cross the wire, but many more on occasions. It was always my job, ordered by Grese, to count the dead, and I, together with some other women, used to load the bodies into one of the railway wagons after working hours. The bodies were subsequently removed by ambulance. I know two of the women who helped me on these occasions; their names are Canina Stasicka and Karola Mikot. I saw them last on 8th June, 1945, in Belsen Camp. Both are Polish Aryans. Their Auschwitz numbers tattooed on their arms are 18565 and 18566. I do not know which of them had which number. Both had lived at Cracow [Kraków]. I know the name of one internee who was shot by a guard when ordered to cross the wire. It was Anna Guterweiss of Czacowies, near Cracow [Kraków]. In fact, I wrote to her son to tell him that his mother had died. It is possible that orders to cross the wire were not in every case given by Grese, because the Kapos used to try it, but it is almost certain that Grese was responsible in almost every case.

4. I identify No. 3 on photograph 19 as an S.S. woman who was at Auschwitz during 1943-4. I knew her by the name of Bormann and have now been told that her full name is Juana Bormann. She was the worst hated person in the camp. At first she was in charge of the clothing store and then in charge of labour. She always had with her a large dog which she set on to the prisoners. On one occasion when I was undergoing a minor punishment - it was in the summer of 1944 as near as I can remember - I was kneeling down with my hands in the air and I saw Bormann approach a prisoner, a female, who was going towards the offices. Bormann stopped the woman and took something out of the woman's pocket. She then hit the prisoner with her right hand and then, claspng her by the hair, threw the woman to the ground. Bormann was holding the dog by a strap in her left hand, and when the woman was lying on the ground, she let the dog go and it bit the woman severely. When the dog had finished, the woman was a mass of blood and one of her breasts had been torn severely. A doctor, S.S. Obersturmführer Rodek, came and examined the woman. He was a good doctor and behaved always well. There was no movement from the body and four prisoners were instructed to take the body away on a stretcher to Block 25, which was notorious as the death block; that is the block to which people were taken when they were dying or where they were lodged prior to being taken to the gas chamber.

5. In 1942, not long after I had been at Auschwitz, Bormann found some cigarettes and photographs in my bed. For this she beat me on the face with her hand and then set her dog on to me. I was bitten in the left arm near the elbow. Bormann walked me to the hospital and I was there for six weeks. I believe Bormann called the dog off only because she was a sadist and enjoyed doing that sort of thing. I received an official beating for having cigarettes when I came out of hospital. Bormann left Auschwitz in the summer of 1944.

6. I recognise No. 5 on photograph 22 as an S.S. Oberaufseherin at Belsen. I knew her by the name of Ehlert and I have now been told that her full name is Herta Ehlert. Two weeks before the British came, it was in early April, the roll-call at my block was incorrect and Ehlert beat me with her hand, but not very much; but she stopped the food the next day for the whole of the block as a punishment.

7. I recognise No. 6 on photograph 22 as an S.S. woman who was at Auschwitz. I knew her by the name of Volkenrath and have now been told that her full name is Elisabeth Volkenrath. She was responsible for selections for the gas chamber at Auschwitz Camp from Block 18, where I lived. I attended seven selection parades and she and S.S. Rapportführer Tauber between them made all the selections. Volkenrath was not merely acting as a guard - she personally picked out victims for the gas chamber. On one occasion, out of a block containing 1400 prisoners there were only about 300 left after the selections had been made. I left Auschwitz in November, 1944, and next saw Volkenrath at Belsen in February, 1945, when she said to me that Germany had lost the war and we should all be hanged.

Info: The following paragraph (8) was not read out at the trial.

8. I knew an S.S. Oberaufseherin Drechsel at Auschwitz. I would describe her as about 30 years of age, 5 ft. 4 ins. in height, very thin, with bright brown thin hair. She had two protruding front teeth, a long thin nose and pale complexion. She walked with her head bent forward. She was responsible for selections for the gas chamber and I myself have seen her doing this many times.

9. I knew an S.S. Arbeitsdienstführerin Hasse at Auschwitz. I would describe her as about 28 years of age, 5 ft. 8 ins. in height, very blond hair (natural), straight, and worn in an upward style, blue eyes, blond eyebrows, small mouth, round face, healthy complexion, slim build, good even teeth, beautiful, good figure, and very smart in her dress. This woman was in charge of the transport columns which arrived at Auschwitz from time to time. These transport columns consisted of people who were to be exterminated at once and they did not spend any time in the camp. She used to lead the columns to the gas chamber, and when there were babies in arms, she ordered them to be thrown into a hole which was connected to a stove, and they were burnt alive. I was employed in cleaning up the ground near the crematorium and I saw this happen many times. Hasse always wore a pistol, but I never saw her use it - only to threaten people.

10. I recognise No. 5 on photograph 1 as an S S. man who was chief cook at Belsen. I have now been told that his name is Karl Flrazich [Francioh]. A week before the English arrived I went to fetch food from the kitchen for my block, and the internees who were queuing for their food started to push, and Flrazich (Francioh), who always stood on the steps at the entrance to the kitchen, shot a girl with his pistol. The girl, who was pregnant, was shot in the arm, and as she belonged to my block, I took her to the hospital. She became unconscious and died whilst I was there. I cannot say why she died as she was only shot in the arm - she was very weak. I know this because a doctor examined her and told me she was dead. My block was next to the kitchen and I saw Francioh shooting repeatedly at the internees, many of whom fell down and were flung on to a heap.

11. I recognise No. 1 on photograph Q/4/1 as an S.S. man whom I knew at Auschwitz and Belsen. I have also seen him in custody and I know beyond all doubt that he is the same man. I knew him by the name of Hansi and I have now been told that his full name is Heinrich Schreirer. I first met Schreirer in the winter of 1942-3 at Auschwitz. He was in charge of a Strafkommando in which I was working. He spoke to everyone in the Strafkommando and asked them their jobs in civil life, and when I told him that I was a Professor of Music, he at once became interested. He talked all day about music and politics. He spoke badly of the Germans and said that the war was already lost. One day I was sentenced to 12 days in the bunker for smoking. Schreirer was in charge of this bunker. He told me that he was in charge of the Political Department and that he would tell me all that was going on if I would play the violin for him. I agreed to do so and he brought me a violin. He told me that 10 people in the bunker were to be hanged and many to be gassed the next day. I played "Mother Love" to him and he told me that he had no mother and if I played it again he would shoot me. He also asked me to play something Rumanian or French, and when I asked for music he said he would write it for me, which he did. When I had finished playing for him he wrote on the doorpost "England will come to help."

12. I afterwards spoke to an American boxer named Jacob, who was in the bunker and he told me that Schreirer was an intelligent man and spoke Rumanian, French, Polish, Russian, German and English. Schreirer spent almost every day in my cell, and I formed the opinion that he was not normal. He told me that he was a homosexual. After I was released from the bunker Schreirer said that he wanted me to join the camp band, but I could not do so whilst I was in the punishment party. In an attempt to get me off the punishment party, Schreirer arranged a meeting

for me with Hoessler, whom I identify as No. 1 on photograph 9. Hoessler told me that I had to stay in the punishment party.

13. I saw Schreier whilst I was at Belsen in December, 1944, or January 1945. I spoke to him about three times. The last time I saw him was at 2100 hours one evening about three weeks before the British came. He came to my room and he was very dirty. He said that he had been working in the woods and had buried some secret papers. I said that I would like to see where they were and he agreed to take me. We went out of the camp to a spot between the crematorium and the sand-pit and he showed me where five or six boxes were buried. They were only covered with a little earth which he scraped away and I actually saw the boxes which he said contained the last papers the German possessed, and ammunition. On 31st June, 1945, I showed Captain A. J. Fox, General List, D.A.P.M., 86 Special Investigation Section, Corps of Military Police, where the boxes had been buried. They were no longer there.

14. One day in Belsen Schreier showed me three passports or identity cards. Each of them had a photograph of him and each card was written in a different language, and the names were different names. The name "Schreier" was not one. I do not think "Schreier" is his real name. There was an elderly man at Auschwitz whose name was Schreier.

APPENDIX Y: STATEMENT OF HILDEGARDE LOHBAUER

STATEMENT OF HILDEGARDE LOHBAUER (German)

1. I am a German national, unmarried, with two children. I was put into a concentration camp for refusing to work in an ammunition factory. I went to Ravensbrück from 1940 to 1941. I was then transferred to Auschwitz, where I stayed until approximately January, 1945. I returned to Ravensbrück until March, 1945, when I came to Belsen. At first I was an ordinary prisoner, but for the past two years my job has been Arbeitsdienstführerin, whose duty it is to produce the number of people determined by the camp authorities for working parties.

2. Treatment of prisoners in Belsen was severe, but not as bad as it was at Auschwitz and Ravensbrück. I have only once seen a prisoner shot. This was on the day the English [British] liberated the camp. When the amplifying unit first came to the camp to announce the arrival of the English [British], many of the prisoners rushed forward rejoicing. They were told they must not do so. One of them, a Dutchman, who persisted, was shot from behind by Rapportführer Emmerich. I saw the man was dead, and he was carried away. The S.S. women at Belsen did not carry arms, but all at Auschwitz carried pistols. The S.S. were armed, and I believe that shootings took place at Belsen and Auschwitz on outside working parties, though I myself was never a witness.

3. Beatings of prisoners were frequent, both at Auschwitz and Belsen. At Auschwitz regular organised beatings were given. I myself was given 15 strokes on the behind for smoking at Auschwitz in 1943. The punishment was carried out by two fellow prisoners, one of whom held me on a punishment stool while the other beat me with a solid wood stick. I believe that such organised beatings was prohibited afterwards at Auschwitz, because of the injuries caused to victims. I know of none at Belsen.

4. As Arbeitsdienst I have myself frequently hit prisoners to keep order, but only with my hand.

5. Of the S.S. men and women whom I have seen with my own eyes beating and ill-treating prisoners, I consider that Gertrud Fiest, Gertrud Sauer, Herta Bothe and Peter Weingartner should be punished.

APPENDIX Z: STATEMENT OF ELISABETH VOLKENRATH

STATEMENT OF ELISABETH VOLKENRATH (German, aged 26)

I am 26 years of age and come from Schönau near Badlandeck, Silesia. I am a married woman, my husband being in the S.S., and I have not heard of him for a long time. Before being called up into the S.S. I was a hairdresser. In 1939 I was called up to work in a munitions factory and on 1st October, 1942, was transferred to the S.S. I never actually became a member of the S.S.; we merely wore the uniform and became supervisors at concentration camps.

On joining the S.S. I was sent to Ravensbrück, where I became an Aufseherin and was taught how to treat prisoners. We were told that we were not to talk to prisoners and our job was to take them to work and see that they didn't escape. I later went into the concentration camp at Ravensbrück, where I worked under S.S. woman Langefeld and Kommandant Koegel. In March, 1942, I was transferred to Auschwitz, where I remained until 18th January, 1945. I then proceeded to Bergen-Belsen, where I arrived after a long train journey on 5th February, 1945.

On arrival at Auschwitz I was placed in charge of a working party sewing clothes. I later was placed in charge of the parcels department where Red Cross parcels from families were received for the prisoners. I always made it my duty to see that the parcels were delivered, and those prisoners that worked under me can say that this is true. On 20th September, 1944, I took over a working camp in Auschwitz, consisting of a cobbler's shop and tailor's shop which were run for the benefit of the prisoners. I remained at this post until the camp was cleared. Whilst I was at Auschwitz the Kommandanten of the camp were Kommandant Hoess, Liebehenschel and Baer. On the women's side there were S.S. women Langefeld, Mandel and Drechsel. Kramer, was the Kommandant at Birkenau from, from June or July, 1944, to December, 1944.

I often heard about the gas chamber from prisoners, but I never actually saw it, although from the distance I have seen the crematorium. I have been present when selections were made from prisoners, by the S.S. doctors, of those unfit to work. These people, were all sent to Block 25 and to my knowledge they were never seen again. Obersturmführer Müller always told us that these people were being sent away to recuperate. Whilst I was at Auschwitz the camp was visited by Himmler and he saw the conditions that existed there.

I have always been very strict, but have never murdered anyone. I have boxed the ears of girls if they did anything wrong, but anything I did was always on orders from Lagerführerin Mandel and Drechsel. It was on the orders of Kommandant Kramer that girls were brought to the office and made to "make sport." It was conducted by Camp Aeltesten. This was a punishment for being in possession of things they should not have, and consisted of running round the room, bending their knees and, generally, doing physical exercises. I have always tried, as far as possible, not to forget that I was a woman and a human being. I was never present when this took place, and it only happened once in Block 2.

The many deaths at Belsen were caused by lack of food and overcrowding. Prisoners were marched from other camps to Belsen with little or no food and arrived in an exhausted condition. I mentioned this to Kramer and Vogler. Kramer told me, about, the 20th March, 1944, that he made a report about the camp and, as a result, at the end of March, 1945, it was inspected by

Pohl, Hoess and Verwittungschef Burge and also Dr. Lolling, who was head of all doctors in Germany. Due to this inspection temporary barracks should have been built, and a start was made in the women's camp at the end of March.

I know things have been bad in these camps, but they were also bad for us and we could do nothing about it. We were punished the same as the prisoners by money being stopped, up to 5 marks, by Kramer, and confinement to camp on orders from Berlin, and kept almost the same as the prisoners ourselves. It is true that I have had to make prisoners on Appell hold their hands above their heads, but it was always on orders from others; this happened in Auschwitz on instructions from Mandel and Drechsel.

It is my opinion that the man most responsible for the conditions at Auschwitz was Hoess, as he was in charge of all camps in this area. Reichsführer Himmler is, of course, responsible for all concentration camps. At no time did I see any orders in writing relating to concentration camps.

On arrival at Belsen I did not work for the first six weeks at all, owing to the fact that I was ill. I then took charge of all S.S. women and received my orders direct from Kommandant Kramer.