

Judgement : Goering

Goering is indicted on all [four counts](#). The evidence shows that after Hitler he was the most prominent man in the Nazi Regime. He was Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, and had tremendous influence with Hitler, at least until 1943 when their relationship deteriorated, ending in his arrest in 1945. He testified that Hitler kept him informed of all important military and political problems.

Crimes against Peace

From the moment he joined the Party in 1922 and took command of the street-fighting organisation, the SA, Goering was the adviser, the active agent of Hitler and one of the prime leaders of the Nazi movement. As Hitler's political deputy he was largely instrumental in bringing the National Socialists to power in 1933, and was charged with consolidating this power and expanding German armed might. He developed the Gestapo, and created the first concentration camps, relinquishing them to Himmler in 1934, conducted the Roehm purge in that year, and engineered the sordid proceedings which resulted in the removal of von Blomberg and von Fritsch from the Army. In 1936 he became Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, and in theory and in practice was the economic dictator of the Reich. Shortly after the Pact of Munich, he announced that he would embark on a five-fold expansion of the Luftwaffe and speed rearmament with emphasis on offensive weapons.

Goering was one of the five important leaders present at the Hozsbach Conference of 5th November, 1937, and he attended the other important conferences already discussed in this Judgment. In the Austrian Anschluss, he was indeed the central figure, the ringleader. He said in Court: " I must take 100 per cent. responsibility.... I even overruled objections by the Fuehrer and brought everything to its final development." In the seizure of the Sudetenland, he played his role as Luftwaffe chief by planning an air offensive which proved unnecessary and his role as a politician by lulling the Czechs with false promises of friendship. The night before the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the absorption of Bohemia and Moravia, at a conference with Hitler and President Hacha he threatened to bomb Prague if Hacha did not submit. This threat he admitted in his testimony.

Goering attended the Reich Chancellery meeting of 23rd May, 1939, when Hitler told his military leaders " there is, therefore, no question of sparing Poland," and was present at the Obersalzberg briefing of 22nd August, 1939. And the evidence shows he was active in the diplomatic manoeuvres which followed. With Hitler's connivance, he used the Swedish businessman, Dahlerus, as a go-between to the British, as described by Dahlerus to this Tribunal, to try to prevent the British Government from keeping its guarantee to the Poles.

He commanded the Luftwaffe in the attack on Poland and throughout the aggressive wars which followed.

Even if he opposed Hitler's plans against Norway and the Soviet Union, as he alleged, it is clear that he did so only for strategic reasons; once Hitler had decided the issue, he followed him without hesitation. He made it clear in his testimony that these differences were never ideological or legal. He was "in a rage" about the invasion of Norway, but only because he had not received sufficient warning to prepare the Luftwaffe offensive. He admitted he approved of the attack: "My attitude was perfectly positive." He was active in preparing and executing the Yugoslavian and Greek campaigns, and testified that " Plan Marita," the attack on Greece, had been prepared long beforehand. The Soviet Union he regarded as the " most threatening menace to Germany," but said there was no immediate military necessity for the attack. Indeed, his only objection to the war of aggression against the U.S.S.R. was its timing; he wished for strategic reasons to delay until Britain was conquered. He testified: " My point of view was decided by political and military reasons only."

After his own admissions to this Tribunal, from the positions which he held, the conferences he attended, and the public words he uttered, there can remain no doubt that Goering was the moving force for aggressive war second only to Hitler. He was the planner and prime mover in the military and diplomatic preparation for war which Germany pursued.

War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity

The record is filled with Goering's admissions of his complicity in the use of slave labour. " We did use this labour for security reasons so that they would not be active in their own country and would not work against us. On the other hand, they served to help in the economic war." And again: " Workers were forced to come to the Reich.

That is something I have not denied." The man who spoke these words was Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan charged with the recruitment and allocation of manpower. As Luftwaffe Commander-in-Chief he demanded from Himmler more slave labourers for his underground aircraft factories: "That I requested inmates of concentration camps for the armament of the Luftwaffe is correct and it is to be taken as a matter of course."

As Plenipotentiary, Goering signed a directive concerning the treatment of Polish workers in Germany and implemented it by regulations of the SD, including " special treatment ". He issued directives to use Soviet and French prisoners of war in the armament industry; he spoke of seizing Poles and Dutch and making them prisoners of war if necessary, and using them for work. He agrees Russian prisoners of war were used to man anti-aircraft batteries.

As Plenipotentiary, Goering was the active authority in the spoliation. of conquered territory. He made plans for the spoliation of soviet territory long before the war on the Soviet Union. Two months prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler gave Goering the over-all direction for the economic administration in the territory. Goering set up an economic staff for this function. As Reichsmarshal of the Greater German Reich " the orders of the Reichmarshal cover all economic fields, including nutrition and agriculture." His so-called " Green " folder, printed by the Wehrmacht, set up an " Economic Executive Staff, East." This directive contemplated plundering and abandonment of all industry in the food deficit regions and from the food surplus regions, a diversion of food to German needs. Goering claims its purposes have been misunderstood but admits " that as a matter of course and a matter of duty we would have used Russia for our purposes," when conquered.

And he participated in the conference of 16th July, 1941, when Hitler said the National Socialists had no intention of ever leaving the occupied countries, and that "all necessary measures-shooting, desettling, etc.-" should be taken.

Goering persecuted the Jews, particularly after the November, 1938 riots, and not only in Germany where he raised the billion mark fine as; stated elsewhere, but in the conquered territories as well. His own utterances then and his testimony now show this interest was primarily economic--- how to get their property and how to force them out of the economic life of Europe. As these countries fell before the German army he extended the Reich's anti-Jewish laws to them; the Reichsgesetzblatt for 1939, 1940, and 1941 contains several anti-Jewish decrees signed by Goering. Although their extermination was in Himmler's hands, Goering was far from disinterested or inactive, despite his protestations in the witness box. By decree of 31st July, 1941, he directed Himmler and Heydrich to bring "about a complete solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe."

There is nothing to be said in mitigation. For Goering was often, indeed almost always, the moving force, second only to his leader. He was the leading war aggressor, both as political and as military leader; he was the director of the slave labour programme and the creator of the oppressive programme against the Jews and other races, at home and abroad. All of these crimes he has frankly admitted. On some specific cases there may be conflict of testimony, but in terms of the broad outline his own admissions are more than sufficiently wide to be conclusive of his guilt. His guilt is unique in its enormity. The record discloses no excuses for this man.

Conclusion

1/10-1946: The Tribunal finds the defendant Goering guilty on all [four counts](#) of the Indictment.

<https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/judgoeri.asp>

Defendant Hermann Wilhelm Goering, on the counts of the [Indictment](#) on which you have been convicted, the International Military Tribunal sentences you to death by hanging.

<https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/judsent.asp>