

International Military Tribunal



THE NUREMBERG TRIALS

Complete Tribunal Proceedings

(V. 17)

International Military Tribunal

**The Nuremberg Trials:
Complete Tribunal
Proceedings (V. 17)**

Trial Proceedings from 25th June 1946 to 8th July 1946

e-artnow, 2022

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PREFACE

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Recognizing the importance of establishing for history an authentic text of the Trial of major German war criminals, the International Military Tribunal directed the publication of the Record of the Trial. The proceedings are published in English, French, Russian, and German, the four languages used throughout the hearings. The documents admitted in evidence are printed only in their original language.

The first volume contains basic, official, pre-trial documents together with the Tribunal's judgment and sentence of the defendants. In subsequent volumes the Trial proceedings are published in full from the preliminary session of 14 November 1945 to the closing session of 1 October 1946. They are followed by an index volume. Documents admitted in evidence conclude the publication.

The proceedings of the International Military Tribunal were recorded in full by stenographic notes, and an electric sound recording of all oral proceedings was maintained.

Reviewing sections have verified in the four languages citations, statistics, and other data, and have eliminated obvious grammatical errors and verbal irrelevancies. Finally, corrected texts have been certified for publication by Colonel Ray for the United States, Mr. Mercer for the United Kingdom, Mr. Fuster for France, and Major Poltorak for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY- THIRD DAY,

TUESDAY, 25 JUNE 1946

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MORNING SESSION

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[The Defendant Von Neurath resumed the stands]

DR. OTTO NELTE (Counsel for Defendant Keitel): Mr. President, I should like to advise the Tribunal that the first half of the manuscript of my final defense speech in typescript will be ready tomorrow and the second half by next Saturday. I am sorry to say that I personally can furnish only eight copies, six of which are earmarked for the interpreters to facilitate their difficult task. I am sorry that I could not furnish more copies since I personally have no mimeographing machine. I hope the Tribunal will appreciate the fact that after the statement made by the chief prosecutor for the United States on Friday, I cannot make any claims on the technical assistance of the Prosecution.

Therefore, I am asking the Tribunal to decide whether it would be worth while, in order to expedite the presentation, to have the translation of my speech put before them. In this event I would request that the necessary arrangements be made. I am prepared to place my manuscript at the

disposal of the Tribunal, under the conditions announced by you, Mr. President. What applies for me personally would, so far as I am advised, apply also for the rest, at least for the majority of Defense Counsel. In order to expedite the proceedings and to reduce the time spent on the presentation of the final defense speeches, it is important to have this point clarified.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Nelte, if you would hand in the manuscript to which you have referred, the Tribunal will make arrangements to have it translated into the various languages. I think that will meet the position so far as you are concerned.

DR. NELTE: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal has an announcement upon the subject, which I am about to read. The announcement is this:

"In view of the discussion which took place on the 13th of June 1946, on the question of time to be taken by Defense Counsel, the Tribunal has given the matter further consideration.

"When the Defense Counsel stated the time they wished to take, the Tribunal observed that some of the defendants required more time than others, and to this extent they did make an apportionment among themselves. The Tribunal feels that the suggested times are much too long and some voluntary restriction should be made.

"Except as to a few of the defendants whose cases are of very wide scope, the Tribunal is of the opinion that half a day to each defendant is ample time for the presentation of his defense; and the Tribunal hopes that counsel will

condense their arguments and limit themselves voluntarily to this time. The Tribunal, however, will not permit counsel for any defendant to deal with irrelevant matters or to speak for more than one day in any case. Four hours will be allowed at the beginning for argument on the general questions of law and fact, and counsel should co-operate in their arguments in such a way as to avoid' needless repetition."

As heretofore stated, the Tribunal would like to have a translation of each argument in French, Russian, and English submitted at the beginning of the argument. Counsel may arrange for the translation themselves if they so desire, but if they will submit copies of their arguments to the translating department as soon as possible and not less than 3 days in advance of delivery, the translation will be made for them and the contents of the copies will not be disclosed.

That is all.

Yes, Dr. LUDINGHAUSEN.

DR. OTTO FREIHERR VON LUDINGHAUSEN (Counsel for Defendant Von Neurath): Last night we had stopped in our treatment of the various points raised by the Prosecution. I should like to continue now and to put the following question to you, Herr Von Neurath.

The Prosecution is charging you with the fact that in the Protectorate Germans had a preferential position as compared with Czechs and that you were responsible for that. Will you please comment on this?

CONSTANTIN VON NEURATH (Defendant): The position of Germans in the Protectorate was not a preferential position

which was vested with any real preferences and advantages as compared with the Czechs, but it was an entirely different position. The Germans had become citizens of the Reich and, therefore, had the rights of Reich citizens, such as the right to vote in Reichstag elections. The Czechs did not have this right to vote, which is understandable in view of the existing difference-variance between the German people and the Czech people. There were at no time any actual advantages connected with the position of the Germans in the Protectorate.

Efforts to have preferential treatment were made, of course, in the chauvinistic Party and in nationalist circles. But I always opposed them vigorously and prevented any practical realization of such efforts. In this connection, however, I should like to stress once more that the Czech people did not consider themselves inferior to the German people in any way.

It was a question simply of a different people which had to be treated, politically and culturally, according to its own characteristics. That was also the reason for the maintenance of the so-called autonomy which meant nothing more than the separation of the two nationalities with a view toward securing for the Czechs their own way of living; and it is evident that this autonomy had to be kept within certain limits, dictated by the prevailing necessities of the Reich as- a whole, especially in times of war.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Now, I should like to deal with the individual points raised in the Czech indictment, or rather the points found in the Czech report, which is the basis for this charge. In this report it is asserted that the

freedom of the press was suppressed. Is that correct and what role did Herr Von Gregory play in the treatment of the press?

VON NEURATH: Herr Von Gregory had been the press attaché at the German Legation in Prague and was subordinate to the Propaganda Ministry. Then he came, as chief of my press department, to my administration and controlled the Czech press according to the directives of the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. The Czech press, of course, was not free-no more than the German press. Control of circulation and other measures, especially censorship measures, were the same.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech report further raises the charge that the local Czech administrative offices were in many cases dissolved and then reorganized and key positions filled with officials and town councillors who were German or Czech collaborators. Is that correct?

VON NEURATH: These were communities with a considerable German minority, particularly in Moravia. That they should also have a representation in the local administration seemed to me a natural thing. Prague, for instance, had a Czech mayor and a German assistant mayor. This could hardly be objected to. With regard to the attempts of the Germans in the various cities or districts to take a part in the local administration to an extent that did not seem justified by their numerical strength, I intervened and rejected them. In the municipal administrations of purely Czech districts, such as in West Bohemia, there were generally no German representatives at all. But on the other hand, there were Germanspeaking enclaves, such as the

region of Iglau, where the Germans were dominant in numbers and thus, of course, in influence as well.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech report accuses you of having-in this way and through the appointment of higher land councillors (Oberlandrate)-germanized the Czech administration, and this report bases its accusations on a statement which you allegedly made to the former Bohemian Landespräsident, Bienert, in which you said, "All that has to be digested in 2 years time."

VON NEURATH: I do not recall having made such a statement. And I-cannot imagine having uttered it. Here we are concerned with the co-ordination of the Czechs-of the Czech with the German administration. The Oberlandrate were not appointed by me, but their office was created as a controlling agency by the Reich Government by the decree of 1 September 1939 in connection with the setting up of German administrations and the Security Police. When the Oberlandrate appeared before me to give their reports, I told them time and again that they were not to do any administrative work themselves but were to supervise only. The Czech method of administration was frequently superior to the German, I told them.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: With regard to this I should like to refer to Document Number Neurath-149 of my document book, the decree on the organization of the administration and the German Security Police, dated 1 September 1939. In Paragraphs 5 and 6 the appointment and the duties of these Oberlandrate are described more in detail. A quotation of this document might be redundant.

The Czech indictment further contains a statement by Herr Bienert to the effect that on the problem of the co-ordination of the Czech administration you had remarked to him something like: "That must be carried out strictly; after all, this is war." At the same time Bienert stated in his interrogation that the purpose of this measure, that is, the co-ordination of the Czech and the German administration, had been to assure Germany of a peaceful hinterland during the war.

Will you kindly also comment on this.

VOW NEURATH: It is possible that I told Bienert something along these lines. However, I cannot remember it at this date. But it can be taken for granted that in the sphere of administration, as in every other sphere in the Protectorate also, the necessities of war were the main concern. Restrictions of the autonomy in the Czech national administration have to be considered from this point of view. That it was my constant endeavor to keep the country quiet in the interest of the Reich, and therewith in the interest of all, can hardly be held against me. Apart from that, I should like to remark that the introduction of restrictions on the autonomy was already contained explicitly in the decree setting up the Protectorate.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: In this connection I should like to refer to the order contained in my document book under Number Neurath-144, Document Book Number 5. The order was issued by the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and is dated 16 March 1939. Under Article 11 it was even then stipulated that the Reich could incorporate departments of the administration

of the Protectorate into their own administration. The Czech report further refers to a statement made by the former Czech Minister Havelka dealing with the persecution of the members of the Czech Legion of the first World War insofar as they held public office. What can you tell us about this question of the Legionnaires?

VON NEURATH: The Czech Legion had been founded in Russia during the first World War. It was composed partially of volunteers, partially of the balance of Czech regiments which had belonged to the old Austro-Hungarian Army and had become prisoners of war in Russia. These Czech Legionnaires enjoyed a certain exceptional position after the founding of the Czech Republic. In part they were filled with strong chauvinistic resentment toward the Reich which dated back to the time of the nationalities fights. This, the so-called Legionnaire mentality, was a catchword in Bohemia; and in times of political unrest it could signify a certain political danger. By the way, this preferential position which the Legionnaires enjoyed was widely attacked in the Protectorate by the Czechs themselves. Therefore an effort was made, and by Frank particularly, to remove the Legionnaires from public office. But this took place only in the crassest cases and only insofar as those Legionnaires had joined the Czech Legion voluntarily, that is, it did not apply to those who were members of the former Austro-Hungarian Army. From the very beginning I tried to make this discrimination, which approximately corresponds to the situation-or corresponds with the distinction-which today is made in Germany between the voluntary members of the SS and the Waffen-SS.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech indictment is further accusing you of having supported the Czech Fascist organization Vlayka. It bases this charge on a memorandum which you yourself wrote concerning a discussion which you had with Hacha, the President of Czechoslovakia, on 26 March 1940. According to this memorandum you told Hacha that the personal and moral qualities of the Vlayka leaders were well known to you; in any case, you had to confirm the fact that this movement, this organization, was the only one which had taken a positive stand toward the Reich and toward collaboration with the Reich. How about that?

VON NEURATH: The Vlayka movement was the same as the collaborationists in France. This movement worked to bring about a German-Czech collaboration and, in fact, long before the Protectorate was established. But the leaders of this movement were, in my opinion, rather dubious characters, as I shoved in the words to Hacha quoted above. These leaders threatened and slandered President Hacha and members of the Czech Government among others. State Secretary Frank had known these men from former times and he wanted to support them merely in consideration of their former co-operation with him. However, I refused to do this, just as I refused the various applications of these people to visit me.

On the other hand, it is possible that Frank supported them from a fund which Hitler had placed at his disposal without my knowledge and about which Frank was under obligation not to tell me anything.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: What attitude, now, did you take to the dissolution of parties-of political parties-and of

trade unions?

VON NEURATH: That was like the control of the press, a necessity which resulted from the system, from the political system of the Reich. In any event, through this step taken by President Hacha and despite the measures taken by Germany, no country suffered less from the war than the Protectorate. The Czech people were the only ones in middle and eastern Europe who could retain their national, cultural, and economic entity almost to its full extent.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Now I should like to turn to the point raised by the Prosecution which is concerned with an alleged cultural suppression. What can you tell us about the handling of Czech educational affairs?

VON NEURATH: The Czech universities and other institutions of higher education, as has been stated before, were closed at Hitler's order in November 1939. Again and again, at the request of President Hacha and of the Protectorate Government, I appealed directly to Hitler to have these schools reopened. But due to the dominating position of Herr Himmler, I had no success. The consequence of the closing of the universities; of course, was that a large number of young people who otherwise would have become university students now had to look for work of a manual sort. The closing of the institutions of higher learning also had repercussions on the secondary school level. This had already been heavily burdened after the separation of the Sudetenland in the autumn of 1938, for the entire Czech intelligentsia from this region had returned to the Czech-speaking area, or what was later the Protectorate. Hence for the young people from the

secondary schools there was hardly any employment left. It was about the same situation which is now prevailing in Germany. Concerning the closing of Czech lower schools and other planned efforts to restrict Czech youth in their cultural freedom and their educational possibilities, I know nothing.

DO VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Did you yourself approve of the closing of Czech institutions of higher learning ordered by Hitler?

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Von LUDINGHAUSEN, he said that he tried to intervene and get rid of Hitler's order.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: If that is sufficient for the Tribunal then he need not answer the question further.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you think that is sufficient?

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Yes, I just wanted to have it expressed once again in a somewhat stronger way; however, if the Tribunal is satisfied with the clarification of this problem, I am completely satisfied.

THE PRESIDENT: It would not make it any better if it was said twice.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Yes, if you-but, it is sufficient.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] Do you know anything about an alleged plan, mentioned in the Czech report, to turn the Czech people into a mass of workers and to rob them of their intellectual elite?

VON NEURATH: No. Only a madman could have made a statement like that.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech indictment, or report, asserts that through your agencies, that is, with your consent and endorsement, destruction and plundering of Czech scientific institutions took place. On Page 58 of the

German text, Page 55 of the English of this report, USSR-60, it says:

"The Germans occupied all universities and scientific institutions. They immediately got hold of the valuable apparatus, instruments, and scientific installations in the occupied institutions. The scientific libraries were plundered systematically and methodically. Scientific books and films were torn up or taken away. The archives of the academic Senate, the highest university authority, were torn up or burned; and the card indexes destroyed and scattered to the four winds."

What can you tell us in regard to this?

VON NEURATH: In this connection, I can say only that I never heard of any plundering and destruction of the sort described either in Prague or later. The Czech Hochschulen, or institutions of higher education, were closed together with the universities in the year 1939 at Hitler's order. The buildings and installations of the Prague Czech University, as far as I know, were partly put at the disposal of the German university which had been closed earlier by the Czechs, since, after the Czech Hochschulen were closed, they could not be used any longer for Czech scientific purposes.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Do you know anything at all about this . . .

THE PRESIDENT: I did not understand that answer. As I got it, "The buildings, in part, were put at the disposal of German universities which had been closed by the Czechs."

VON NEURATH: In Prague. In Prague was the oldest German university; it had been closed by the Czechs after

the last war, and after the establishing of the Protectorate it was reopened; and, as far as I know, some of the equipment and buildings were used for this German university.

THE PRESIDENT: Go on.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Do you know anything else about the removal of scientific equipment, collections, objects of art, and so forth?

VON NEURATH: The only case about which I have any knowledge concerned the removal of historically valuable old Gobelins from the Maltese Palace in Prague. These were removed by a member of the Foreign Office in Berlin, allegedly by order of the chief of protocol; and this was done at night, secretly, and without my knowledge or the knowledge of my officials. As soon as I learned of this I contacted the Foreign Office, and I requested immediate restoration. Whether restoration was made, I do not know; that was only in 1941, and meanwhile I had left Prague.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: May I here . . .

VON NEURATH: I know nothing about other incidents. Apart from that, I specifically prohibited the removal of art objects from the Protectorate to the Reich.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: In this connection, I should like to submit an extract from the interrogation of the former State Secretary Frank, dated 10 June 1945. This is Number Neurath-154 of my Document Book Number 5, and I should like to ask the Tribunal to take notice of this statement.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] What happened to the objects of art and the furniture, which were Czech State property and with which the Czernin Palace in Prague, which you used as your official residence, was furnished?

VON NEURATH: This house was the former official residence of the Czech Foreign Minister, and the partly valuable furnishings belonged to the Czech State. Since there was no inventory of any sort of these items, before moving in in the fall of 1939, I called in the Czech director of the castle administration and the Czech art historian, Professor Strecki; and I had a very exact inventory taken. One copy of this inventory was left in my office and another one was deposited with the administration of the castle. After I left Prague in the autumn of 1941, I had a record made through my former caretaker and again in the presence of a representative of the castle administration, Professor Strecki, that the articles which were mentioned in the inventory were actually still there.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we need details of the inventory, but there is one thing I should like to ask. The translation came through to me that the inventory was made in the fall of 1938. Was that right?

VON NEURATH: 1939. I only wanted to mention that naturally I did not take any of these articles.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Another point raised by the Czech indictment deals with the confiscation of the so-called Masaryk houses in various cities and with the destruction of Masaryk monuments and monuments erected to other personalities famous in Czech history. What do you know about that?

VON NEURATH: While I was in office, some of these Masaryk houses were closed by the Police because they were centers of agitation against Germany. The destruction or the removal of Masaryk or other Czech national

monuments I had specifically prohibited. Apart from that, I expressly permitted the laying of wreaths at the grave of Masaryk at Lanyi, which Frank had prohibited', and this actually took place on a large scale.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: It is further asserted that Czech literature was suppressed and muzzled to a large extent.

VON NEURATH: The printing and dissemination of Czech anti-German literature was prohibited of course, just as the further dissemination of English and French works was prohibited in the entire Reich during the war. Aside from that, all this material was treated according to the direct orders of the Propaganda Ministry. However, while I was in office, there were still many Czech book stores and book-publishing concerns which published books by Czech authors in large numbers and disseminated them. The selection of Czech books of every type in the book stores was considerably larger than the selection of German books.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Could you say anything about the suppression of Czech cultural life, of theaters, movies, and so forth, to which the Prosecution refers?

VON NEURATH: There was no question at all of a limitation of the cultural autonomy of the Czechs, aside from the university problem. In Prague a great number of large Czech theaters of every description were open all the time, especially the Czech opera and several theaters. On the other hand there was only one permanent German theater with daily performances. There was a constant production of many Czech plays and operas, and the same applied to music. The well-known Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at

Prague played Czech music primarily and was absolutely independent regarding its programs.

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. LUDINGHAUSEN, we don't need details. The defendant says that theaters and cinema theaters were allowed and there was only one German theater. We don't want any further details about it.

DR. LUDINGHAUSEN: Very well, Mr. President. I asked about these matters only because they are rather extensively dealt with in the Indictment.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] And what about the film industry, Herr Von Neurath?

VON NEURATH: The same applied to the movie industry. It was even especially active.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Now, I should like to turn to the alleged suppression of religious freedom, of which you are being accused in the Czech indictment. The Czech indictment speaks of a wave of persecution which inundated the churches and which started immediately when the German troops marched in to occupy the country. What about that?

VON NEURATH: A systematic persecution of the churches is quite out of the question. The population was quite free as concerns public worship, and I certainly would not have tolerated any restrictions along this line. The former Under State Secretary Von Burgsdorff has testified to that point here already. It may be true that in individual cases pilgrimages or certain religious processions were prohibited by the Police, even though I personally do not remember it clearly. But that took place only because certain pilgrimages, consisting of many thousands of people, were

exploited as political demonstrations at which anti-German speeches were made, At any rate, that had actually occurred several times and had been brought to my knowledge. It is true that a number of clerics were arrested in connection with the action at the beginning of the war, which we have already mentioned here. But these arrests did not take place because the men were clerics but because they were active political opponents or people who were political suspects. In cases of this nature I made special efforts to have these people released.

My personal connections with the archbishop of Prague were absolutely correct and amicable. He and the archbishop of Olmutz specifically thanked me for my intervention on behalf of the Church, as I remember distinctly. I prevented any measure against the public worship of the Jews. Every synagogue was open to the time I left in the autumn of 1941.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: In connection with the last point, I should like to put one more question about the position of Jews in the Protectorate. What can you tell us about it?

VON NEURATH: The legal position of the Jews had to be coordinated with the position of the Jews in the Reich, according to instructions from Berlin. The directives with regard to this had been sent to me already in April of 1939. Through all sorts of inquiries addressed to Berlin, I tried and succeeded in not having the laws go into effect until June 1939, so as to give the Jews the opportunity to prepare themselves for the imminent introduction of these laws.

The so-called Nuremberg Laws were introduced into the Protectorate, too, at that time. Thereby- the Jews were removed from public life and from leading positions in the economic life. However, arrests on a large scale did not take place. There were also no excesses against Jews, except in a few single instances. The camp at Theresienstadt was not erected until long after my time of office, and I prevented the erection of other concentration camps in the Protectorate, too.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech report accuses you of personally carrying through anti-Jewish measures. They maintain that, first of all, you charged the Czech Government, that is to say the autonomous government, with the carrying through of the anti-Jewish laws and that when Ministerpräsident Elias refused to do so, you personally took the necessary steps.

VON NEURATH: As I said just now, the introduction of the anti-Jewish laws came about on Hitler's direct order, that is to say through the competent authorities in Berlin. The representation...

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Von LUDINGHAUSEN, why do you want to go over all this again? The defendant has given the evidence that he, succeeded in putting off the laws until June 1939 and that then the Nuremberg Laws were introduced. He has given us the various qualifications which he said he made; and then you read him the

Czech report and try to get him to go over it all again, it seems to me. It is now quarter past 11.

.DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: All right, then, I shall consider the first question sufficiently answered and we shall not deal

with the matter of confiscation either.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] The Czech report further accuses you of the dissolution of the organizations of the YMCA and YWCA, and the confiscation of their property in favor of German organizations.

VON NEURATH: I must admit that I do not recall these confiscations at all. If this dissolution and confiscation took place before I left, it must have been a police measure only.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech report further mentions the destruction of Czech economic life and the systematic plundering of Czech stocks of raw materials and accuses you in that regard. What are the facts with regard to that?

VON NEURATH: With the establishment of the Protectorate, the Czech economy almost automatically was incorporated into the German economy. The export trade, for which Czech industries had worked to a considerable degree, was stopped for the duration of the war, that is to say, it had to trade with the Reich.

The Czech heavy industries, especially the Skoda Works and the arms industry, as direct war industries, were taken over to supplement German armaments production by the Delegate for the Four Year Plan.

At the beginning I tried especially to avoid selling out of the Protectorate, which would have been hard on the population. An effective means for that purpose was the maintenance of the customs boundaries which existed between Czechoslovakia and Germany. After heated conflicts with the Berlin economic departments, I succeeded in having the customs barrier maintained up to October

1940, for another year and a half, though it had already been rescinded on 16 March 1939.

I believe I am also accused of having been responsible for the removal of raw materials and the like. In that connection I should like to say that the office of the Delegate for the Four Year Plan was the only authority which could take such measures.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: In this connection I should like to refer to the decree which has already been submitted, the decree dated 16 March 1939, Number Neurath-144 of my Document Book Number 5. In this decree I should like to call special attention to Articles 9 and 10.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] You are further charged with and accused of the fact that the rate of exchange of Czech kronen to marks was established as 10 to 1, for in this way the buying out of Czechoslovakian goods was said to have been favored. Are you responsible for the establishing of this rate?

VON NEURATH: No. In the decree of 16 March 1939 dealing with the establishment of the Protectorate-a decree in the drafting of which I did not take part in any way-it was already stipulated that the rate of exchange would be determined by the Reich Government. As far as I know, the same rate was the customary one at the stock exchange and in trade before the incorporation of the Sudetenland into the Reich as well as afterwards. An official rate had to be determined, of course, and this was done through the decree issued by the authorities in Berlin.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: In connection with the decree dated 16 March 1939, which was just mentioned and which

is to be found under Number Neurath-144 of my Document Book Number 5, I should like to call your attention especially to Article 10 which sets forth: "The ratio of the two currencies, the Czechoslovakian and the German, to each other will be determined by the Reich Government."

[*Turning to the defendant.*] The Czech report further accuses you of the fact that railroad rails allegedly were removed and taken to Germany. Do you know anything about this matter?

VON NEURATH: I know nothing about this matter and I think this is certainly an error. I know only that in the year 1940 there were negotiations between the German Reich railroads and the Czech State railroads concerning the borrowing of railroad cars and of engines against remuneration. But the stipulation in this case was that this rolling stock could be spared by the transport system in the Protectorate. Aside from that, the railroads in the Protectorate were not under my supervision; but they were directly subordinate to the Transportation Ministry in Berlin.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: I should like to refer to Article 8 of the decree which I have just mentioned, a decree which is found under Number Neurath-144 of my Document Book 5.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] It is further asserted that the Reich Commissioner at the Prague National Bank stopped all payments for abroad and confiscated all the stocks of gold and of foreign currencies of the National Bank.

Did you have anything to do with this matter?

VON NEURATH: I had nothing at all to do with these matters. The Reich Commissioner for the Prague National Bank was appointed directly by the Reichsbank in Berlin, or

rather by the Ministry of Finance; and he got his orders from them.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: The Czech report states further that you are to be blamed, or are to be made co-responsible, for the alleged confiscation of the Czech banks and industrial undertakings by the German economy.

VON NEURATH: The German banks, and to an extent the German industries as well, had a real interest in getting a firm foothold in the economic life of the Protectorate. However, this was something which applied long before the establishment of the Protectorate. Therefore it was not strange that the big German banks, in particular, used the opportunity to acquire Czech stocks and securities; and in this way the controlling interest in two Czech banks together with their industrial holdings were transferred to German hands in a manner which was economically quite correct.

I believe the Union Bank is mentioned in the Czech report, a bank which was taken over by the Deutsche Bank; and I know in this case quite coincidentally that the initiative did not originate on the German side, but rather from the Czech Union Bank itself. But neither I nor my agencies tried to foster this development in any way. Apart from that all these enterprises had Czech general directors, and in very few cases were German officials taken in. By far the largest part of all industrial enterprises remained purely Czech as before.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: What was the situation with regard to the alleged coercive measures which the Prosecution maintains were used against Czech agriculture?

Can you tell something about this and about your attitude and the measures you took?

VON NEURATH: This chapter belongs to the whole scheme of plans by the Party and SS, relative to Germanization, which have already been mentioned. The instrument of this German settlement policy was to be the Czech Land Office (Bodenamt), which in itself was a Czech office, which was a survival of the former Czech office for agrarian reform. Himmler first of all assigned to the Land Office an SS Fuehrer as its provisional leader.

THE PRESIDENT: The Tribunal does not want to know all the details about this. The Czech report apparently alleges coercion in agriculture. The defendant says that it was due, if any, to the Party and the SS; and he had nothing to do with it. What is the object of his giving us all these details about the history of agriculture in Czechoslovakia? You must realize the Tribunal...

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Yes, but I should like to point out one thing only.

[*Turning to the defendant.*] The Land Office, which was acting in the interests of National Socialism, was restaffed by you with new personnel after a long struggle. I considered it important to clarify this too.

Mr. President, I should like to make a general remark. I said yesterday that my examination would last another hour. But yesterday, when I left the session, I found another document book to the indictment which has forced me to deal in greater detail with individual questions here. And for this reason, a reason which I could not foresee, I will have to take additional time.

THE PRESIDENT: Very well, the Tribunal has not taken up the question of time at the moment.

Why do you have to go into some questions of-I do not know what the word is, "Allot"-to do with agriculture? Why do you want to go into that? He, the defendant, said he had nothing to do with it.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Yes, in a way he was connected with it, Mr. President, insofar as these agricultural efforts were made through the Land Office.

THE PRESIDENT: If he was connected with it let him explain it. I thought he said the Party and the SS did it.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: Yes, but via the Land Office, and he prevented this. Perhaps you can tell us briefly about this, Herr Von Neurath.

VON NEURATH: I believe that according to the statements of the President of the Court, that is hardly necessary. As a matter of fact, I had no direct connection with the Land Office. I only succeeded in having a rather unpleasant leader of this office, a member of the SS, removed.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: During your period of office as Reich Protector, was there any compulsory transportation of workers to the Reich?

VON NEURATH: No. In this connection I shall also be brief.

Compulsory labor did not exist at all while I was in the Protectorate. There was an emergency service law which was issued by the Protectorate Government and applied to younger men who were employed in urgently needed work in the public interest in the Protectorate. Compulsory deportations of workers to the Reich did not occur in my time. On the contrary, many young people reported

voluntarily for work in Germany, because labor conditions and wages were better in the Reich than in the Protectorate at that time.

DR. VON LUDINGHAUSEN: How did your resignation from office-and this is my last question-your leaving your office as Reich Protector come about?

VON NEURATH: First of all I should like to tell you why I remained as long as I did, in spite of all these occurrences and difficulties. The reason for it was that I was convinced, and I am still convinced today, that I had to stay as long as I could reconcile this with my conscience, in order to prevent this country, which was entrusted to Germany, from coming under the definite domination of the SS. Everything that happened to the country after my departure in 1941 I had actually prevented through my presence; and even if my work was ever so much limited, I believe that by remaining I not only rendered a service to my own country but to the Czech people as well, and under the same circumstances I would not act differently even today.

Apart from this I believed' that in time of war, especially, I should leave such a difficult and responsible office only in case of the utmost necessity. The crew of a ship does not go below deck and fold their hands in their laps if the ship is in danger.

That I could not comply with the wishes of the Czechs 100 percent is something that will be understood by everybody who had to deal with politics in a practical and not merely theoretical way. And so I believe that by my persevering in of lice I prevented much' of the misery which befell the Czech people after I left. This opinion vitas also