

Transcript of the Shoah Interview with Hans Gewecke

Translation by Lotti Eichorn - Volunteer – Visitor Services – November 2011 to October 2012

Q: Lanzmann, A: Gewecke, W: Wife, C: Corinna

Bobine 1

A: that I... that you, you have written, well, I always spoke for the native population, particularly for the Ghetto... Ghetto inhabitants of Schaulen [Siauliai]...

Q: Yes...

A: ... and the last question which you raised in your letter was literally: as can be seen from the documents, the area commissars reacted in very different ways, particularly where the treatment of the native population, as well as of the Jews is concerned. That were your six questions.

Q: Yes, exactly.

A: In order to create an outline for myself, in order to concentrate, I took the six question as basis.....

Q: very, very good. Good, you may.... you may start.

A: Yes, I understood. As you wish.

Q: You may start in.... in this....

A: So, I can start. Yes. I... From time to time I may have to put in a break of just a few seconds....

Q: Yes..... yes, and we.....

A: because I have....

Q: each.....

A: I do have everything in my memory, but, as you can see, I prepared myself in writing, because everything I will say to you, can be proven at all times. Either you have the documents or I can give you references and say....

Q: Yes?

A: what I will say has really happened, these are facts, right?

Q: Yes, good....

A: We agree on this, yes? If we do so.....

Q: Yes, yes....

A: do.....

Q: yes, yes.

A: do it this way. Question 1: The distribution between civil and police authority in the occupied Eastern areas.

Q: Yes... First, could I.... could I pose some biographical questions...

A: Yes, please, yes.

Q:

A: Yes, yes.

Q: because this is.... This is important. When exactly did you arrive in Schaulen as District Commissar?

A: As district commissar.... I can only tell you approximately: about July 10, 1941.

Q: This means about two to three weeks after the...

A: After the military occupation of the area.

Q: Yes, this means right at the beginning.

A: I... in the beginning, right at the beginning.

Q: And before, may I ask where you were before?

A: Here in Moelln.

Q: You were in Moelln until when?

A: Until my deployment in the Eastern area.

Q: Oh, yes?

A: I... I was professional district head for the NSDAP....

Q: Where, in Moelln?

A: In the district Herzogtum Lauenburg...

Q: Lauenburg....

A: This is a district in Schleswig-Holstein.

Q: Yes. District chief, this means that is.... a district, this is like an area?

A: A district of the NSDAP follows exactly the administrative borders or community administration....

Q: Oh, yes.

A: of the district. At the head of a district, seen from a community-political point of view, administratively, is the state parliament. It supervises – but only administratively – the mayors of the individual cities and the districts.

Q: Yes.

A: And this area, yes? And the area of the district chief of the NSDAP, these districts are congruent. They are totally the same. Yes?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. My tasks as district chief of the NSDAP were to execute the orders which the – as we said – “Führer”, the Führer, Hitler, gave through the laws via party and state... Hitler said: “The party orders the state”....

Q: Yes.... This means the party was above?

A: The party was in actuality the representative of the will of the Führer....

Q: Yes.

A: We had....

Q: Wish of the Führer....

A: we really had a dictatorship.

Q: Yes.

A: Dictatorship.

Q: Yes.

A: And the Führer decided, and in the Reichstag, of which I was a member, Hitler stated: give me 4 years. We gave him I would like to say, active legitimacy by unitedly – apart from the SPD, which, in the beginning, still was a member of the Reichstag as the opposition – we gave Hitler unitedly active legitimacy by saying like a motto: Führer orders, we follow.

Q: Yes.

A: You understand me?

Q: Yes, very well.

A: And he made the laws and he decided, by himself. The government of the Reich was only – if I may say so – an administrative....

Q: Administrative executive.

A: Correct. An administrative institution. And thus, the district chief...

Q: But, excuse me, when were you a deputy?

A: In the Reichstag? Starting in 1933.

Q: Oh, at the beginning.

A: Starting at the beginning.

W: The youngest.

Q: The youngest.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes

A: Yes

W: General.....

Q: This means you were deputy in the Reichstag and also district chief.

A: Also district chief here.

Q: Here too. In 33. Yes?

A: No. I was district chief here already since 1931.

Q: 31

A: Since August 31.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: I did here in the district....

Q: But the NSDAP was strong here, in this....

A: Very strong. I built it up.

Q: Yes, Oh, you yourself built....

A: I built it up. Before me there was someone else here who had been in the party longer (since 25)..

Q: Yes.

A: At the time I was I was born in 06, I came here in 31, I was 25 years old. That is correct?

W: Yes, even less.

A: about. When I became district chief here and the....

Q: When did you become a member of the NSDAP...

A: 1928.

Q: 28? You were 22 years old. Yes, yes.

A: If you want to know it, I also was an active speaker, I was a regional [Gau] speaker and Reichs- speaker for the NSDAP.

Q: What does it mean "Redner"?

C: Speaker

Q: Oh, speaker, yes, Redner.

A: Yes, in addition to my main activity as district chief.

Q: And your district, was there a large population in the Lauenburg district?

A: Yes. I estimate.... I estimate 120-130'000 inhabitants. I can only estimate. I cannot say exactly.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: The administrative seat was here in Moelln, while the official seat of the district

administration was in Ratzeburg. I preferred Moelln over Ratzeburg and for this reason I settled here.

Q: Yes, and you were born in Moelln?

A: No, I was born in quite a different place.

Q: Where?

A: In the Braunschweig area.

Q: In Braunschweig?

A: No. In the Braunschweig area, this means in the Land Braunschweig. To be exact, near Bad Gandesheim in the Harz.

Q: In the Harz?

A: I am from Lower Saxony..

Q: Yes.

A: in the broader sense.

Q: But this is not so far, it is 200 kilometer.

A: Yes, right.

Q: Yes.

A: right.

Q: Yes, about. And you stayed in Moelln until 41?

A: Until 41.

Q: yes; you were never in Poland before.... eh....

A: Where?

Q: In Poland.

A: Poland

Q: Yes.

A: No

Q: Never

A: No. I was sent to the East, to Lithuania by the Reichsminister Rosenberg on the suggestion of Reichskommissar Lohse.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: Lohse was my Gauleiter.

Q: Oh, here?

A: In Schleswig-Holstein.

Q: In Schleswig-Holstein, naturally.

A: Gauleiter

Q: And Lohse.....

A: and..... and supreme president.

Q: Yes. And Lohse wanted....

A: Lohse...

Q: his people in the East..

A: Absolutely. Lohse wanted to take his people with him to the East. He made that a condition.

Q: Yes.

A: And he put me into Schaulen because..... I may be able to show it to you on the map, perhaps you are familiar with it. Schaulen is located approximately on the height.... that means in the middle between the former German Reich borders and Riga.

Q: Yes.

A: Thus, the distance between the former Reich border behind Tilsit, up there at the Memel, to Schaulen was a bit more than 100 km...

Q: Yes.

A: I cannot prove this. And from Schaulen to Riga it was again about 100 km. And I was

supposed to.... Schaulen was in area the biggest district in Lithuania.

Q: Yes, in area, yes. But Schaulen is how many km from Kauen?

A: More than 100 km.

Q: Yes, and from Vilnius?

A: From Vilnius? Even further. Vilnius is located behind Kovno, farther to the east.

Q: But Kauen, Vilnius and Schaulen were the three most important cities.

A: No, no. They were.... You mean areas.... Oh, you mean the cities...

Q: Yes.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes.

A: The capital was Kovno....

Q: Yes.

A: translated as Kauen. Kovno, Vilnius, Schaulen.

Q: Yes. And the general.... Then General Commissioner of Lithuania was....

A: Dr. Von Renteln.

Q: von Renteln, yes.

A: Dr. Adrian von Renteln.

Q: Yes, and he was.... he was in Riga or in Kovno?

A: He resided in Kovno.

Q: In Kovno.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes, he was in Kovno, Dr.von Renteln. And.... You were with.... It was very different to live in the Eastern area. Did you go there with pleasure?

A: I was first of all National Socialist in the sense....

Q: You were convinced?

A: I just meant to say. I was a very convinced National Socialist, and also a great admirer of Rosenberg. If you want to know, why and wherefore – this is an expansive field, we are getting into philosophical matters, we may come back to that.....

Q: But this is very important, this philosophy....

A: Yes, yes, I was primarily a trustee of the populist Lohse, the Gauleiter, who appreciated me very much, and I him. The proof, if I may say so, for our relationship was, that I, of all of the at the time surviving leading party members, district chiefs and heads of Gau offices, and old recipients of honors insignia – recipient of honors insignia was a term, was a term; I also had a golden party insignia....

Q: Honors insignia.

A: It was called that, yes, for those who had a membership number below 100,000. Of those..... the founders.... not founders, but among the first ones, the people, as you would say today, of the first hour, not really, but the second hour, I would call it. Sounds a little funny, yes? A proof for the relationship was that I gave the eulogy when Lohse died.

Q: Yes. When was that?

A: When did Lohse die? 1964? I have to look it up. I have documents here.

Q: 64, yes. And where did he die?

A: He died at his home, he is.... Is it there, you see, it is here.

W: Yes, 64. It has been a long time. Oh, God, yes. Shortly before the start of your trial....

A: Yes.

Q: Did he also have a trial, Lohse?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. Have I..... May I see?

Q: Yes.....

A: Here is the letter from Mrs. Lohse... No..... it is a letter, another letter. Here is the letter from Mrs. Lohse in which she thanks me for my eulogy, which I delivered. It was the wish

of the family and the wish.....

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A: the size of 500 square meters....

Q: So, this....

A: Only the district of Schaulen.

Q: Schaulen district.

A: Schaulen district.

Q: not area?

A: No. Only the Land district. I recently had a visit from a gentleman who with me in Tauroggen... Tauroggen may be known to you. Tauroggen is.... was at a certain time the famous Convention Tauroggen, where.... the army.... Stop this, I am starting to stutter. I have to think. Where, in 1812, I believe, the convention of Tauroggen was concluded.

Q: Yes.

A: with Russia, yes?

Q: Yes.

A:with Russia, because of Napoleon. This is Tauroggen, this was also part of my area. He was agricultural leader of the district, he was here. He visited us at greater intervals. The gentleman is 80 years old. He was my district agricultural leader, under my command. We spoke about the size of the districts, exchanged memories, etc. He told me: yes there was 15-1600 square.... no, 3000.....3000 square meters etc. Thus, that was the size of the districts, the areas.

Q: Yes, fine, now. You are.... we are at the beginning, you arrive in Schaulen in August....

A: Yes, you want to see the progression.

Q: Yes. But you wanted to *(talk about)* the philosophy....

A: Yes, I will get back to that later, if I may stress that, yes?

Q: Yes.

A: Before me, before I started my work, there was an advance commando in Schaulen. It

consisted of two order squires [Ordensjunker] who were from a so-called order castle [Ordensburg]....

Q: Order....?

A: Order castle.

Q: Yes?

A: This has nothing to do with history, there was no old castle, but it was a designation for a so-called advanced school for the education, the philosophical and mental indoctrination of the next generation of leaders for the NSDAP. In ample time it had been taken care of – by direction of the Führer – that district chiefs, naturally me too, would sporadically recommend to their superiors people, men from the circle of party members, who appeared suitable, intelligent, gifted people, young, who might be considered for occupying high or highest party posts. The next generation.

Q: Yes. What is “Nachwuchs?”

A: The problem of next generation....

C: Oh, successors

A: People for the succession. And they were trained....

Q: But these people were from where, these....

A: They were from the order castles, successor people....

Q: Yes, yes

A: who were proposed from the ranks of the party, from the party....

Q: These people were “Volksdeutsche?”

A: They were “Reichsdeutsche”

Q: “Reichsdeutsche”

A: Reichsdeutsche, you understand? Party members, young people who were educated there, I don't know for how long, one or two years, I think, right....

Q: But people who had been born there?

A: No, they had been born within the Reich.

Q: Yes.

A: Here in the Reich, somewhere.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: let's say in Braunschweig, in Schleswig-Holstein, there were party organizations everywhere and these order squires, they were – not all of them – but some order squires were assigned to the East to assist the district commissars in the administration of the occupied areas.

Q: Yes.

A: There were two who were assigned to me, who came to Schaulen, were assigned to me in Kovno by the Commissar General, then sent to Schaulen while I traveled back to the Reich to fetch my own additional aides from my work department, from my section. Just like the Reich Commissar Lohse had (*selected*) me and other.....

Q: Your own people?

A: in the same manner I wanted suitable people, which I made as a condition and there I searched for some employees that I considered right, even a driver, two girls here, from Moelln as stenographer/typist, as secretaries, etc., even though I had been assigned employees by the Commissar General.

Q: Yes, yes, I know.

A: But the Schaulen district was..... I had been told so from the start, the largest in Lithuania and the need for personnel was accordingly somewhat greater than for other district administrations. We discussed these things with the Commissar General in Kovno. I will summarize: I was assigned those people, I sent them to Schaulen with the orders to do certain things. And I want to tell you what they did: first of all look for quarters....

Q: Quarters?

A: Quarters for the offices, quarters for the district commissar, residence, residences for and offices for the other German officials and – now we are getting to the Jewish problem – and to put the Jews into ghettos.

Q: Yes.

A: I have to get to talk about Rosenberg: Rosenberg did, Lohse did and I have instructed my people from the start that the Jews have to be put into ghettos; this was said by Rosenberg, because they had lived in ghettos already before, this means at the time.....

Q: You mean before the war?

A: Before the war, before the war, yes? This..... Rosenberg was against a terror policy against the Jews, but for humane treatment. The most extreme thing considered by Rosenberg was putting Jews into ghettos, because that had already taken place before the war. And it was this task that the order squires had to work on....

Q: Yes, but do you believe..... I did not know that. Do you believe that the Jews in the East were in ghettos before the war?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: They were not.... But what kind of ghetto was it? It was a.....

A: It was a city quarter, it was a city quarter, yes? Which was surrounded by barbed wire...

Q: Yes, but before the war they could freely.... the Jews were free...

A: They could move around freely, they could move freely even at the time when the when we arrived, when we took over matters, they could move freely, they could walk on the sidewalks, yes, they could pass the streets individually....

Q: In in Schaulen, the.... the population, what was the share of Jews in the....

A: Yes, that I cannot tell you exactly. I can only estimate their number living in Schaulen; this number has been stated by me during the many interrogations, which I was subjected to during the 30 years after the collapse to today, concerning the Jewish problem, interrogation which were always clear.... about 5000 Jews.

Q: Yes.

A: in Schaulen.

Q: when you got there.

A: When I got there. When I got there, I made – it may sound peculiar – an inventory. Please don't misunderstand. Yes, so,... how many... what is the population in the area of Schaulen? About 850,000. I still remember that. In the whole district. What is the population divided into the various areas? In Schaulen itself, Schaulen was a free city, about 40-45,000, the city of Schaulen, and the Jewish share...

Q: Yes.

A:was about – I can always only say about, these are things I don't remember – about 5000

Jews.

Q: 40,000 and....

C: and 5,000.

Q: and 5,000, yes.

A: I want to stress: during many interrogations I always quoted these numbers and in the beginning I naturally remembered well, 20-25 years ago, during the 50's, I still remembered these numbers and was naturally.....

Q: What.... what was your.... You were a National Socialist, convinced. What was your philosophy concerning the Jews?

A: I would like to quote you two examples. I said before, these are facts which can be proven, for which I still have the proofs for their truth, for their correctness. First, I would like to use these facts to get to the philosophy.

Q: Yes, naturally,

A: The SA – you know what the SA was?

Q: Sturmabteilung.

A: True. A section of the party. The SA had nothing to do with the district chief, they were not under his command. They were besides the district chief, a column of the NSDAP. The highest commander of the SA head at the time, below Hitler, the highest SA leader was Hitler himself, but the chief of staff, this is the correct one...

Q: Röhm...

A: True, Röhm, you was shot in 34, Ernst Röhm...

Q: Yes, in Bad Wiese.

A: Correct, Ernst Röhm.... Ernst Röhm one day gave the order, that the SA should erect “Stürmer” boxes. You know the “Stürmer?” by the Gauleiter Julius Stretcher in Nuremberg....

Q: Franconia...

A: a....a broadsheet against the Jews with the motto, which was his constant motto: the Jews are our disaster. On order of the chief of staff Röhm, “Stürmer” boxes were set up, even in the district of Lautenburg, without....

Q: What really were “Stürmer” boxes? what is...

A: This were propaganda boxes....

C: A box, a case....

A: Large boxes...

Q: A a tablet.... a tablet...

C: You can open it, one puts newspapers into it....

A: And there was always the latest issue of the “Stürmer”, this hate sheet, as I said, against the Jews.

Q: Yes.

A: These “Stürmer” boxes annoyed the public – as far as I as district chief was informed, and I was not told everything, this is clear. Most annoyed about it was I. Because this malicious agitation, in its brutal form made me angry, because I considered it useless, wrong and damaging to the image of National Socialism, I told Gauleiter Lohse during a meeting of district chiefs in Kiel that he should arrange that these “Stürmer” boxes would be taken down. I could not prohibit them. That the “Stürmer” boxes would be prohibited would be.... well, I was very worked up about this and vented my frustration, but later on this had the effect that I had difficulties with the SA leadership after they were prohibited on the intervention of Lohse.

Q: Yes, I can understand that.

A:Annoyance and so on. I can prove this fact by the following: I had a trial, as I told you earlier, you know that...

Q: Yes.

A: But I considered it correct to correct this...

Q: Yes. Yes.

A: in your first letter. In this trial , in order to point out my attitude towards Judaism and to amplify it, my attorney – I had a star attorney who was also a defense attorney during the Nuremberg trials, he was from Hamburg, a well known person who unfortunately took his own life – but this is of no importance here – I think this is called adjournment – he called a district chief named Hermann Hansen from Husum, who also took part in these meetings, as a witness before the jury, and he stated under oath, under oath, that I had been the one

who informed Gauleiter Lohse that the “Stürmer” boxes which were shameful, should be removed in the Lauenburg district.

Q: Yes.

A: This was my request.

Q: Yes.

A: this was the first point that I wanted to make for a general answer to your question. The second point, which is very much in my memory, but which I can also prove – I will get to that. You may perhaps laugh, it is a special case. A Jewess in Moelln had a dog...

Q: dog...

A: dog, yes.

Q: dog.

A: A dog, yes? This dog bit the wife of the district chief, my wife.

Q: bit.

A: bit.

Q: Yes.

A: Right. At the knee. Or at the thigh. My wife had to go to the doctor. And to the woman, the Jewess, the owner of the dog, was told... She was obviously – you have to understand the milieu at the time – it is humanly understandable. The Jews were persecuted, but not here. They were generally persecuted, in Germany they already had to wear the star, right? The Jews were afraid for their lives, that is understandable. And the women went to the then grain merchant – I can give you his name Hans ..., the grain merchant Michelsen who had his business at the Moelln railroad station; a well known person who was appointed mayor here in Moelln by the British, the occupation power, in 1945. The women went to him, they were obviously well acquainted, and told him her problem and said something like...– I am getting to the proof which is in a long document among the court files (you can request it if you like) that something would now happen to her because her dog had bitten the wife of the district chief; she was trembling, anxious.

Q: Yes.

A: The mayor... Mr. Michelsen told her something like: you can relax, as he knew the district chief, nothing was going to happen. Nothing happened to her. My wife and I did not speak at all with the women, the Jewess, I have to say, we did not file any complaint against

her as might have been done by others – there were obviously others in the NSDAP who perhaps might have ... well, you know what could have happened to her. Well nothing happened to her. Then, there was – item number 3 – no Kristallnacht here, although there was a Jewish business in Ratzeburg.

Q: Yes. In Moelln, how many Jews were there in Moelln?

A: Few, few Jews. In Ratzeburg was just one Jewish business by the name of Rosenberg.

Q: Yes. Rosenberg.

A: Rosenberg. Well, Rosenberg. Yes. There were SA posted in front of the business. Kristallnacht was primarily a matter for the SA. You may know that. And I have already told you that the SA was not under my command. I naturally had a local group leader in Ratzeburg. Ratzeburg was a large local group of the NSDAP with several hundred members, very good people. One or several of them or the local group leader reported immediately to me that the SA had arrived, which I could not prevent. But the business was not set on fire and the Jew Rosenberg was not bothered at all. That is what is important. The trusteeship administration – that was ordered from above....

Q: yes.

A: The trusteeship administration of the business property....

Q: Aryanization, right?

A: yes, of the business was assumed by the Lauenburg Land Bank.

Q: I see.

A: ... by the late bank director Kork, who reported this to me, etc. Rosenberg was then able to emigrate and today a son of Rosenberg has a business in Ratzeburg...

Q: Oh, yes.

A: So, the....

Q: The son came back.

A: The family.... yes, nothing happened to the family. These were three items that I wanted to talk about.

Q: Yes, this is very good.

A: I cannot get out many more things. You have already asked, sir....

Q: But philosophy.... philosophy...

W: Philosophy.

Q: Philosophy. Were you antisemitic or not?

A: What was I?

Q: Were you anti-Semitic?

A: Oh, I will just get to that.

Q: Yes.

A: More.... more proof for my attitude, for my – I think I can say so – tolerance I do not have, because few Jews lived here. Near here was a painter, he lived close by here. I have to think; I think his name was Wittenberg. Yes, he emigrated, he left Moelln. I had been informed of this. If I had been a strong anti-Semite, if I had been a man of Stretcher's ilk, I could have the man.....

Q: Yes, a strong....

A: The Jews..... the Jews are our disaster, I would have had the power...

Q: Yes you had the power.

A: Yes. I would have been able to say to the State Police in Luebeck who were in charge here: the man may not leave, but – you know that the Jews in the German Reich, if they could not individually emigrate, all, as it was called then, were subjected to special treatment.

Q: Yes.

A: Right? That was the expression. I could have done that, right?

Q: Certainly.

A: In Lauenburg we had – I just remembered this case which I can even prove, I have a document. In the city of Lauenburg on the Elbe, down, the city of Lauenburg, we had two half-Jewish tradesmen.

Q: of mixed race.

A: Half.... right, of mixed race. Yes. And the mayor at the time – he has since died – Mayor Petersen, who also was local group leader and had much to deal with me, who dealt with

the invitations for tender to assign the orders from the city to the tradesmen....

Q: Yes.

A: He also considered the half-Jewish tradesmen, just as the full Aryans, just as the Aryans. So, half-Jews – as you may know from the Nuremberg Laws – this was the big problem....

/25

Q: Oh, yes.

A: Yes? Those who tended toward the German side....

Q: Or....

A: were made into “Aryans,” in quotation marks. And those who did not – well, they were simply Jews, were unfortunately Jews. These half-Jews, those two, I knew them personally, yes? they were considered just the same in the assignment of official jobs, and Mayor Petersen called me each time and said: so-and-so is to be considered, did I agree to this? I responded: Yes. But this case is not so important, these were half-Jews. Important to me is the Stürmer affair, and with this I would like to come to your question. I was anti-Semite in the sense that I approved of the party program of the NSDAP. I had to. You may be convinced, already by my upbringing which I had in the home of my parents, my father, at the time strictly German notionist...

Q: Yes.

A: my mother brought up similarly, but otherwise humane, always for reconciliation, always for tolerance, etc. If it had been written in the party program of the NSDAP what today is known by the whole world of the final solution – you know what I mean – for the Jews, if that had been included, that the Jews should be physically annihilated, I would not have joined the party. I became a member of the party because.... because I had been able to get enthusiastic about things from my youth on, I have – this is part of it – I have after high-school graduation I have before high-school graduation – I graduated from high-school in Lübeck – before high-school graduation I went to school in Düsseldorf for two years; at that time the school in my home town only led to the lower school certification. To continue my studies I went to Düsseldorf; you know where Düsseldorf is located? There, a sister of my mother was married and my uncle – who was quite wealthy – took me in for two years and I lived there during the French occupation.

Q: Yes.

A: That was in 1921.

Q: Yes.

A: as you know.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I also experienced the..... the..... the resistance movement, the passive German resistance. When we walked along Königsallee, as a teenager, I saw how German men and women had to make a wide detour when – I have to say this – the French officers came with their riding crops, etc. And it also happened that high-school students, or middle school students – I was at that time in the “Unterprima” (*a high-school level grade*), that students did something foolish which the occupation force, the French occupation force, objected to. I have experienced that fellow students were incarcerated at the Ulmer Höhe – the notorious prison in Düsseldorf, on orders of the occupation force. These things contributed substantially to awaken and increase nationalist feelings in me.

Q: Yes, yes, this is.....

A: Very early I did....

Q:understandable.

A: think about these things and this probably led me to becoming a member of the NSDAP. I said to myself: you have to.... somehow.... Germany lies defeated – 6 million out of work, the Versailles agreement – I don’t have to.... you know the effects, etc.

Q: Was very difficult...

A: in Germany... yes. And somehow you have to take part, you sense some voice – it may sound strange – if I say that, you have to become active. Politically. I then vacillated if Tannenbergbund or NSDAP.

Bobine 4

Q: Where did you learn French so well? In Lebanon?

Daughter:

I learned it at school, because after I graduated from high-school, I studied languages. I worked as interpreter.

Q: You are speaking marvelously.

W: All our daughters (*learned*) foreign languages....

C: Are your children bi-lingual?

Daughter:

Yes. They spoke German and Arabic in Lebanon. Both equally well. Because I speak French with my husband, they also learned French, because.....

Q: Well, this is fantastic. This gives... this gives....

A: Do the gentlemen have ash trays? Everything here? Ute, please bring coffee.

Daughter:

..... they speak English on the side.

Q: No. French.... The Greek intellectual class speaks French.

Daughter:

Because I was somewhat worried about the children when they want to play with other children nearby , they could not understand....

Q: They will also learn Greek.

C:learn Greek.

Q: That would not be bad, Greek, Arabic, French and German. This is very good. This is very good. Well.

A: Yes, if I may continue and come back to anti-Semitism – that was your actual question.

Q: Also.... You have said that if you had known....

A: that in the end...

Q: what....

A: was going to be the elimination of the Jews on the program, no, no.

Q: never a member of the party...

A: No, no. If I had be different, I would have permitted that the Jews in Schaulen would be killed.

Q: Yes, yes. But in the Hitler program, for example in “Mein Kampf” he speaks openly about the... this is not the final solution, but the eradication....

A: I know, I know. Yes, yes. This was not the official...party program, right?

Q: Yes.

A: I have.... For me it was, before I.... before I joined and signed the joining declaration, I read through the party program. I knew nothing about Hitler's "Mein Kampf."

Q: Yes.

A: Right? Knew nothing. I then subscribed to the "Völkische Beobachter." Already as teen I regularly read it. In the "Völkische Beobachter" is no mention and no incitement for the forcible killing of Jews.

Q: Yes., yes. Naturally no killing.

A: No.

Q: But emigration...

A: Yes. Yes. No. No. That is coming. You certainly know about the Madagascar Plan?

Q: Yes, I am very interested...

A: prevented by the British. Do you know that?

Q: I am very.... and also the French. I am very interested...

A: Oh, I am sorry, the French. Yes.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, yes. Palestine by the British. I just did with the Israelis..... no, no, naturally...

Q: There was a discussion between Ribbentrop and.... French Foreign Minister George Bonnet about....

A: Was that Bonnet?

Q: Bonnet, 1938.

A: I know, I know. That was that was the so-called final solution. If that had succeeded, one could have said, a peaceful final solution. Right?

Q: Yes.

A: Right?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. The party program of the NSDAP clearly and distinctly called for the elimination of the Jews from all leadership positions in the economy, politics, culture and the creation of a law for foreigners for the Jews...

Q: Yes.

A: Yes? The elimination. And when one looked at the time in Germany, one had to see that leading positions, primarily in culture, newspapers, the press, remarkably many Jews were active, although not exclusively, to be sure.

Q: In your opinion, why? Why was this the case? Why was the situation such?

A: Why was what?

Q: Why were the Jews so high up in culture, in.....

A: Because they were and still are very smart, very competent... very competent, very intelligent. I would like to quote you an example. I still today like to read, I always have, books by Franz Werfel.

Q: Yes. He was a Jew.

A: I know that. I knew it well. Still. That never bothered me.

Q: Yes.

A: Werfel, Molnar, primarily Werfel. The 40 days of Musa Dagh, etc. Upstairs on my desk I have the "History of Culture" by Egon Friedel. As you probably know, for me an excellent compendium

Q: Yes. This is an extraordinary book.

A: I agree. Outstanding, unusual. It is a pity that the man committed suicide.

Q: Yes.

A: as far as I know. In any case...

Q: Excuse me

Daughter: Does not matter.

A: Does not matter. Leave it, leave it. Stamp it out. Thank you, thank you. Everything is in order. Or Tucholsky.

Q: Yes.

A: I also read that. I know it. Does not bother me at all. I only wanted to say this that

Q: But these books were burned...

A: They were... they were prohibited and burnt.

Q: Yes.

A: But not burnt for me.

Q: Yes.

A: Right? I only wanted to say that to indicate that I was no blatant anti-Semite.

Q: I have understood this.

A: this is why I gave the above examples.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: In Hitler, I saw a personality, I sensed this, who was the only one who would be able – by the strength of his words, which he was capable of, by the power of his conviction that he had – at least for me and millions of others, at least tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, who joined the NSDAP early. For us, for me, he was the only guarantor to overcome the German problem. For me he was a guarantor for being able to...

Q: That he could....

A: combine the millions of the right, the millions of the left....

Q: a unit...

A: into one people, into a unit. Dr. Sorel, if you are looking today, how all the world – and we too here in Germany – most of those who were with us earlier, if they are still alive, are leading personalities in Bonn; I could cite you names, you would be surprised, they were active to the nth degree. Now they say what used to be white is now black, and they used to cry hallelujah and now they cry “let’s crucify him.”

Q: Yes. Yes. You are right.....

A: If you (*think*) about it...

Q: this is clear...

A: If you think about it, then yes...

Q: But I think that it is quite true what you are saying, because all of Germany was...

A: Yes, yes, yes. If Hitler had not...

Q: Not just the Nazis.

A: No, no, no. If Hitler would not have gotten power, it would have been obvious that some day the KPD would have seized power and then it might have happened – as I have often said in discussions that keep on happening when one talks about earlier times – what at that time Dr. Seyss-Inquart did in Austria. You know, the Interior Minister, which he was in Austria when the turn to the right was being prepared, as agreed with Hitler. After all, I experienced it in the Reichstag how Seyss-Inquart was feted, the whole Reichstag stood up like one man and cheered when the Anschluss was made. The “Anschluss”, right.

Q: Yes.

A: That which Bismarck had been unable to accomplish, as we said at the time, only the small solution; this was now Hitler’s great solution, the expanded Reich. And....

Q: But, I would like to get back to the Jewish question.

A: Please.

Q: Do you believe that...

A: I only tried to...

Q: Yes. Did you believe and are you believing now that the Jews were really a danger for Germany?

A: You mean while there was peace, before the beginning of the world war, before there was war?

Q: Yes, naturally.

A: A danger, no. Not a danger, but the National Socialists, the Party and Hitler, were of the opinion that the Jew is the catalyst who....

Q: Decomposition.

A: Decomposition. Did not Momsen say this?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, for the decomposition.

Q: Many people said that.

A: Yes. Of the cultural, the intellectual decomposition, etc. I.... I took note of this at the time. You have to keep in mind that my job at the time was just as district chief. Although I also was a speaker. But I did not give philosophical speeches, although I would have been able to. I gave political speeches.

Q: Yes.

A: Political speeches, right?

Q: Yes.

A: ... at mass meetings and at smaller gatherings, depending. Thus, this was not a problem for me. For me, the problem was about how we will attain power. How can Hitler achieve his overall goal, his distant goal, right? of getting the power in a legal manner. By this I want to make you understand that publicly, I dealt with the Jewish problem – I want to emphasize that – as little as possible. However, I have to admit that my instructors certainly also taught about the Jewish problem. This is clear. This was unavoidable.

Q: Yes. But..... I mean that the Jewish problem and the (*in French*) comment dit-on l'expulsion?

C: Expulsion

Q: the expulsion of the Jews was very important in National.....

A: Naturally.

Q: in Hitler's philosophy.

A: Yes. Yes.

Q: It was at the heart, right?

A: I did not understand that. What did he mean?

C: It was close to his heart.

A: Close to his heart.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes.

Q: And there were also the speeches by Hitler in the Reichstag. Right?

A: Yes.

Q: He spoke several times quite clearly about this matter.

A: Yes. The...

W: You always told me that the Jews declared war on him.

A: Yes, this is....

Q: and then he....

A: Yes, this is possible.

Q: said: they shall have it.

A: Yes, I have..... do you know the book – I have it here – the book by Hoggin?

Q: Yes.

A: “The forces war.” the book is over there. Or Diwald, one of the leading German historians, recently published – I also have it. They are – I would like to say – two standard books. In these books can be read – just as my wife interjected – that the international, world Judaism, gave Hitler twice the dates, which I had known before – declared war.

Q: the...

A: And once Hitler discussed this declaration of war in the Reichstag. I obviously cannot tell you anymore when that was...

Q: It was in....

A: After it has occurred...

Q: It was in 39.

A: Yes, yes, you know it exactly.

Q: January 39.

- A: Yes. Very well.
- Q: And also September 10.
- A: I am no scientist as you are, fortunately not...
- Q: No, but you have a
- A: I don't have to..... please?
- Q: You have a very good memory.
- A: At any rate, Hitler discussed it and said, to say it simply, they shall have the war, right? At the end there is then the annihilation, something like that, right?
- Q: yes, but the question is not simple. Who started it?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Yes.
- A: That is what the historian says.
- Q: Did the Jews declare war on Hitler or the reverse? Perhaps the Jews just defended themselves.
- A: Yes, well, Dr. Sorel, I would like to add the following: Diwald, whom I mentioned before – I could show you the latest newspapers. It is mentioned there, and Diwald is attacked from many sides because of it, that the problem of the final solution, the annihilation of the Jews and the treatment of the Jews cannot yet, or not at all, be treated based on the current state of knowledge or in a final matter, saying: Hitler knew or did not know about it.
- Q: Yes.
- A: In a certain context it is even being said that Hitler even did not know anything about the annihilation actions of the Jews in the East.
- Q: Do you believe that?
- A: Quite honestly, I am telling you that I do not believe this.
- Q: I don't believe so.
- A: I believe that he knew.

Q: Yes, certainly.

A: Yes.

Q: I am convinced....

A: Yes.

Q: He has....

A: I also want to tell you....

Q: He not only....

A: I also want to tell you why....

Q:gave the orders....

A: ...Rosenberg – I want to tell you the following, and why I am saying it quite without hesitation, I am saying this....

Q: Yes, naturally.

A: After all, I am.....

Handwritten in transcript in French: "The rest has not been asked. Repeat of the image 16 p. 4?"

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W:founded. Are they not ancestors?

A: Yes, Harvard University, yes.

Q: This is not the question

A: This is not....

W: Yes. Strange, right? Were they not ancestors? But their name was not Gewecke.

Q: Thank you.

A: I have to.... look for the family register of my grandmother from Windheim.

All this is in there. But that is too far....

W: Somewhere at the university.

A: Yes. He is one of the founders of Harvard University.

Q: Yes.

W: *(inaudible)*

Q: Yes, well.

A: Dr. Sorel, the question that is still pending is: if Hitler knew or did not know of the annihilation of the Jews. I am of the opinion – yes. This is a purely instinctive question. I can give you the following explanation for it; it is already contained in here, you can take this with you. I had to report to the Reich-Commissar any forced action against the Jews that I became aware of, because the instructions were for tolerant treatment, no violence – I think I said so already at the beginning – and the Reich Commissar, just like me and Rosenberg, possible ghettoization – that were the orders from above, but no violence. No annihilation, etc. And we kept to this out of our own attitude anyway. And if individual cases did occur, we reported those. I have experienced – it was reported to me – that the security police, the SD – I was able to prevent this in Schaulen – but in more distant areas some isolated Jews were still living and they were – as the expression went at the time – liquidated by the SD. When I heard of this, I reported it to the Reich Commissar who in turn reported it to Rosenberg and I know that Rosenberg only two or three times.... I am able to provide you with a witness who I think is still alive, although I don't know him personally, a Mr. Bräutigam....

Q: Yes, Bräutigam.....

A: Do you know him, have you talked to him?

Q: Eastern Ministry. He was..... he was.... he was with Leibbrandt.

A: With Leibbrandt.

Q: with Wetzel....

A: With Wetzel, with Leibbrandt, with Meyer...

Q: Yes.

A: Gauleiter Meyer, Westphalia, was the representative of Rosenberg. Primarily Bräutigam. Bräutigam made witness statements. I have read it, I can show it to you, I have it. He made statements and he had to know it – after all he was Rosenberg's right hand – that Rosenberg was not admitted to the presence of Hitler more than three times during this whole period – and he was Minister of the East.

Q: Yes, I believe that.

A: Yes. I also doubt that Rosenberg was not able to discuss with Hitler the annihilation of the Jews, which he himself sharply repudiated – I know this – and declined from the start. On the other hand, the annihilation actions against the Jews are the responsibility of Himmler as highest command, and Himmler did have always the ability to speak to Hitler. I am convinced – because you have asked me – it is my conviction that Hitler had been informed by Himmler about these measures. However, I don't know this.

Q: I would say the opposite:

A: Please.

Q: I believe that the idea of the final solution and special treatment, liquidation of the Jews was Hitler's idea.

A: Yes. To this.... To this I cannot comment.

Q: Do you know....

A: I was no actual witness, as a district commissar I was naturally at a lower level. Our administration was on three levels: Reich Commissar, General Commissar, District Commissar. Although the District Commissar had – we will still get to that – many types of authority, as you might call it. But he never was master over life and death. He had many duties. He had a large area of responsibility, but he was not privy to the actual events.

Q: Yes.

A: Right?

Q: And it was always a fight...

A: Yes. I will still get to this. For us this was devastating. Only because of this fight which was going on, was it possible – I am coming now back to your earlier question – that the district commissars in part reacted very differently, right? While I in the production registration, the so-called production battle – I am now digressing to agriculture, meaning the use of the field yields for the German Reich, actually the German army, northern front, right?....

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, for me this was the main goal. While I.... within this production battle.... my main effort was taken up by this, particularly during harvesting time by trips, by inspections.... not a single farmer who refused to deliver did I punish while another district commissar in Vilna for the same reason had 40 farmers shot on his own authority.

Q: Yes.

A: This was the different....

Q: Yes, yes. Naturally. And there were....

A: This was..... there was a lack of overall directions. Yes? However, this one was an SS leader, an honorary SS leader.

Q: Higher SS leader and police leader.

A: No, no. Not that. No, no, honorary leader, I said, yes.

Q: Yes.

A: District commissar. A higher SS and police leader was never also district commissar simultaneously.

Q: Yes, yes, I know that...

A: No, no. He was district commissar just like me, but on the side....

Q: Oh, you mean "ehren"

A: "ehren." No. Not "ehren", honorary leader, honorary leader of the SS. That existed, right? Honorary leader in the SS. On the one hand he got instructions from Lohse on how to act towards the residents...

Q: When did you arrive in Schaulen... in July...

A: About July 10.

Q: The Einsatzgruppen were...

A: They were already there.

Q: ...already there.

A: You mean EK2, EK3.

Q: EK 3 was Jaeger.

A: EK 2 were already there. EK 3 was Jaeger, Stahlecker

Q: Stahlecker, yes.

A: Yes.

Q: Dr. Stahlecker.

A: Dr. Stahlecker, yes.

Q: Yes. And what exactly did you know at that time about the actions of the "Einsatzgruppen"? What was the task of the Einsatzgruppen?

A: The Einsatzgruppen... The Einsatzgruppen were not identical with the stationary security police.

Q: Yes. Yes.

A: You know that? Thus, security.... SD and security police, yes they were stationary. And the Einsatzgruppen....

Q: Yes, they were in motion.

A: were....Thus.... as the name indicates: special forces. They were in motion. To cleanse the area of Jews.

Q: Yes.

A: And... and.... and to fight partisans. At that time there were not many partisans.

Q: But not at that time. That came later. The partisans came later.

A: They....They came from Koch. I will get to that later. The gravedigger of the German East Policy.

Q: Yes.

A: Now, don't misunderstand me when I am saying: we certainly hoped to win the war...

Q: Yes, naturally.

A: We certainly wished that the ideas of Rosenberg would become reality, even though Rosenberg's ministry was totally undermined; it was established as super ministry, I know, but undermined by his opponents, I don't want to say enemies, his opponents: Goering, Himmler, Bormann and Koch.

Q: You may say enemies, I think.

A: Please?

Q: You may say enemies.

A: Well, enemies. Because they sabotaged everything, who under the pretext – as I always saw it – you also have, I am going ahead again, asked about the experiences of the district commissar. If I go into details about this, the background will become clear, right? Regarding the care with which we acted there. We took care to keep the population – I shall get back to the subject of the partisans – the population in line. I have – my wife also experienced this – made trips throughout the district. The German army came as liberator into the country and

Q: As liberators, yes.

A: As liberators from the Soviet yoke, was greeted with jubilation, and four weeks later the district commissar – that was I – made trips in order to get to know his district, and if you mention the bishop, I still remember, the church dignitaries, the children, the schools, the schools paraded, which was embarrassing to me, I was modest, if I may say so, it was embarrassing. It was an overwhelming reception etc. And the district chiefs, the land councils (they are called district chiefs there), there were 6 of them let me think, Taugoggen, Raseinen, Schaulen, Schaulen 4, Telsche - 5, Moschaiken - 6, six... they outdid themselves with assistance, actions, offers, etc. We got into a relationship, later, which became better and better, without leaving the main object out of sight. I always was for them the government representative of the German Reich. This was no fraternization, which would not have been appropriate. No, it really was.... The hearts of the population which had suffered seriously under the Soviets, right, that went towards us. And....

Q: And you were yourself received as liberator?

A: That is exactly how I was received. Although the real liberators were the army. This is clear. I was received as such. And it was for me.... this was one of the goals and my task, not only the supervision of the administration, like a veil, right? My administration was extended over the area, supervision of the local administration, naturally except for justice. And in particular autonomy which had been granted to the population from the start, something they did not have under the Russians.

Q: Local administration

A: Local administration in cultural matters. This was for these people with relatively small populations who had a strong national identity, as I can tell you....

Q: Very big....

A: and a very long history – Lithuania, Poland. You know that, right? This was great for them. And schools. Almost every large village – I am deliberately exaggerating – had a student, right? Many high schools. Schaulen had two high schools, etc, etc. And we respected this autonomy, we were giving it to them. In my apartment in the guest room of

the district commissar there were from time to time district chiefs which I had invited. They were singing their songs, their freedom songs which many a district commissar would probably not have permitted. Now I will get to the partisans.

Q: Yes, but... one moment. About the special forces...

A: Yes, we wanted to come back to that.

Q: Yes. This is obvious that it was the task of the special forces was to clean up, as you have said, clearing the area of Jews.

A: The final solution of the Jews.

Q: Final solution.

A: Yes, naturally. I know that. I can state that with a good conscience.

Q: Yes, yes, yes. How....

A: I have....

Q: How would it have been possible for you to..... to have an administration – and administration means defense of the people. Administration is on the side of life, and there were the special forces who came to kill?

A: You mean in Schaulen?

Q: Yes. Not only in Schaulen, throughout the Baltic....

A: Yes, yes. When I arrived, a number of extermination actions already had taken place. The gentleman I talked about before, the district agricultural chief of Tauroggen, who was here – he said to me recently when he was here and we talked about this and exchanged experiences. He said then that in Tauroggen – and that I should know about this – extermination actions against the Jews had taken place. I said: naturally, I know this. When I made my first official call on the District chief, who already was in place, the district chief of the German army to be exact, a man from Latvia, right?

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A:violent policy by Koch, right?

Q: Koch was Reichskommissar for Ukraine.

A: Ukraine, Ukraine.

Q: Erich Koch.

A: Erich Koch, yes. Born in Elberfeld.

Q: But did you.... did you know these people of the special forces?

A: Yes, Jaeger, yes.

Q: How was Jaeger? Can you describe Jaeger?

A: Jaeger is dead, he committed suicide.

Q: Yes. Can you describe Jaeger as to his character...

A: Yes, exactly.... but I most experienced Hamann. You (*know*) Hamann?

Q: Yes.

A: known, right, who on orders of Jaeger and finally on orders....

Q: Hamann was special forces 3.

A: Yes, I think so. I cannot say that with certainty any more. Jaeger was colonel [Standartenführer], he was not the SS and police chief for Lithuania, he was a colonel.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes?

Q: But he was special forces.

A: I think so.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes? I have.... if I way that I think, I have not had any dealings with Jaeger, I had no dealings with anybody from the SS and have personally with nobody – I have to correct myself – the exception was Dr. Scherzi....

W: at the very beginning, right?

A: At the very beginning. He was chief or deputy chief of the security police, the security police stationed in Schaulen. A very well read, very educated man with whom I talked already for that reason, who... if he himself had participated in extermination actions against

Jews that happened before my time – he was there already before my time – if he led them, participated in them, I don't know.

Q: But in Schaulen...

A: That was in Schaulen.

Q: There were extermination actions in Schaulen too.

A: What?

Q: In Schaulen....

A: Yes?

Q: There were extermination actions.

A: Before my time.

Q: Yes, yes. Deportations.

A: Dr. Sorel, I cannot give you specific statements regarding this. At all times I have said the following, and at that time seen, experienced from Lithuanian... from important Lithuanian sources specifically, that in Schaulen, before my time, individual Jews were exterminated or displaced or deported; but not in any great numbers certainly; because there were still some 5000 there.

Q: When did you arrive.

A: Please?

Q: When did you arrive there?

A: Around July 10, I told you.

Q: Yes, yes. But there were more Jews in Schaulen, because I believe that when you arrived there were only people in the ghetto who were able to work.

A: We had two ghettos....

Q: People able to work and families.

A: Yes. There were two ghettos. One....

Q: In Schaulen?

A: In Schaulen. One ghetto was immediately.... the barbed wire went directly to the back side of the leather goods factory. It was a very big one. The largest one in the East. This means in the General District Lithuania.

Q: Yes, leather good factory.

A: which also made things for the front, essentially for the front. And....

Q: for..... for what, for the armament directorium or for?.....

A: Shoes, “Knobelbecher” [*slang for army boots*] as the soldiers called them, do you know this expression?

Q: Yes.

A: Etc., etc. right? I don’t recall any details. The leather goods factory was not under my command. It was under the command of the “Ostlandgesellschaft” [*Eastern country company*]. This was a conglomerate founded by the Reich Commissar.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Perhaps you may have heard of it? And it was administered by two Germans, two German trustees....

Q: Yes?

A: Kaiser and Reiner were the names of the trustees, German trustees who had to do with me only to the extent as they needed coupons for food, for clothing from my business office, which means that they were practically taken care of in this regard by the district commissioner. Naturally also with regard to party matters. Otherwise I had to deal with this large number of Jews when I came. What happened before – I want to get back to that again – how many Jews had been killed before, I don’t know any longer.

Q: Yes, yes, but you..... it was only two weeks after the....

A: After the arrival of the Wehrmacht.

Q: Yes. And the special forces came in with the Wehrmacht.

A: Eh....

Q: They came in....

A: I know that.

Q: with the Wehrmacht.

A: They advanced with the Wehrmacht. I know

Q: And they immediately started to kill the Jews.

A: Yes. Isn't it Isn't it strange that all the Jews in Schaulen remained alive?

Q: Not all the Jews, I believe.

A: No, but these 5000.

Q: Yes, these 5000.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes, but I think that Schaulen was a very special case.

A: How so?

Q: Because this leather goods factory was there...

A: Yes...

Q: and there was this.... I think also an Insulin....

A: Insulin manufacturer.

Q: manufacturer.

A: Yes. There was the.... this enormously large slaughter house Meistas. There was Pinozentras. Pinozentras was similar to Reifeisengesellschaft in Germany. Pinozentras, Maistas, Leather goods factory. There were also a few smaller ones. There was Inquawenshe, 20 kilometers from Schaulen, a very big sugar factory.

Q: Yes.

A: There..... By the way, regarding the killing of Jews. Before the establishment of the civil authorities. I can affirm with certainty, with a good conscience, that I learned at the time from the mayor of Schaulen, Linkewitchus, Mr. Linkewitchus, he was an attorney, a very learned man, or Dr. Jasaitis, he was the city medical officer. The two gentlemen represented the Lithuanian civil authorities with the district commissar; they came to me very frequently. From them I learned that a part of the Lithuanian population had a hatred of Jews.....

Q: Yes..

A: and also killed Jews.

Q: Pogrom.

A: Po... I just wanted to say this, the famous pogroms. If that happened in cooperation with the EK3 [*Einsatzkommando = special forces*], if the EK3 used Lithuanians – I assume so, I assume so. It seems reasonable. Because the Jews were not yet sent to ghettos. As I told you at the beginning, my two order squires [Ordensjunker] had the task – right? – to establish the ghettos, right? It would have been possible that the EK3 EK3 ... EK2 was more active in the areas near the German Reich – Tilsit, as you might know.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yes, it was within the 20 kilometer sector.

Q: yes.

A: Have you ever heard of this?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, right? Under the State Police Tilsit.

Q: Yes, yes, and the SD.

A: Naturally, SD.

Q: And I believe it was Lieutenant Colonel ...

A: Boehmes.

Q: Gutsman, Gutsman or Jeckeln.

A: Yes, also, no, no. This was Jeckeln, SS Lieutenant General Riga for all of the Eastern area. Jeckeln.

Q: Yes, yes. But you arrived with police personnel from Tilsit for a second.... there was a second period when these people came in order to kill the Jews.

A: They were already.....

Q: After they were put into ghettos.

A: No. In a....

W: But you were once a witness in a trial?

A: Yes, yes. In the Ulm trial. I just wanted to say that. Within 20 kilometers, it was a zone established by the Reich leadership SS of 20 kilometers along the borders of the German Reich, thus 20 kilometer into Lithuania, this broad strip of land, it had been given up for clearing, again in the sense of collecting of the Jews, carting them away, killing, yes? for the clearing by the SD, by the security police – this was the same thing with us....

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yes? Or EK, and that is the EK2.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: EK2. And I have to tell you, this is certain, very certain, when I arrived there and traveled around, I learned about these facts of which I know nothing before, and during the Ulm trial – the first mass trial which took place in Ulm some 15 or even 20 years ago, which triggered – I would like to say – the whole.... the establishment of the Ludwigsburg office for recording the Nazi crimes, as I heard. By the inattentiveness of a member who had been shooting, killing the Jews, who triggered things personally because he was an official who had reached the point where he would have been entitled to a pension and filed for this pension. In the process he had to indicate where he had been and what he had done. These facts I learned during the trial. This started things rolling and some 10 people – I am saying approximately, because I want to be as precise as possible – I seem to remember that it was about 10 members of the killing commando. The main accused was Boehme, Dr., I believe, Boehme... Boehm or Boehme.... and I was called as witness and asked various questions. And it was there that I really learned what these commandos actually had done. What I had already known from the reports by my district chiefs when I made my first official tour there. And they did in Tauroggen, in Krottingen – Krottingen is a district capital, Krottingen district belonged to me. In Krottingen, Tauroggen, in Telsche – no, excuse me, Telsche is further back.... Krottingen, Polangen, Tauroggen, etc. If and certainly also further, because after Tauroggen it started to go down to the Hemel, the great Memel....

Q: Yes, yes.

A: The Memel makes a big loop and inside this loop was the area commissariat of Kauen undr Mr. Lenten. He was the SA chief there. I assume that they caused havoc there too.

Q: Did you travel to Kauen?

A: Was I in Kauen? Yes, repeatedly. I had to, because the Commissar General von Rentelen – the name has been mentioned before – organized service meetings from time to time...

Q: No, I am asking because.... we have talked about this pogrom....

A: Yes.

Q: the

A: pogroms, which were also done by the Lithuanians...

Q: Lithuanians, yes. And I think that I had (*read*) reports by Stahlecker...

A: Von Stahlecker.

Q: Stahlecker, who was the head of Special Forces A...

A: Yes, I know.

Q: And he says that it was difficult to organize these pogroms, but.... in the end, they were successful, it was possible to organize a pogrom in the famous garage..... garage Litaki in Kovno.

A: In Kovno.

Q: where the Lithuanians did

A: kill the Jews.

Q: kill many Jews with....

A: I know.

Q: Yes.

A: I had the following experience in Kovno. I also described it during my trial in a certain context. That was in the early days. My action Schaulen, meaning the appearance of Hamann had already taken place, if.....

Q: Hamann, you have to explain to me in detail what happened with Hamann.

A: Yes, I shall do that. You also wanted to know the descriptions, the impressions etc. Yes, yes. It will come.

Q: And I would like your telling where the people of the special forces were.

A: Ruthless, ruthless, arrogant...

Q: Very brutal?

A:arrogant, the way they were talking – naturally in their actions, right? Brutal – I would not have tolerated this. I want to tell you what happened. My secretary announced that an SS chief wanted to speak to me without appointment. Not from the local security police, but.....

Q: There was..... I have read, that there was in Schaulen at that time, in September....

A: It was October, October 41.

A: this action. Oh, what was there.... there was a spare commando....

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W: back to us. And they said – I often have to think about this: it was terrible when they were lead away from a factory etc. No, it was terrible.

A: Yes, yes. They just did not have any rights. I have to admit.

Q: Where.... ok. We will get back to this...

A: To Mr. Hamann....

Q: Yes, Mr. Hamann. It was September 11, 41.

A: Ok, I thought it was October, early October. But, ok. It was quite, quite at the beginning of my time there, or soon after a started my administration that the appearance of Mr. Hamann was announced. I asked him in. He appeared, in high boots, his sword on his side...

Q: Yes.

A: And he came in self-importantly...

Q: Was he tall?

A: Rather tall.

Q: Tall.

A: A German Member of the Master Race, a.... a representative of the master race bred by Himmler. You know what I mean?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Germanic Master Race.

Q: In a black uniform?

A: Naturally, a black uniform. And he stated very energetically or arrogantly, or whatever you want to call it: Mr. District Commissar, I have to inform you that tomorrow (this also appears in my report) that tomorrow all Jews in Schaulen will be liquidated (something to this effect, I cannot repeat it literally).

Q: He exactly stated...

A: Yes.

Q: Liquidated.

A: Yes, exactly. He also spoke of the “bunch of layabouts,” of Schaulen.

Q: Of ???

A: of “bunch of layabouts.”

Q: Yes. Pig stay.

A: of pig sty. Pig sty. This is even more....

W: even worse.

A: Even worse. Naturally the conversation was very rough. I countered him sharply. I pushed the button and told my secretary: “Mr. Schultz should come down immediately.” Schultz was the deputy of the head of the German Employment Exchange to the District Commissar. This German employment exchange remained quite independent for a long time. As you know, the army had the administrative duties of the civilian administration the WIKO Kovno, the economic commando Kovno, and had a colonel in Schaulen – I cannot think of his name – who was the head of the matters which I later took over in the employment office. And the employment office was taken over by me in September/October, or a few months later – I cannot remember exactly, but this is not important – was put under my administration. The chief was a Dr. Guenther, Dr. Richard Guenther who lived in Detmolt, probably deceased by now. He already had dementia at the time of my trial. Unfortunately, I would have liked to have seen him there. Schultz was until a few years ago, until his retirement, with Stingel as president of the office for employment in Nuremberg.

Q: Yes.

A: He appeared – I wanted to have a witness for that which was to come....

Q: This is a very important point, this point, because...

A: Why is it so important?

Q: No, I believe that the Jews were workers, but not just workers. I believe in various fields they were specialists.

A: I know, I shall get to that.

Q: and that is very important.

A: Yes, yes. However, the Jews were not just saved by me from being killed because they were workers, but also for humane reasons. I will just get to that. I will give you proof for this.

Q: Yes, yes. But these are two different...

A: I know, two different views. I never asked Hamann to sit down. He had to remain standing. The conversation was not very long. Schultz came very quickly – I knew he was there. I then told him something like: if you kill the Jews in Schaulen tomorrow, I will call on the German police and have them shoot the SD. Report this to your Jaeger, what I just said...

Q: German police, this means the regular police...

A: regular police.

Q: yes.

A: eh hh

Q: Was this really possible...

A: the...

Q: Well, was such a thing possible...

C: Was this possible?

Q: Yes.

A: If this was possible?

(All speak at the same time)

A: Yes, I know. Naturally, this was a question. I took the chance. At the moment this was a

great risk for me.

Q: I think so.

A: It also had consequences. I shall get to that, if you are interested.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: What I am telling you can be proved by the statement under oath by Mr. Schultz already during the trial in Ulm. When the trial in Ulm took place and I had to travel there as witness from Oldeslohe, where I lived, it was the first time that I saw Mr. Schultz again since the collapse. A constable – I later became aware of this that this had all been organized by the tribunal – saw that we greeted each other and came immediately to us and said: you in this room, you in that room. When I then said – I was not afraid – why? Why? He said: you will see that later during the trial.

W: No consultation, right?

A: No consultation. This was very proper. It was later to my advantage that this did not take place. I would anyway – I had a clear conscience – and Schultz remained totally without worrying.... They wanted to know how I might have reacted as district commissar there and Schultz confirmed free and openly under oath what I have said here. And in my jury trial – which was after 15 years – he stated exactly the same thing as a witness. I then wrote a report to the Reichscommissar and sent the report by means of my administrative Junker Schrepfer, because I could not get away – after all, I was not the postal clerk – I did not have to bring a report to the Reichscommissar, but this was very urgent. I phoned him and asked his secretary, Mrs. Dietz, if the Reichscommissar was there. Yes. And then I immediately sent my administrative Junker Schrepfer with the report to Riga – the report about this matter. Now, to your question: would I have made them fire? I have thought about that very much, etc., etc. I would have I did.... the next morning it was to start. I had my police ...SS and regional police chief Pauly, living in Ahnfeld near Hannover.....

A: Are your parents still....

C: Yes.

A: ...in Hamburg?

C: In Hamburg.

A: Did you now have a chance to visit your parents?

C: Yes

- A: ... also were able to spend the night with your parents?
- C: Yes
- A: Nice.
- Q: Well, let's go.
- A: Dr. Sorel, we were talking about – or you put up the question about the killing of the Jews....
- Q: The fight between the....
- A: I see, yes, yes, no....
- Q: The fight between the special forces and SS, Himmler....
- A:and the civilian administration.
- Q: The Jews, they wanted to kill the Jews without....
- A: And were met with strong resistance from the district commissar.
- C: Without....without.....one moment...
- Q: without economic...
- C: reflections.
- Q: reflections, and the people like you, and the people of the civilian administration and the East Ministry, they wanted...
- A: Yes. One could...
- Q: they wanted to use the Jewish workforce. Both were important.
- A: If one.....
- Q: ... because the Jews were the specialists in many areas. Am I right about that?
- A: Certainly. The Jewish skilled workers were actually the backbone of the leather factory. To be precise, we had two leather factories.
- Q: Yes.
- A: Now, the idea might occur – which would be logical – that the district commissar also was

personally responsible for the utilization of the work force of the county which would entail that he would have to defend himself under all circumstances against the appearance of Hamann in order to preserve the workforce for the leather factory for the leather factory. But Jews also were working by the hundreds at the airport, etc.

Q: There is an airport in Schaulen?

A: A large airport.

Q: Military?

A: A military airport. Thus, the district commissar had to take care, under all circumstances, that the Jews were not killed, because the leather factory would have been unable to fulfill its task.

Q: Yes.

A: If you say that, this is absolutely the case on one hand. On the other hand, human considerations were also decisive for me – I already gave you some examples from my youth as area chief, although just a few examples. It would have been possible for me to make an offer to the SD and I could have said: give me a few days time. We need the skilled workers for the front. That is, not for the front, but to include the products which were made for the front in the leather factory. I can make a selection. All the women, all the children, all the invalids, all the old people that might have been – I never knew – several thousand, at least a large number, who would have been selected out and could have been liquidated. And if I had been brutal, I could even have said that we would have a few thousand gluttons less (after all, I also had to take care of that). It might be that Hamann or Jaeger would have agreed to this compromise and might have said: the district commissar Gewecke is ready to at least somewhat muck out the sty of Schaulen.

Q: to clean it.

A: To the extent that the skilled workers would not have been taken.

Q: This means exactly to rescue the...

A: I know, the skilled workers....

Q: ... those able to work and the skilled workers...

A: yes, yes.

Q: You were ready and you had no other possibility to hand over the others to the special forces...

A: I did not....

Q: for liquidation.

A: Sir, sir, I did not do this. And during my trial – to which have to come back again – I believe that I told you that already in a letter, where I cited one part where I mentioned the supposed acquittal.....

Q: But I have... I have.... I have a question: your fight, let's say the commissar fight, the district commissar fight, the general commissar and Reich commissar fight for this Jewish workforce, you knew exactly that this was a hopeless fight...

A: Yes.

Q: because you knew that the aim, the final aim, was killing.

A: Yes, I know. At the moment when I told Hamann – I have to repeat it – when I said in so many words – It was confirmed under oath by Schultz, as I stated, twice confirmed – if you have the Jews liquidated tomorrow, I have you shot.

Q: But did you but did you exactly make the offer to Hamann...

A: Which offer?

Q: I will give you the aged, the old people, the children, but leave me the....

A: I never spoke of this.

Q: But did you think that?

A: No. It was clear to me that this was out of the question. No Jews killed, not a single one.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: Right? Based on my moral attitude.

Q: Your humane attitude.

A: Yes, yes, that was primary.

Q: Yes.

A: And I naturally had the success in the end, I was able to report what I had declared was – even with a rage in my belly, as the saying goes – accepted by the SD, accepted by the SD, and I also was able to keep my workforce.

Q: Yes.

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Q: Trampendach.

A: As far as I know, he was chief of the political section with the Reich Commissar.

Q: Yes, yes.

W: And Burmeister was also....

A: Burmeister was.... He headed the Main Section One – Politics and Administration.

Q: Burmeister.

A: Yes, and under Burmeister, Trampendach headed the political department.

Q: Burmeister, this is a North German name.

A: Yes, but I think that he lived more in the South, in Hessen or so. I cannot say that for sure, I have no contact with him. Not many of that generation are still alive. This should be clear. I said that not many of that generation are still alive.

Q: No, no, no, no. There is not...

W: My husband was one of the youngest ones, after all.

A: I was the youngest.

W: Yes, the youngest member of the Reichstag, and the youngest of all of them.

A: Please don't record my chewing [*translator's remark: they are eating cake*], let me finish my cake.

Q: No, one minute.

A: Well, we can continue.

Q: No, please continue eating.

W: No, he has had enough.

A: We stopped with the question if I saved the Jews just because they were the workforce. I told you – to summarize again – that for me human consideration played a primary role,

because I could have made an offer to Hamann, as I told you, that he could have the elderly, the aged, the young ones, we make a selection, and leave me the workforce. This might have been an acceptable offer for the SS. And I would have kept the workforce without much worry.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. I did the opposite. And now you had asked earlier...

Q: But you, you have..... it was your own humane....

A: I was the only one..... I stood.....

Q: But in others.... there were other district commissars who did exactly that.

A: Who did the opposite?

Q: The opposite.

A: I know that. I know that. I have the case.... I don't like to say this, but we have no longer any contact, to mention Erren, Gerd Erren, living at Spiringstrasse in Bergedorf, as far as I know, Spiringstrasse in Bergedorf, who was convicted to life. And I read last year in the newspaper, at least some time ago, that the trial was suspended...

Q: Yes?

A: He had filed for appeal was suspended because he was no longer fully mentally responsible. He got a life sentence, thus he has....

Q: He was district commissar in Slonim.

A: Slonim, we already mentioned this.

Q: He had a name – the bloody district commissar.

A: Please? The....

Q: The bloody district commissar of Slonim.

A: Yes, yes. He actually did personally lead the shooting of Jews, at the side of the local SS leaders and executed the shootings personally. He was just like the district commissar Wulf in Vilna who had 40 farmers shot because they refused deliveries, according to testimony by Bräutigam. I already mentioned this. He also was honorary SS leader, Erren.

Q: Yes.

A: Erren, yes.

Q: Yes. Erren was SS leader.

A: And the SS leader – I cannot quite remember, who at the time was the SS and Pol leader, SS and police leader for White Ruthenia, a close friend of Erren. We got to know each other in the camp and often took walks together, and at that time he eternally spoke brilliantly of this SS leader, this close friendship. He was later put to death.... because of the killing of Jews in White Ruthenia.

Q: Which name?

A: I am trying to...

Q: There also was...

A: I don't know any more.

Q: another district commissar, but I believe he also was very humane, district commissar Carl von Sluzk.

A: Carl von Sluzk, yes, he was district chief in Rennsburg near us....

Q: Yes.

A: ... he took part in World War I with EK.

Q: Old fighter.

A: Old fighter, if you want to say it this way. He was with office manager with Attorney Harkens in Hohenwestet.

Q: He has a memory, this is wonderful.

A: and he was a very nice man. He did not do harm to Jews.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: However, I only know this from hearsay, please note.

Q: Yes, but I said, and this is....

A: But he is already dead, Hans Carl.

Q: Yes. But it is true, your fight was hopeless.

A: My fight against the SD was hopeless? Yes, in the beginning...

Q: Yes, because you knew that the final aim was the killing. And it is difficult to say...

A: I still can... yes, Doctor Sorel, I would like to....

Q: in your area, you have saved the Jews.

A: I would like to respond as follows:

Q: There are many Jews from Schaulen who....

A: What?

Q: There are many Jews from Schaulen who are still alive.

A: I know that, I know.

W: But I was so shaken. My husband has saved all these Jews, and they tried now to bring him to the gallows. That has shaken me. I was then already at that time at the Jewish Council or in Geneva, right?

A: you cannot say that....

W: that was the highest person in Geneva. I don't know his name...

A: In Geneva.... You know more about this, is there at the UNO some....

W: No, they lived not directly at the UNO, across the street, right?

A: Possibly a branch of International Judaism in Geneva, I believe so.

W: Our daughter lives in Geneva. I was there, right? I say, my husband has saved all these Jews and now they are trying by all means to kind of hang him....

Q: You mean this was for World Judaism? A representative...

A: I don't know. My wife means....

W: International Judaism. Where Goldmann had this later.

A: Nachum Goldmann.....

Q: I have heard this name...

- A: Goldmann is currently the head or representative of...
- Q: the representative of the World Jewish Congress, I believe.
- A: of the Jewish Congress, or the International of Judaism.... the World Center of Judaism. At the time....
- W: the process was then suspended again by the state attorney because there was nothing that they could present. And the Jews kept on trying to bring it up again until a young state attorney in Lübeck this finally did.
- Q: But this is surprising, because I have with.... what is his name.... a Jewish historian...
- A: It is not Reitlinger?
- Q: No, no, no, and he has written a book and in this book he clearly stated that the case of Schaulen is quite unique, because.... because...
- W: Because they were the only ones who were saved.
- Q: Yes, because many Jews remained in Schaulen.
- A: Is it Yerushalmi?
- Q: No, no. Yerushalmi has a.... no....
- A: Do you know the diary of Yerushalmi?
- Q: I heard of it.
- A: I still have it. I still have it.
- W: Because, after all, we had a trial which lasted almost a year. Just because one Jew was hanged, right? And they wanted to (*charge*) my husband....
- A: I do have.... I have...
- Q: Oh, yes. I heard of that.
- A: I do have...
- Q: Mazowietzki, yes.
- W: Yes, yes.

- A: I did correct the passage in your letter regarding the acquittal. This is about a trial for the hanging of one Jew in 43. In the year.... September 41, we talked about that, I have while active, I.....
- Q: No, no. We have not finished with this job.
- A: We also can omit this subject.
- W: ... One first has to continue with this.
- Q: We can....
- A: *(It)* leads.... It leads away.
- Q: I have.... I have read various reports by Stahlecker, for example. And he writes to Himmler just about this question about Jewish workers and Jewish specialists. And he states, for example, that in Kauen and in Vilna 80% of the dentists, for example, were Jews.
- A: Here too.
- Q: And he writes: if we kill these Jews, we will have no more dentists. What shall we do? This is a question. He is asking, Stahlecker.
- A: Yes, yes, I know.
- Q: And there is also....
- A: This was.... this was no reflection from humanitarian concerns, but for expediency.
- Q: Yes, yes.
- A: Naturally, we will just shoot a few fewer, something like that.
- Q: And I also have reports from the armament inspectorate, by General Thomas, for example....
- A: General Thomas?
- Q: Yes.
- A: Thomas, yes.
- Q: Yes.
- A: I know this name.

Q: And he writes exactly the same. He states, that the Jews have abilities....

A: When..... Thomas.... Thomas was the head of the concentration camps.

Q: Yes, yes. And he says, what happens here ... what will happen when the killing goes on? And that is the.... I am very interested about this, this fight between between Himmler, who absolutely wanted the Jews killed and the people who wanted to rescue the Jews for professional reasons. And there were naturally also humane reasons.

A: I just wanted to say this; I just wanted to object here. Thus, not only save as workers, but also for humane reasons. Yes? For me... for me – this was the case for me – and look here... here my head interpreter writes on April 21, in the original, here Otto Leppert from America, Illinois, Chicago, February 21, 1966...

Q: Yes?

A: “As can be seen from my letter to you of January 17, 1966, as witness in the case of Mr. Gewecke (this was the trial my wife talked about earlier) as district commissar to describe his general activity and his character. All these witnesses appreciate Mr. Gewecke as a very decent, humane functionary, who had no tendency to kill Jews,” (Underlined by me), to persecute religious creeds and others not of German nationality. The Catholic bishop Vincent Bryzgys can and will confirm the statements that he often visited Catholic priests and parishes – I am reading here literally – in the district of Mr. H. Gewecke. All of their – the priests – opinions about H. Gewecke were very good. The bishop never encountered any obstacles within the area of the retired commissar, to visit the faithful unhindered and without interference, to conduct mass, to preach and it was particularly emphasized that the priests were of the opinion that particularly in the area of Schaulen the Jews were treated humanely. This is.... Then there is another thing regarding the subject of Jews: Augustinus Ramanauskas, our friend, the area chief.... the land councillor of the district Telsiai, Telschen, can and will prove that in Telschen the largest Jewish library of the Rabbinical Seminary Jaschiboto there, which was taken into the protection of H.G. Aramanauskas will also be able to say more about the Jewish questions, about which he was dealing with H.G. Teacher Matinas Purdinas – you knew him well – teacher at the Gymnasium and interpreter, was a very close acquaintance of Mr. Gewecke, and will be able to talk about the Jewish question. The legal councillor of the mayor of the city of Schaulen, Vladas Pautsa and the widow of the district chief of Schaulen who had been murdered by the Communists, Mrs. Antonina Noraika, can and will prove that the Jews in Schaulen were particularly humanely treated.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, thus, primarily the humane attitude, and, in the overall picture, the background against which the power struggle between the SS and the SD, as expressed personally: Himmler was always listened to by the Führer, as later.....

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(Sound only)

Q: Well, now....

A: What is this?

Q: No, that is about this... this....

A: Ute, don't let the loose files fall out.

Q: Can you now.... for me it is difficult to imagine. Can you describe what a ghetto was?

A: A ghetto?

Q: Yes, what is it?

A: I can describe it. In Schaulen I had – this was one of my duties – to take care of the ghetto with regard to the economy, food supply and work policy or providing workers. These for the three factors. In Schaulen – and this was the case everywhere – the ghetto was subject to the SD and security police, the local security police concerning security policy, or rather security policing. Right? It governed, if I can express it in this way, in the ghetto.

Q: This means that there were two authorities.

A: There were two authorities for the ghetto: the district commissar for economy, food supply, work scheduling; the SD for the supervision concerning the security policy, the security police.

Q: Police work?

A: Concerning the security police.

Q: Yes.

A: The.... In the ghetto was the Jewish Council. The Jewish Council consist.....

Q: What is the Jewish Council?

A: The Jewish Council was the head of the Jewish self-administration. The Ghetto – The Jews administered themselves in the Ghetto. They had their Jewish Council. The Jewish Council had authority regarding the ghetto residents. The Jewish Council had a large office which was again divided – analogous to the tasks of the district commissar – into the departments of business, food supply and work assignment. The Jewish Council – I even could give you the names of the Jewish Council, but I don't think that this is of interest.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: Mendel.... Mr. Mendel was the highest official in the Jewish Council; he died; Mr. Leibowitz, I remember these two names. The Jewish Council...

Q: Leibowitz... Leibowitz was the Jewish Elder?

A: the....

Q: Eh, the Jewish Elder?

A: The president or the highest official was....

Q: That is the Jewish Elder.

A: You can also call it the Jewish Elder. Jewish Council, Jewish Elder. I always called it Jewish Council.

Q: Yes.

A: It....it was called Elder Council in the ghetto, Jewish Council. The Jewish Council often came to the district commissar, was received personally by me. The tribunal in my trial did.... it was my impression did express its surprise that the district commissar personally received the Jewish Council. My secretary....

Q: But why not? I don't understand.

W: And to sit down.

A: I get to that. And I was asked....

Q: Is this surprising?

A: Certainly, this is surprising.

Q: Why?

A: It was also for the tribunal. I could have said that I did not have time to deal with the Jewish Council. If I had been mean – please understand this psychologically – I would have said, if I persecute Jews, they would not have even dared to come to me. They trusted me to come to. Although they did not have a passe-partout, but had to call my secretary. They were very humble, which you can understand...

Q: Very humble?

A: Very humble.

Q: This means very....

A: After all, they had no rights whatsoever. Not because of me, but politically, no rights.

Q: They were afraid.

A: What?

Q: They were afraid.

A: They were not afraid of me.

Q: No, but generally.

A: Generally? No? They called to ask if the district commissar would again receive Mr. Mendel. I then made a date and they came with their problems. I was asked in the tribunal – what you just said was very good – if I made the Jewish Council stand against the wall. No put against the wall, but made him stand at the wall, or if I invited him to sit down...

Q: That means a chair?

A: Sit at the table. I truthfully stated that the Jewish Council would be asked to sit down every time he came to see me, that we I had a large office; it was the court building of Schaulen. My order squires had, at the beginning – I already told you that – the task to get quarters for me and they confiscated the court building and installed the office of the district commissar there. It was a large office. It contained my desk and here in the back was a table to sit down with visitors. I did not stay at my desk. I went and sat down with the Jew. It would also have been possible to say beforehand that I would not want to be disturbed by you and directed them to Mr. Foss. Mr. Foss, a German from Ratzeburg, was a local head of the NSDAP in Ratzeburg. A very valuable, loyal friend, with whom I was in close contact until his death, he was in charge of the food supply section. He had gathered experience during the war, already at the beginning, I got him later, with the food supply office in Lübeck. I could have directed the Jewish Council to him... or to the head of the section on business, Mr. Schriever. But I always received the Jewish Council myself, I reserved this for myself.

Q: How were these people? Were they young?

A: No, no, no. They were considerably older than I.

Q: And were they religious people?

A: Yes, yes. They were very reliable people; they never lied to me. I have to admit that. After all, I did have to make spot checks, right? I have to say that the gentlemen of the Jewish Council were reliable, good people. And – yes – they came to me with their problems, they wanted to know the situation with the fuel allotment for the severe winter. In the east we had very, very hard winters, 40 degrees and more below. In the journal by Yeruschalmi that I already mentioned – it was entered as evidence in my trial. Mr. Yeruschalmi praised me very much in several places, and, for example, the Jews – he kept the archives as member of the Jewish Council. And he also put into archives these things, and he was told that the district commissar repeatedly (*provided*) special allotments ... and special allotments meant, after all, beyond the spare rations.... for food and fuel.

Q: Were the rations very spare?

A: Yes. They were set at half of those for the civilian population of Lithuania. Very hard.

Q: Very hard.

A: Very hard. I have to say so. I did say that the Jews were totally without rights.

Q: Yes.

A: In this aspect too.

Q: This means that the situation regarding food supply..... the situation was very....

A: The Jews yes. The Jews felt forced, to resort to food smuggling, in spite of the fact that it was forbidden. I have to admit that. The food rations for the civilian population, for the Reich-German population and for the Jews, there were three categories which were determined by the Reich Commissar. The district commissar, as subordinate could not change anything on this; he only was able – because he had a certain amount of freedom of action and because he did not – how should I say that – lack a certain amount of courage as seen in the action Hamann, to provide sometimes special allotments by ordering my business office to please give another wholesale certificate to the Jewish Council.

Q: Yes. And there were people who.... you said that the situation with regard to food supply was very hard were there people who died because there was not enough to eat?

A: I cannot satisfactorily answer this question. I don't know. But I consider it possible that – if there were such cases – I will not exclude this possibility.

Q: Yes, I understand

A: I consider is possible, that it would have been reported to me.

W: After all, they did smuggle in a great deal.

A: I was just going to say that.

W: They did from Maistas...

A: Yes.

W: And the smuggled and then the SD complained, you had to revise this entry.

A: Otherwise would the SD... thus me, in parenthesis, he did not say that, in spite of the matter Hamann, would he – after all he had the protective task of the security police, right? – make an example, even without regard to the workforce...

Q: Did you yourself often visit the ghetto?

A: I – not often, repeatedly, sometimes. Either irregularly now and then or, if there was a special reason. We had typhoid in Schaulen...

Q: Oh.

A: An epidemic of typhoid...

Q: In the ghetto or generally?

A: No, generally. In the ghetto too. In the ghetto too. In Schaulen itself we had two large military hospitals, army hospitals which were taken care of by the Reich Germans who were there, especially by our families, our children and myself, etc. by.... to the wounded by special allotments of candy, chocolate and smoking materials. The children went there regularly and visited the hospitals and took care of people. There..... Then there was, as I said, the Kondor Legion, the military units, the army, Kondor Legion, squadron Himmelmann, fighting squadron Himmelmann.

Q: Fighter planes, fighter planes.

A: At the airport, at the airport. There was typhoid there also at times. We.... and in the ghetto some died. Soldiers also died from it. I knew the number, but I cannot recall it now.

Q: And the living conditions in the ghetto, this was also very difficult?

A: The living conditions in the ghetto were... more or less inhumane.

Q: Inhumane....

A: I have to openly admit that.

Q: which means?

A: This means: at the lowest level in square footage, yes? Families crowded together with children.

Q: Yes, how many people in one...

A: Well, I cannot tell you that. Then, with the transfer of the Jews to the ghetto, all mobile possessions which were not absolutely necessary for clothing and foot wear, were confiscated on orders from above, such as furs, etc. They were then transferred to the area commissariat, registered there by my finance department, delivered via the Reich commissar or the general commissar to the Reich commissar and...

Q: Oh, yes, this is also ... this is interesting. You also had a fight with... with people of the SD regarding these... this matter. Yes, I have... with Jaeger. There are these.... these letters.

A: Yes. May I read them aloud?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: This one is from Gewecke. To the Reich Commissar for the Eastern Region, September 8, 1941. Today, a colonel Stasis Senulis, a resident of Schadow, district Ponewisch, came to the office of the district commissariat in Schaulen and declared that, on orders by SS-Colonel [Standartenführer] Jaeger, he was to take charge of all silver and gold objects from Jewish ownership. He had been in Schadow and also in Retwelischkis. Both mayors had refused – on orders of the district commissar – to hand over these objects. (That is obvious). I have strictly forbidden to Senulis to execute the orders of Colonel Jaeger and I ask you to forbid Colonel Jaeger all unauthorized action in Jewish matters. The two certifications, copies of which are enclosed, have been taken from colonel Senulis. This latest incident proves very clearly that Colonel Jaeger disregards the orders given by the Reich commissar and district commissar regarding the seizure of Jewish assets, and deals with matters that are none of his business. If these interferences by the SS will not finally cease, I, as district commissar have to renounce any responsibility for an orderly seizure of the Jewish assets. I also will use any available chance to emphatically instruct the area chiefs and mayors to refuse to take orders except from the Reich commissar, general and district commissar. Because of the importance of its content, the general commissar in Kauen is receiving the same letter.

Q: That is clear.

A: Clear and unambiguous.

Q: Yes.

W: Yes, you are really unambiguous.

Q: Yes, this is very unambiguous.

A: Well, yes.

Q: Very courageous.

W: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Because he steal..... this Jaeger, he was an activist, this....

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: He wanted...

A: I want to.... I want to you...

Bobine 10 - Gewecke 10A

(Sound only)

A: Nothing happened. They did not get what they wanted. Right? I remember one case....

Q: But in this....

A: Do you know the case about Rasainen? This was the same case. In Rasainen.... During a trip through my district in Rasainen. Rasainen is a district adjoining Kovno.

Q: Yes?

A: This means Schaulen.... to the East, the easternmost district of mine. There the area chief reported to me that an SS leader had come on orders of Jaeger to confiscate Jewish assets. They had already been confiscated by the area chief on my orders. There was no ghetto in Rasainen but individual Jews who were not killed there – I would like to stress – as far as I know, right? But their assets had to be collected to the extent that they were special goods, they had to be delivered and that was when the deputy of Jaeger appeared in order to get these assets from the area chief. The area chief refused; he had orders to this effect from me, and when I got there during my trip through the district he reported the incident to me. I just wanted to say that this was a similar event. I remember it very clearly. It has also been mentioned during my trial. Rasainen.

Q: But what was.... it is hard to understand, what was the Jewish assets. Because these people were...

A: Gold, gold objects.

Q: Were these people rich or poor? These Jews?

A: Jewish assets were furs, jewelry, which means gold and silver objects, furs....

Q: But they....

A: AND Jewish craftsmen whose businesses were taken away from them, that was the... that was the...

Q: But the Jews had more assets than the...

A: Than the Lithuanians, in general.

Q: the Lithuanians in general.

A: yes, yes.

Q: They were wealthier?

A: Well, how should I say that. I mean that the Eastern Jews – you know this term, Eastern Jews – particularly from Poland, coming from Poland, the Polish Jews. We also had called them collectively Eastern Jews. They lived at a lower level than the Jews, e.g., in Germany.

Q: Western Jews.

A: Let's call them Western Jews, that is clear.

Q: This means that the Jews in Germany were wealthier.

A: Certainly, certainly, certainly.

Q: And these.... yes, and And the.... But these Eastern Jews had gold and....

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Furs, there were also carpets. The intellectuals or the intelligentsia, to express it better, were also among them. We... we had Jewish dentists – this subject was already once discussed – there were Jewish doctors, Jewish pharmacists, etc. After all, in a city of about 45,000 inhabitants, Schaulen, with a share of about 5000 – minus the children – let's assume 2-3000, among those were a number with assets, right? With cash, with jewelry, valuables.

Q: But these Jews were what... were intellectuals, or were they workers?

A: The large majority were employees, mainly skilled workers in Schaulen.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Right?

Q: Yes.

A: There were also craftsmen, but percentage wise this was not very high for craftsmen and even lower for academic Jews....

Q: Academic Jews.

A: There were also those.

Q: Doctors?

A: Doctors, dentists; for example in the hospital in Schaulen – a large hospital – Jewish doctors worked there with my permission until the end. Right? They had a permit issued by the German employment office in the ghetto, thus my employment office.

Q: And they worked in the general hospital?

A: They worked in the Lithuanian hospital, had permission to leave the ghetto without supervision and without escort – escort is nonsense – without police escort, right? Dentists, doctors, particularly for the hospital in Schaulen. This is a fact, right? I know that for sure.

Q: Yes, yes. And compared to the share of the Jewish population with the Lithuanian population, were there many Jewish doctors, for example?

A: No, not so many.

Q: No, not so many, no.

A: Perhaps 5, 6.

Q: Yes, the nivea of these people was...

A: The..... the nivea of the majority, thus the nivea was... or the majority naturally consisted of , as I already stated, of employees, overwhelmingly employees.

Q: Yes, and there was an order to confiscate these assets?

A: Confiscate.

Q: And what does it mean in your letters when you are asking, what is the exact meaning of “if

these interferences by the SS will nor cease, I, as district commissar have to deny responsibility for an orderly seizure of the Jewish assets.”

A: Naturally.

Q: What does it mean “orderly seizure.”

A: For a legal seizure, I might say.

Q: Yes.

A: Right? The Reich minister was entitled to enact material law. The Reich commissar could do so in part too, and what they decreed, that was for me – if I may say so – law.

Q: Yes, I understand.

A: I would have acted illegally if I had permitted, for example,

Q: Oh, legal confiscation.

A: yes... a co-worker: So, you can just squirrel away a few rings. You understand what I mean?

Q: Yes, yes, naturally.

A: Right? This means orderly in the sense of legality.

Q: And these assets were sent to where? To Berlin?

A: Sent where?

Q: Yes.

A: The valuables?

Q: Yes.

A: From me, as I already stated, to the Reich commissar.

Q: Oh, in Kovno.

A: In Riga.

Q: In Riga.

- A: Yes. In Riga was a central confiscation location for the confiscation of all the Jewish valuables to the extent that the SD or Colonel Jaeger who was very active in my district, as you have seen from my report, had not confiscated them illegally or privately – the latter I would like to put in parenthesis.
- Q: Yes. Yes. Now another question. I have.... I have read, but I don't remember where, that in 1942 an order came, or a prohibition for the people, the residents of the ghetto, for the Jews... ah for the women to births....
- A: Termination of pregnancy.
- Q: Pregnancy....
- A: or not termination, but generally to give birth.
- Q: Yes.
- A: It was a prohibition, I know that.
- Q: It was forbidden to have children.... how was that possible...
- A: It still happened, it still happened, that children were born....
- Q: Yes?
- A: They stayed alive. It was none of my business.
- Q: Did you know?
- A: Yes.
- Q: Yes?
- A: Yes.
- Q: But how was it possible a....
- A: The Jewish council....the Jewish council; I already told you that they came to me with their problems, repeatedly. And he reported this to me, because these orders which I received from above, I had to pass them on to the Jewish council. This was clear.
- Q: Yes, naturally.
- A: On the other hand, I spoke up for the life of the Jews. On the other hand I, as district commissar, also had to take care of tasks relating to sovereign jurisdiction. This was a task

which I actually considered below my dignity. I had other duties to fulfill, bigger ones. I have these orders, for example, the Jews – I will not summarize the whole list of measures, right?

Q: This is very important.

A: The Jews had – one moment please.....

Q: You have everything prepared. Would you like a....

Daughter: Thank you, thank you, take one from me if you.....

A: The Jews had to wear the Jewish star.... I just looked it up again.... to wear the Jewish star.

Q: Where, where?

A: In general.

Q: Yes, but where?

A: Here, here, here.

Q: Here?

A: Yes. Had to wear the Jewish star. They were not allowed to use the sidewalk when they were going by themselves.

Q: What means “Bürgersteig” [*a term for sidewalk*]

A: The “Bürgersteige”

Q: What? Oh, sidewalk.

A: Sidewalk. Jews going by themselves were Jews with a permit from the German employment office in the ghetto.... This German employment office in the ghetto was staffed by a Lithuanian who was an assistant for my office. He had the authority granted by me to issue permits. Those needing the Jewish workers were such as the area commissar himself, the employment office, the German office for the mail, the mail office, the army primarily, the airport of the army, the army command office, the German offices such as.... not offices... economic enterprises which I already cited: Binozentrum, Maistas, leather factory, etc. Even the SD employed individual Jews who had permits from the area commissar.

Q: Yes, the SD.

A: The SD. I was able to insist on that with the SD. I stated: otherwise you will not get any Jews. And then.... thus, first, the Jewish star for everybody; no use of sidewalks for

individual Jews, right?

Q: Yes.

A: Well.... we can omit this; this is obvious.... no use of sidewalk; then the seizure of Jewish property, we already....

Q: Yes

A:talked about this.

Q: Yes, yes. But, for example, this question about births... prohibition of births, how is it possible to...

A: These.... I would like to say, theses.... these instructions, as I just stated, the treatment of the Jews regarding the wearing of the Jewish star, the prohibition of walking on the sidewalk, that had to be posted on large posters with the signature of the district commissar. I have...

Q: What was written, for example, regarding these births,

A: Effective.... Effective immediately, it is prohibited to the Jews to step on the sidewalks. Secondly, to march in columns for work only under the supervision of the Lithuanian police. For example, in this manner, right? About like that. That was communicated to the Jewish council, with simultaneous information to the public by posters...

Q: Did the.... did the Jewish council (*have*) power or....

A: The Jewish council was provided with a power of discipline with regard to the inhabitants of the ghetto. There was even in the ghetto a police, a Jewish police, which could mete out punishment as arranged by the Jewish council – which they probably never did...

Q: Who were these people of the Jewish police, were they Jews?

A: They were Jews, Jewish police, with a yellow armband.

Q: Weapons?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: No weapons.

A: With a wooden baton.

Q: Baton.

A: Baton.

Q: That was enough?

A: That was none of my business. The Jewish council provided them with those. What they did with it? I did not concern myself about this; that would have gone too far.

Q: Yes, yes, yes, I understand.

A: Right?

Q: This means the Jewish council had to obey.

A: The Jewish council was the authority....

Q: Yes.

A: for the.... for the Jews and it enforced it if this was necessary. When the food smuggling got out of control – my wife has already mentioned it – so that the SD told me quite clearly and energetically, and they were not that pleased with me – see the Hamann matter etc., and other instances such as the complaint about Jaeger etc. – they told me often: if the food smuggling by the Jews does not finally stop, we will nab the Jews.

Q: Nab?

A: To nab means.... this means we take, right, arrest or liquidate, etc. I would have been unable to prevent this. I would have been able to prevent a major action such as Jaeger had planned, but to prevent an individual action, like a pin prick by the SD, well, that I could not. Going into the ghetto in the dark of night and get Jews out....

Q: What means in the dark of night?

Bobine 11 - Gewecke 11A

A: I want to add something to the conditions which I had to make for the Jews via the Jewish council: the practice of certain trades was prohibited – they were listed; the use of public transports was prohibited; using sidewalks – I already mentioned that; wearing of the star of David – I also mentioned that already; food or other items were prohibited from being brought into the ghetto; and – the last point – working orders for the Jews, to the extent that they were able to work...

Q: With all these laws it was overall a very difficult situation.

A: I already said so: the Jews had no rights. I knew that.

Q: What?

A: Had no rights.

Q: Yes.

A: I knew that.

Q: Yes, yes. It was very difficult.

A: I repeatedly spot-checked the Jewish worker groups – I remember this very clearly – I will get to that in detail – when they came from the airport – that were several hundred – spot-checked at major time intervals, because the SD threatened me – I already stated that – if that would not stop, something was going to happen.

Q: But they had to march in military fashion...

A: In formation, escorted by Lithuanian police with rifles, not Jewish police. Lithuanian police. Jewish police acted in the ghetto. When such a column arrived from the ghetto, I had them stop and had them checked, I never made body checks myself. Also only spot checks; I knew exactly those from 10, 12 who had so and so many spot checks. Yes. Thus nobody from the SD could say.... and the SD – it even happened that the SD drove past and looked over, etc. I would like to

Q: And they were.... these Jewish columns were singing?

A: Singing?

Q: Yes.

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No, now I am falling of the roofs.

Q: No?

A: No, no. No, no. Now, to conclude this matter, I would like to cite directly from my final verdict: “The accused Gewecke has to be credited with the fact that during the checks of Jewish worker columns for food items which he conducted personally, he refrained from ordering any harsh or cruel measures.” This was said by Jewish witnesses...

Q: did this...

A: during the trial under oath. They were asked and stated under oath “no, he never resorted to harsh measures.”

Q: Yes, this is obvious.

A: This is written in my verdict. I copied it word for word in order to read it to you.

Q: And what is the story that I read in a book about the Vilna ghetto, but I believe that it was the same in all the ghettos, this story about the certificates. There were certificates and the people who had certificates were allowed to live and the people who did not have certificates...

A: I know. They were all shot. Hingst.

Q: Hingst.... yes, Hingst was...

A: Hingst.

Q: This was in Vilna.

A: Vilna, yes. District chief in Schleswig-Holstein...

Q: Yellow certificates.

A: What?

Q: Yellow... yellow certificates. I believe the color.

A: That I don't know. No, I only know that in.... I would otherwise not have said that, but because you said it, I can confirm it. All Jews that were unable to work were shot in Vilna.

Q: Yes. And I believe they were shot in a forest...

A: Yes, yes.

Q:Ponar, Ponari.

A: Yes, something like that.

Q: Yes, this is near Vilna.

A: I did not ask. When I had the Hamann matter; why did not the district commissar in Kovno, or even the general commissar, (*prevent*) the destruction of the Jewish.... the ghetto of

Kovno, which was very much larger – I mean the number of Jews – than the one in Schaulen. Compared to this, the Schaulen ghetto was small. I am aware of this. Why did they not prevent this? I was a witness to it. My driver, who is living here in this area, he knows it too. We drove to a business meeting in Kovno – which was also mentioned in my trial – and I saw rubble, smoking rubble of the ghetto. This had happened very recently that the whole ghetto was destroyed. In a cruel manner.

Q: When was this?

A: What?

Q: When.... when was this?

A: That was in 1941, about.

Q: Yes.

A: Close to the beginning.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, I asked myself....

Q: Yes, but I believe that in Kovno were – how do you say it [*in French*] forts, oh, forts, fortresses.

C: Oh, fortresses.

Q: Fortress, yes. There were fortresses in Kovno.

A: Kovno was a fortress.

Q: No, there were many fortresses..... fortress 1, fortress 2.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Fortress 9.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Fortress 9. And the people were killed in these fortresses.

A: Yes, yes. This is possible.

Q: Yes.

A: I did see a picture, right? If the Jews were killed in the various fortresses, or globally in one fortress, I don't know that.

Q: And in Schaulen.... did these certificates not exist?

A: Which certificates?

Q: Certificates for able and unable...

A: No. Why? After all, it was not the intention After all, I was responsible for their employment. There was no intention to kill them. On the contrary, we left them in peace. They lived in the ghetto. I cannot say that they lived peacefully, as one tends to say, they were living in fear, this is clear, but they lived in the ghetto and the only ones who had certificates were the individual Jews, or if they went together in a group of three, right? Who had been sent to work by me, right?

W: Passes.

A: Passes.

Q: *(In French)* Oh, well. But I believe that you had stopped. Excuse me.

A: What was that?

Q: Please, please.

A: Well. I had a Jewish worker group under a former sergeant of the German army from World War I, Friedmann.

Q: Yes, a Jew?

A: Yes, naturally. He had the Iron Cross II.

Q: Iron Cross?

A: The Iron Cross from the First World War. He had been an active fighter. Was very proud of it.

Q: Yes?

A: And I know, when I got upstairs to the office of the district commissar in the morning, he would already be there.

Q: Oh, yes?

A: In the beginning he would report with the German salute and....

Q: With the Nazi salute. Yes?

A: That was prohibited to him. That was not the right thing. You understand?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Did you not know that?

W: Yes., yes.

A: Afterwards he would stand very erect.... really erect. Good morning Mr. District Commissar. – Good morning Friedmann.

W: He had many privileges with you, right?

A: Yes, yes, yes. We had a lot of fun together. From time to time he got a box of cigarettes from me or or through my secretary. And if nobody could see it – I had a lot of personnel by then, even Lithuanians, on this court house floor who went back and forth. I was careful to give him a box myself. You can understand why? There were always informers who might have whispered something to the SD or even to Mr. Jaeger.

Q: Naturally.

A: Yes.

Q: But perhaps my..... This question now is quite stupid. It may be a stupidity, but I still would like to pose this question. Did the Jews have a chance at resistance?

A: You are thinking of the Warsaw ghetto?

Q: Yes. Why did they.... because the Germans were not so numerous.

A: They were....

Q: Why did the Germans.... the.... the Jews accept them with such passivity? How to you explain this?

A: You mean.... You mean why did the Jews behave so passively against these draconian measures which I have described?

Q: The Jews even were passive in front of the mass graves. When everything was lost, they went passively to their death...

A: I have.... I never have seen these type of scenes myself, never experienced them; I only

know about it from hearsay, as I already stated at the beginning, within the 20 km strip etc., no Jews were killed and I only know from hearsay from my district farmers who, some of them, were eye witnesses. I know from them that the Jews lay down stoically, resignedly, into the ditches which they had previously had to dig – cruelly – and then that the SD – I really cannot describe it, because I did not see it, right? came with the machine guns...

Q: yes.

A: You are right?

Q: Yes, but how to explain...

A: I have not witnessed any case, I can....

Q: They were stoic...

A: Stoic. You know what I want to say with this?

Q: Yes, naturally. Do you believe that they were courageous?

A: The Jews?

Q: Yes.

A: Courageous?

Q: Yes.

W: That's not it. Stoic is...

A: Stoic is really....

W: ... the opposite.

Q: This is fatalistic.

W: Yes, yes. They were so.... that is without thinking and so...

Q: How do you explain this?

W: I don't know. I find it gruesome. I also cannot understand this.

A: Perhaps, perhaps they were already mentally so far removed – I don't know if you know this expression – so totally apathetic and.... I really ... the expression stoic...

Q: They also were very weak.

A: Also physically weak. That is obvious. Half the ration of the rest of the population. And still, in our area they were not in a bad nutritional condition, because of the smuggling... they also kept on taking things from the district commissar's office, these worker groups. Yes, that was known; the Friedmann group; "it belonged to the district commissar."

W: Yes. They did not live badly.

A: No.

Q: But I believe there were....

A: At Maistas slaughter house. Seimer.... director Seimer, the German there, I often talked to him about that and stated: close one eye.

Q: In this whole story of the Schaulen ghetto, there were different periods.

A: What do you mean by that?

Q: I believe that there was a first period, about from June to December....

A: Yes?

Q: 41. And then there was a more quiet period in 42. And in 43 there was still something else.

A: Oh....

Q: For example, what was this so-called children's action in 43 in the ghetto?

A: 43? Yes. Children's action. The registration of.... 43, when? Do you have the month?

Q: Yes.

A: Can you tell me something about this? Show me something? Read something to me?

Q: November 5, 43.

A: November 43.

Q: Yes, when the children were seized and sent away.

A: 43.

Q: November 43.

A: Yes, there was a children's action. Actually, the SD or the SS has executed the children's action during the night.

Q: Yes.

A: You have to..... if you have documents, these documents should prove the same thing as what I have said. This children's action was executed during the night, in which the children were taken away from the Jewish families. They were then transported away and later killed either by the SD or by the security police or by the action Jaeger. I know about this. Naturally, I was not informed of it ahead of time.

Q: Naturally not.

A: This was an action that caused quite a sensation.

Q: A what?

A: Quite a sensation.

Q: Sensation, oh, yes.

A: caused it.

Q: Yes.

A: I just had to stop as I could not remember the date of 43. I thought that this was later, 44.

Q: No, I believe it was not long before the transfer...

A: Before what?

Q: Before the transfer..... transfer of the ghetto.

A: Transfer of the ghetto?

Q: Yes, yes. There was a last period in the... In the ghetto, right?

A: Is the name Schlef mentioned? SS-leader Schlef?

Q: No, not Schlef. Foerster...

A: At the end...

Q: Foerster.

Bobine 12 - Gewecke 12A

A: If I put these things together that a district commissar such as Wulf, who was able to have 40 men shot without that Lohse....., that Rosenberg, who had asked for the death penalty of the Fuhrer, was able to enforce this.

Q: Yes.

A: And if I also imagine these excesses by Jaeger and all other things, and that the SS and district police chief Lithuania sat in on every district commissar meeting, which bothered me, what business of his was that? We attended just as observers with the SD. If I think about all of this, the general commissar had something on his mind without his telling me. I did not execute his orders.

Q: Yes, well. Let's get back to this last period. You did not have any power....

A: At the end not any more, this means the last half year about, I would say.

Q: In 43 or 44?

A: I would say 44.

Q: 44.

A: Not 45, eh. I would say 44.

Q: But, for example, this children's action. How did that happen? How did that happen?

A: The execution – I don't know about it. I only know that it came like a bolt from the blue.

Q: What?

A: Like a bolt from the blue, without prior notification.

Q: A bolt from the blue.

A: Yes. No Hamann came to me and said: Mr. District Commissar, we will now kill the children. I guarantee you that I would have said the same thing: I will have my police march in. And I would have done so. I would immediately have phoned the Reich Commissar to cover my back....

Q: But how strong was your.....

A: What?

Q: How many people were in your police force? Your police was a force?

A: Well, personally I did not have any police force. That is a subject.... the difference ... or let's say the first question from you. I already told you about the division between civil and police force.

Q: Yes.

A: I, myself, did not have any police force. I only had an SS and police district chief who was under my direct and personal command. This means direct. The SS and police district chief was directly and personally under me. Literally this means that my deputy was not entitled, only I. I was not able to give instructions to the police district chief. But I had the right to being informed. He, in turn, was obligated to inform me about all police actions by his German gendarmerie and the Lithuanian police under his command, together with the area police chiefs, and about actions such as gang control later on or the arrest of saboteurs, which were numerous – blowing up army cables, etc. happened frequently – individual actions, individual cases. And he was under my direct command. This means that when I needed him, I called and he had to come to me, and he did. And....

Q: But you were able to....

A: I was able to..... was able to.....

Q: give orders?

A: No, I could not bypass him. I could not go over his head and simply give orders to a Lithuanian police chief: tomorrow show up with 20 men in order to shoot at the SD, if necessary. I have....

Q: Did this happen in the Eastern area, for example?

A: What?

Q: Such an example, did it happen in the Eastern areas?

A: Like the Hamann action?

Q: No, not like that action.... a fight between SS and police.

A: Happened all the time, all the time.

Q: No, but I mean a fight with guns?

A: I know of no such case. I never got to this, as you know. I would have, if the SD would not have given in. As soon as this happened, that Hamann came to me and had left, I

immediately called for the police district chief and told him: it may be that I need tomorrow so and so many men from the police with guns. And I explained it to him and told him that. I drew his attention to the consequences if he should refuse to put at my disposal police – naturally under his command or some other command. And it worked. The police would have come. This posed a risk for me, great risk....

Q: Yes, this is a great risk...

A: Yes; no. Well, to re-iterate: the district commissar had no police force. The police, the German one – by the way, that was only in the beginning, a special force police which was then called away and put with the known fighting police troops – there were police units who were fighting, militarily, on the side of the army, you may know that. We had that right at the beginning. Perhaps after about half a year they marched off to the front. And then there was the district police chief in my area, as with every district commissar, up to the end, up to the collapse. And then there was the ordinary Lithuanian police. Each district police chief – I already mentioned this – they were called area police chiefs, had under him a certain contingent of local, village, district police which, in turn, were supervised by the German security police.

Q: I understand.

A: That is how it was structured.

Q: I have a.....

A: If we want to talk again about the term police. I had police-type penal authority. The district commissar had police-type penal authority of 6..... up to 6 months, which is.... one moment please.... 19, 11, 12..... as I said, you need a few seconds, just as the gentlemen also said. The police-type penal authority was with the..... not with the district commissar etc. I already said that.

Q: What is....

A: Well. There was a police-type penal authority which the district commissar had towards Reich-Germans and towards Lithuanians and Jews, just as every Land Council in Germany has...

Q: Yes.

A: ... to issue tickets for transgressions and misdemeanors..... as known: transgressions, misdemeanors, crimes, as you know, up to misdemeanors. Severe moonshine distillers, ongoing moonshine distillers, illicit trade, food smuggling, these were punishable but not crimes, they were misdemeanors and were subject to the police penal authority of the district commissar. I could punish people with up to 6 months or with monetary fines and for this we had a certain installation, a so-called camp to which Lithuanians were sent who

had been repeatedly found committing illicit trade etc. Jews were not dealt with, they were not punished. I did tell you how I performed occasional checks of the worker groups, also in order to satisfy the SD.

Q: I have a complicated question, and I don't know exactly how to ask this matter. What was the meaning of the term "East" in in the national-socialist philosophy?

A: The term "East"?

Q: East, yes East.

A: East

Q: East, what is East?

A: Give me a moment....

Q: First a personal question: Which to you prefer: East or West?

A: From today's point of view?

Q: Then, now.... This is.... What is East, what is the term East?

A: Geographically?

W: No.

Q: No, not geographically. I know it geographically.

A: Yes, I wanted to make a joke.

Q: What is... what means Eastern Lands?

A: Eastern lands....

Q: Eastern lands....

A: The East, yes. I know. I will (*tell*) you.....

Q: You did not say Lithuania, or Estonia or White Russia, but Eastern Land. What is East?

A: Hitler.... Hitler has.... and he dealt with it extensively in his "Kampf", in his book "Mein Kampf." The gist of it is: People without space. I have the book by Hans Grimm "Volk ohne Raum" – I am sure that you know it – which made quite a stir at the time in all of the educated world. Hans Grimm stated in this book – if I may state it simply – that the German

people has no space no living space, not sufficient living space. The population is large, growing, increasing. It can lead to a birth explosion, to a population explosion – forgive me.

Q: Birth explosion.

A: No. Yes. Hitler said, in order to *(solve)* this space problem – you will agree with me, Dr. Sorel, if you know well “Mein Kampf”, the book, which I assume – he said that there are two possibilities so solve this problem: either birth control...

Q: yes

A: Right? It is in “Mein Kampf.” Either birth control by the state or create space.

Q: Create space.

A: Create space. This was the idea which formed the central thinking Hitler’s. Later in foreign policy. And this crosses, agrees also the idea – to get back to Rosenberg – the later Minister for the Eastern Land. The idea of Rosenberg, who already *(dealt)* with this problem as student in Rehwald....

Q: Estonia.

A: What?

Q: Estonia.

A: *(one line invisible on transcript)*

Q: Ok, I state it clearly.

A: In Rehwald, in Estonia.

Q: Estonia.

A: He studied there. He also studied in Moscow. And he already dealt with these ideas. And space – where is space? I want to express myself now in a very primitive manner. Where is there space? Space is only in the East.

Q: Why not in the West?

A: Hitler did not want to have war. He would have..... In the West he would have to make war against you.

Q: He managed.

A: Right, this is logical.

Q: Yes.... yes, but this is very interesting what you are saying. Space equals East.

A: Only, only. He has.... there were authors in our time and before whose books I have read. The author Walter Flex died in World War I on the island of Oesel. And especially Hermann Loenz, names which don't mean much anymore and are no particularly brilliant stars. But still.... also this theory of blood and territory, as I would call it. East. Create space in the East. Space is only there.

Q: And space in the East is without end.

A: Exactly, exactly, it is without end.

Q: Without end. Anything.... anything can happen in the East.

A: Yes. At one time Rosenberg said – I have it written down here, but I also memorized it – “the German influence has to be advanced far into the East after overcoming the Bolshevik danger – world bolshevism. In this way space for our people will be created. At the same time it is necessary – I am getting far afield – that the Eastern people (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) be integrated and brought into an orderly Europe, ordered – as I said – by Hitler. Hitler wanted to be the leader in Europe because he considered himself alone called upon to eliminate the threatening Bolshevik danger to all of Europe.

Q: I understand.

A: That is what I would like to say.

Bobine 13 - Gewecke 12C

(Everybody talking at once)

C: The East the East is vague...

Q: Yes.

C: *(unclear)*.... we want to travel towards the East.

Q: Yes, yes. Let's get back to this subject of the East.

A: Please.

Q: What I am thinking is as follows: The East is large, endless...

A: Space, space, space.

Q: Vague...

A: Yes, certainly.

Q: Anything can happen in the East.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: For example, what... what do you think about this.... coming back to the subject of deportation, relocation

A: of the Jews.

Q: Relocation, evacuation, killing, etc. At the Wannsee conference....

A: You mean the Wannsee protocol...

Q: Wannsee protocol contains these phrases, this is a phrase by Heydrich, Reinhard Heydrich:..

A: Only Heydrich.....

Q: About the...

A: I know, I know.

Q: to comb through from West to East. And not the contrary. Not comb through from East to West, but from West to East.

A: He wanted to solve the Jewish question in such a way that, apart from the already.... one moment. He wanted to solve the Jewish question in such a way that the Jews in the West, in occupied France, for example, in Germany, etc. would be deported to the East....

Q: to the East.

A: Yes, and the Reichsbahn was supposed to execute a huge program – which they actually did – in order to...

Q: Which they did, yes.

A: ... use the trains, hundreds of trains, for the transport of the Jews.

Q: Without trains that would not have been possible (*in French*) that would not have been possible.

C: It would not...

Q: It would not have been possible without trains.

C: Without trains it would....

A: It would not have been possible, I just said so.

Q: Yes.

A: Actually, I myself was never a witness, this is clear. I have only read about this complex – naturally – in books which I own. I already mentioned Hoggen; I already mentioned Diewald. I also could mention Bolkow, Baron von Richthoven, you might know this name, considered one of the leading historians. I only would like to mention these three, who also dealt with this problem, and, as far as I remember, they also wrote that a very great number of Jews were used as workers in the war-related industries in Auschwitz-Birkenau, etc.

Q: Yes.

A: Fact. If according to..... according to the description by these historians.

Q: But why was.... was it necessary to deport these people to the east, why would it not have been simpler to kill these people right where they were?

A: No.

Q: Why? This is..... I cannot...

A: The air war, the air war.

Q: What means air war?

C: The air war.

A: The continuous attacks by the British and the Americans from the air. Air bombardments.

Q: Yes, you believe this?

A: I am convinced. I stated that I did not know. It is not a fact, right? What I am saying is not a fact that I can prove.

Q: You believe that the British and Americans..... bombarded.... but what? What targets?

A: Can you tell me when the air war started? already in 1940. The air war.

Q: Yes, between....

A: Between England and Germany.

Q:England

A: France did not count in this sense.

Q: Yes, naturally.

A: Right? America only some time later. Yes. And at that time Heydrich is supposed to....

Gewecke 13B

A: told, went at one time to Kube and seems to have given him a piece of his mind or given him instructions, I don't know. The two were old friends and they had been together in the Prussian Parliament already in 1928 after the election. At any rate, it was remarkable that two old friends and fellow fighters became so divided. I assumed from that that Kube was tending more to the direction of Koch....

Q: No.

A: No? I don't know that.

Q: Quite the contrary.

A: Good.

Q: Kube was very humane.

A: Oh.

Q: Kube wrote a lot about what happened. And that was the fight against Strauch and Kube wrote that the killing.... the killings etc. were

A: That..... this method of your action is unworthy of a German gentleman and often...

Q: The Germany of Kant and Goethe.

A: that the reputation..... yes.... and of Kant and Goethe. Yes, yes. This is news to me. I did not know that.

Q: You did not know that?

A: No, how should I know that?

Q: There is.... something else. For example, Kube was totally against the killing of the German Jews.

A: Oh.

Q: the German Jews who came to Minsk....

A: Who had been deported to Minsk...

Q: Yes, there was in Minsk a so-called Hamburg ghetto, a Berlin ghetto for the German Jews, the Jews from the Reich. And Kube agreed to the killing of the Eastern Jews, the Eastern Jews, but absolutely not in agreement with the killing of German Jews. He said...

A: Ok, ok, you have to...

Q: This is very interesting.

A: So, you have to cut in half the praise you gave Kube, because he totally agreed with the killing of the Eastern Jews.

Q: Yes, but not the Western Jews.

A: Well, so I was not totally wrong.

Q: Yes, yes. This is....

A: After all, we were dealing with the Eastern Jews. And Rosenberg and Lohse strictly forbade the killing of Eastern Jews. So, Kube was not quite so good, or am I right?

Q: This is..... this is not quite clear.

A: Let's say half and half.

Q: Yes. And he also had a fight with Janetzke, city commissar of Minsk....

A: I know him, I know him. He visited us once.

Q: Janetzke, is he still alive?

A: I don't know.

Q: Yes.

A: Well, Dr. Jorel..... Sorel, your idea to be respected – that is clear. I have to respect it. But when I hear what I have not known before, that Kube was actually for the killing of the Eastern Jews, this reinforces my view in as much as my previously stated, general opinion or hearsay, of Lohse was still right. Because Lohse had obviously, or possibly a reason to go to Kube, because something was not quite in order. I am hearing now that he wanted the Eastern Jews....

Q: In the end.... I have.... I have in Berlin.... I have in Berlin.... in Berlin is a lawyer by the name of Scheid.... Scheid....

A: This is a very new lawyer. Is this the same one who also defended the terrorists? Scheid?

Q: I don't think so. Certainly not. He was with Kube in Minsk....

A: No... not so. No. It might be a similar name.

Q: in the Minsk administration. And I talked to him and asked him about the death of Kube....

A: Yes?

Q: And he said that Kube was killed by Himmler.

A: By Him.....

Q: By Himmler, yes.

A: error.....

Q: He is 100% sure.

A: He is convinced?

Q: Yes.... He has no....

A: Convinced is no proof. To err, as I said, I can in good conscience only say what I can prove, right?

Q: You know? Do you know, for example..... one moment please. Here is an idea of Himmler, and this is after your fight with Jaeger about the Jewish properties.

A: Yes.

Q: And Himmler had a discussion, a confrontational one, with Rosenberg on November 15, 41. Four hours. And Himmler said – he is talking about the pettiness of Reich Commissar Lohse and the ridiculous complaint by General Commissar Kube about the securing of the necessary.... necessary...

A:necessary material...

Q: material for SS and police.

- A: Yes, that were certainly these things; were these things.
- Q: Yes. Certainly. And now.... we did not finish with Madagascar.
- A: No, please, yes.
- Q: Madagascar, what was the Madagascar plan?
- A: Well, you probably know more about this than I do.
- Q: Oh, no. You told me that you were a supporter of the Madagascar solution.
- A: Yes. The solution of the Jewish question in Germany. The Madagascar plan came up already before the war.
- Q: Naturally.
- A: Bonnet, as you said, and Ribbentrop have.... I knew that...
- Q: talked about it.
- A: Yes, I know that. The Jews were to be transported to Madagascar...
- Q: The German Jews, naturally.
- A: I am talking about the Germans. The German Jews. That was only possible with the agreement of France. For this reason was the conference between Ribbentrop and Bonnet, the Foreign Minister.
- Q: Yes, but what do you think was this..... This is a bitter irony.
- A: Give me the book by Rosenberg..... I believe.....
- Q: One moment.
- A:he talks about Madagascar.
- Q: This is bitter irony of fate, that it was....
- A: It is a bitter irony of fate, that it was....
- Q: One moment, one moment, I will explain what I mean. The Germans wanted the Jews out..
- A: Yes.
- Q: This is finished? No. The Germans wanted the Jews out, send them away, emigrate, and

Madagascar, and I don't know what. And suddenly there is the war and the Jews have a huge area full of Jews. Yes? What do you think of that?

A: Yes.... May I....

Q: Do you understand my question?

A: Excuse me for a moment. Rosenberg took a position on many questions in 29, the Jewish question. I don't know if he....yes, apparently not. I cannot state this so quickly. I am sure that he was thinking of this. That I know. No. It is not in this chapter. Perhaps it is, but this goes too far....

Q: Yes, but do you understand my question or not? I think my German is too poor.

A: Hm? This is...?

Q: Too poor, too weak.

W: If you understood the question.

A: I understood it all right. I can say little about that. I would like to hear from you about this matter.

Q: No. No. I would like to understand how the idea of the final solution came up. And I think that, for example, in 1939 nobody talked about the idea of a final solution in Germany.

A: This Madagascar question had already been dealt with before the appearance of the term final solution.

Q: Yes. And I think that the term final solution...

A: Well, it can then be said – and given credit to the system – that the intention of a physical destruction of the Jews at that time, that means to start with, did not exist.

Q: Yes. I believe that.

A: Did not exist at all.

Q: Yes, but how did it come about?

A: How did it happen that it broke down?

Q: Yes.

A: When then?

Bobine 14 - Gewecke 14A

(beginning no sound, they are drinking)

A: then I took a 4-hour walk. *(Interruption)*another, for refreshment a tomato juice. Very good, 5 francs and 50 centimes. And the second time there was a very nice waiter, very nice, in general, the French are very friendly.

C: What?

A: It is true.

C: You think so?

A: They are. Yes. Oh, well.

W: Why, are they otherwise not so?

A: Yes.

Q: The French today are a very aggressive people.

A: Well. At any rate, those I had to deal with.... and the waiter said the third time: Oh, the Germans. It was very nice.

Q: I wanted to ask another question. What do you think about Germany today?

A: I?

Q: Do you believe, do you think that much has changed in Germany? What is....

Daughter: If Germany has changed?

Q: Yes.

Daughter: compared to before?

A: Very much.

Q: Yes?

A: Very much.

Q: In what *(way)*:

- A: Germany has become a..... a democracy. You know that. I am only saying the obvious. Germany has built a country with..... which is called a country of laws. You may be surprised by my formulation, that I don't say they have built a country of laws.
- Q: Yes, yes, called.
- A: I am conscious of the fact that my statements, which... you say after 30 years, I will not be alive any more then. Thus, I can speak even more freely.
- Q: Who knows.
- A: Great. Let's leave this subject alone. Currently, the question revolves around the European election, by the way, today. Today. I did not go to the election.
- Q: Me neither; I am here.
- A: See; you don't seem to think too highly of it either, I presume. To talk again about the European election, I often stated to my wife, that when De Gaulle was still alive – he did have some dictatorial traits in him – I considered him a great statesman. I don't want to become political. I cannot judge that; I don't have the right to that because I am a German. But I considered him a great statesman, particularly regarding the idea of Europe, because he always said: we want unity, but we do not want to give up our nation-state, our national culture, etc. And to give up our sovereign rights. While in Germany the thinking I don't involve myself in politics, I dealt enough with politics.
- W: But he often would like to speak out today anyway.
- A: Yes. He would like to speak out today anyway. I still would like to say, the party leaders have spoken eloquently for the need of unification, the unification of Europe in order to be better able to counter this giant parliament in Brussels. This is such a slogan, etc. Personally I am of the opinion that Europe – preferably within NATO – become still more united, should equalize its armament deficit with the Soviet Union....
- Q: equalize.
- A: equalize, at least equalize.
- Q: Do you believe that there will be a war with the Soviet Union?
- A: Mr. Wehner – who is not a friend of mine – stated that Russia will certainly not conduct another war.
- W: Yes, Wehner knows.
- A: Let's drop this subject. I am no great politician.

Q: And you believe that Germany has totally changed?

A: Has what?

Q: Has totally changed, Germany.

A: Totally, totally changed.

Q: And its mentality?

A: A total reversal of the values today. Already then. After all, we have been educated – re-educated – by our, as I often said, our so-called liberators. That includes France, but specially England and America, yes?

Q: Yes.

A: After all, they criticized to no end everything that Hitler did, right? and still – and that will be alive in Germany in 1000 years still – I am deliberately exaggerating – like a headline, right? Hitler made many mistakes; he might perhaps not have lost the war if – these are some of the preconditions that I am telling you, that I think – this might go too far. But he also did some good for the German people. In one stroke he eliminated unemployment; he did it by the use of the armament industry, which he is accused of, and thus eliminated unemployment. He had to do what Carter is doing reluctantly, which is to re-establish military equilibrium with the Soviet Union. Yes.

Q: What this is a different question, but this is..... there is a connection. What do you think about the Jews today?

A: About the Jews?

Q: Yes.

A: Here, in Germany?

Q: No, in general.

A: As you can see.... You can see from all my actions as District Commissar, and nothing has changed in this respect, and would not change now.

Q: Yes, no, no. I mean about the the situation of today's Jews. For example.....

A: Pales.... about Israel?

Q: Israel. What is your.....

A: Dr. Sorel, you did not come here in order.... in order to ask me about my opinion regarding world problems.

Q: No, this is my.....

A: I am I certainly am....

Q: This is my last question...

A: I really am a dwarf with respect to the politics of the world.

Q: No, no, you are very, very good. This is my last question. I have said..... I have asked: has Germany changed and my last question is: in your opinion, have the Jews changed?

A: If the Jews what?

Q: changed?

C: have changed?

Q: have changed?

A: I don't know.

Q: No?

A: I will not personally visit the Jews in Israel and – if invited – will not visit a Jew. Because I would not know if I could do so without danger. I had the trial, as my wife has already mentioned, where I had been accused by witnesses, Jewish witnesses, from Jewish sides, to have ordered the hanging of a Jew. The tribunal did not convict me as an active executor, but only as a supervisor of a man – who, by the way, died in 45 – who accused me of this act. Obviously, it was not possible to hear what this man had to say – you cannot interrogate dead people. My attorney was able to accuse some of the Jewish witnesses, so-called witnesses for state evidence [Kronzeuge] of perjury, so that we were debating if we should request arrests right in the courtroom. We refrained from that because my attorney stated: he would suffer a heart attack and one dead Jew is enough. He liked irony, Dr. Müller. It would be possible, if I were to visit Israel, that this subject would be revived and it would be stated that he actually did order it. It would be of no use if I would say, when I in September – it was September, not October, as I erroneously said – 1941, saved 5000 Jews by taking risks, until the time of the collapse, then I would not have been for three years, only because it pleased me to have one Jew hung. The tribunal...

Q: Oh, theses....

A: I only wanted to relay these facts. For this reason I would.... This I wanted to tell you again

orally. I felt obligated to report this to you as a correction. If I had done this, then – according to what you might call the laws of thought – one would have to assume that, in case of doubt – considering – this would have been impossible. I.... the SD, the security police of Schaulen had marched up for the hanging and a Jewish woman who had worked for the SD for years, stood next to the SD and testified under oath that “she had seen Herbert – Herbert was the first name of the commandant of the security police in Schaulen at the time – he was wearing glasses she said, and he did know me, I worked alongside him, and I was standing quite close to him and I have seen how he lifted up his hand.” The judge asked: “did you see that exactly?” – “Yes, he lifted his hand as a signal and at that moment went” – what did she say? I don’t remember exactly,” a few Jews, right? to the gallows and pulled the thin up.” I was not there at all. Well, I could say more about this. This was, I maintain, a political trial and my attorney said in his appeal justification that according to the principle of “dubio pro reo” [*when in doubt, for the accused*] I should have been acquitted.. And if you are asking me what I think of this country; I think highly of the population, although I don’t get together with the people. The people are industrious, there are many, many industrious people here and as there are in France.... there is youth which does not have any models, right? They were taken from them by re-education or by their parents. They had not been alive at that time. However, in the GDR the youth has models, even though by force. There is the same state youth as it had been under Hitler, also a forced measure, state youth. There are military models in the GDR, Frederick the Great, Gneisenau, Scharnhaupt, Fichte – and here, nothing. Here, there is a vacuum. Here, there is a school reform policy for the last 20 years, a spectacular muddle. This country is totally federalistic.

Q: You mean here?

A: Here, here, right? Everybody..... everybody has his own ideas, his own policy etc. The main point is that there is no new war. This is clear, right? And, see, as I already had this experience with my trial, and previously said the hard word – I said it somewhat evasively, because I was afraid that one could..... but I may now state my opinion, that is now assured by our constitution, just as in your country, France and as in the European democracies. After all, we are not in a despotic country as in the GDR or in Poland, etc. – if I say.... if I have certain doubts concerning the term of state under the rule of law, I say this from my own experience.

Q: Yes, certainly. And how many..... how many years were you in prison?

A: 1½ years in prison awaiting trial.

Q: In prison awaiting trial.

A: 1½ years in prison awaiting trial. Yes. And your....

Q: Not after the...

A: No, no. I was spared that. Yes, the appeal which we have filed with the two attorneys, which

agreed in principle regarding the injustice, severe injustice against the Federal tribunal, a terrific appeal by these two attorneys.... yes.... they first cited a constitutional complaint with the Federal Constitutional Court. But in the meantime I would have been 90 years old.

Q: And the only crime which.... for which you were....

A: Yes, yes.... I want to stress again – and not as culprit, not as culprit, but I am supposed to have, I am supposed to have... as supervisor, right? ...the killing of a deceased family member of my office....

Q: But why.... why was he hanged?

A: Please?

Q: Why was he hanged?

A: He had smuggled food.

Q: Oh, yes. And he was a young man?

A: Yes, about late 40's, perhaps. I did not know him.

Q: What did he smuggle?

A: Cigarettes and.... I think butter, etc. I cannot state this exactly.

Bobine 15 - Gewecke 15A

A: The area commissar – this was also stated by Jews, there were also some Jews who spoke very positively about me....

Q: Yes.

A: There were also some who made very reasonable statements. Not all of them were spiteful, and not all of them were..... were just so that one could say, they have obviously or knowingly told lies. Absolutely not. There were also.... I would like to say, to the extent that it was a fair trial. Fair as far as the tribunal.... this means the conduct of the president of the jury tribunal is concerned... to the extent that we were able to do what we considered necessary, naturally within the law. For example, my attorney was able to personally request witnesses without asking the court, and informed the court that he had outside such and such witnesses. This was readily accepted by the court. That was fair. I mean, I am trying to be quite objective in my view here. But the bitter after-taste which stays on the tongue, and the unpleasant taste, but many the after-taste that the – I would almost like to

say – the holy principle “in dubio pro reo” was totally questionable. At least. I would say: No, innocent. But, well, let me concede this. For example, a witness appeared by the name of Fredersdorf, who lives in Binneberg, who was then already 75 years old. He had been posted in the east with the registry office, farm registry office, and he had business with me from time to time. At one time he had to fell birch woods for airplane construction – birch wood was necessary for light-weight construction of airplanes, observation airplanes, etc. and there were big birch forests and he had to get permission from me, in particular for auxiliary and temporary services which I had to organize for him, work, workers by Lithuanian farmers. They were driving hundreds of vehicles every day, every day. This man once came to me and he was present when I got very angry about the SD when I learned that the Jew was supposed to be hanged. And then he read in the paper about my trial. And he contacted me, he called me and let himself be interrogated by my attorney and the attorney detained him, took him along to the trial. And he testified and he said what he experienced. He then became very strong and clear against the court: that it would be an injustice to convict this man, because he experienced this and that.

Q: Yes, that is the end.

A: Well, yes. I don't want to bother you with that, that is a.....

Q: This is the end.

A: This was an individual case. For you this is not of great importance, Dr. Sorel.

Q: This is the end. I am really very grateful.

A: If you want to hear more. As far as I am concerned, I am not tired.

Q: We want to take a break.

A: What?

Q: We want to take a break. I think that you.... You have said a great deal.... a great deal and it was very good and interesting.

A: Yes, I was forced to do so.

W: Yes. I believe that there would have been many who could not have said that much, right? Sometimes they would not remember this much.

Q: Extraordinary, extraordinary, the way she.....

C: I can't anymore. Thank you.

A: Then to your health! Do the gentlemen still have wine?

Dominique: Thank you.

C: Yes, I still have.

W: Are you driving back to Hamburg still today?

C: Yes.

Q: Yes, madame, You remember everything also?

W: Oh, yes. One has experienced a lot and also myself, as I said, I also was kept prisoner by the SD and so on with my family....

Q: You, yourself?

W: Yes, yes, and were not allowed to travel on.

A: I would like to – excuse the interruption, Dr. Sorel – clarify this exactly. For us this is history. I had executed the action Hamann. My wife already indicated that the SD wanted to make difficulties for us with a denunciation that we had requested and taken too many ration cards for us. I then requested that the Reich Commissar to send a man, an official who interrogated us officially. He did so, checked everything, even my people in the food supply office and obviously this whole matter turned out to be a denunciation by the SD. When we had to leave Schaulen and the front threatened to break down, to break down totally – I am talking about the northern front...

Q: Collapse.

A: What? Yes.

Q: Collapse.

A: Correct. It came. And the Russian came slowly and later broke into Schaulen, I was happy that I had my family in time, eight days earlier, and the German.....

Q: You have stayed until the end?

A: Yes. I was locked in by the Russians.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: And the female German employees – I had quite a lot of Germans there – and the female employees of all German offices which I already for party reasons – I was simultaneously the district head of the NSDAP for the many Reich Germans – had evacuated. My family

was near Insterburg on the farm of one of my agricultural leaders, and there, on orders of the security police, the SD – not from Jaeger, because Jaeger was no longer there, Kovno had fallen before Schaulen....

Q: Yes?

A: In Russian hands. So, it cannot have been Kovno. Presumably via Koch.

W: Yes, they came from the Memel area.

A: You see, from the Memel area. So, the SD came and took my wife and family into protective custody.

Q: Yes?

A: And the Russians were already past Schaulen and advancing to..... advancing towards Kaliningrad [Königsberg]. They attacked in such a manner towards Kaliningrad, left everything to the left. To the right was Riga and the whole area, which had already fallen. It was already in Russian hands. And then, at the last minute I was able to

Q: No, I have done....

A: Oh, you.... alert Reich Commissar Lohse who was sick in a hospital in Kaliningrad, who, in turn was able to mobilize Reich Commissar Koch, so that my wife and children were set free after having spent anxious weeks in protective custody. Koch had become Reich Commissar for the Eastern area after Lohse – I am sure you know about this – had become ill. And at the very end I was – by a representative of Koch as Reich defense commissar for East Prussia, the President of the Government, Dargel in Kaliningrad – put into the German Territorial Army [Volkssturm]. There I was supposed to help gain victory.

Q: Victory?

A: Help gain victory. A totally crazy measure.

Q: Yes, crazy.

A: Crazy. In every respect. I experienced it. Erecting huge ramparts, digging anti-tank ditches, right? For 100 km and more. The Volkssturm in Germany was alerted and, especially at the border near the Memel. And that is where I was put in. I then had Schriever, my deputy... I had no other choice, I could not desert. First of all, I was no deserter and have no inclination for that, and secondly, if I had done so and would have been caught, I would have been – and at that time rightfully so – shot immediately.

Q: Yes, yes, rightfully, you think?

A: Rightfully, naturally.

Q: Well, this is possible. But you remember this period very well?

W: Yes, yes.

Q: And your daughter was also there?

W: They were there too.

Q: Yes?

W: The other one, Lotte, she was still very young, right? It was....

Q: It was difficult, right?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And how were the Russians?

W: Well, I heard them near Goldach, it was.... I always heard them shooting. And I was not allowed to leave. I wasallowed....

Q: And you did not run?

W: No, no, after all I had.... Finally someone came and said that I could leave. But then I already heard them come closer from Goldach.

A: Goldach is not very far from there, from Insterburg.

W: I was able to hear the shooting at night.

Q: But, it was hopeless, all these measures that were taken.

A: Which measures in particular?

Q: Anti-tank ditches...

A: Yes, yes, yes. I then resumed my business in Moelln...

Q: Did you have hope for a victory at that time or not?

A: Oh, you could figure that out, that the war would be totally lost.

Q: You knew that?

A: Yes, but I did not say so. I did not want to by Freisler in the Ploetzensee....

Q: Oh, Freisler.

A: You know that?

Q: Oh, yes, Freisler.

A: They made short shrift there.

Q: Yes.

A: As district chief I received secret orders at the very end, during the last four months, from which could be seen that I had to report any defeatist that I might encounter.

Q: What happened to Freisler?

A: Freisler? One moment, Freisler perished during the bomb attack.

Q: Oh, yes, perhaps, yes.

A: I think.

Q: He was the..... oh, yes. July 20.... Freisler....

A: No, no. Freisler was not there on July 20...

Q: No, but he was....

A: That was after all... that was his "glorious"..... his glorious time, after July 20.

Q: Yes, yes, yes. It was terrible. And you were afraid for Freisler?

A: What?

Q: Were you afraid?

A: No, no, why? Was not necessary. After all, I was faithful to my oath to the end.

Q: yes.

A: Yes. I did not commit treason. I also would never have fired a bomb at Hitler.

Q: Never?

A: Not me. Never, yes, when the chapter, Mr.....

Q: What did you think?

A: What?

Q: What did you think about July 20?

A: What did I think? This I am saying now. Let's rather say, what do I say today. The 20th of July, the men who participated in the 20th of July, are – and this is possibly not non-dangerous to say – consist in part of traitors and to an overwhelming and greater part of people committing high treason.

Q: High treason.

A: High treason.

Q: High treason?

C: That's it.

Q: and foreign traitors?

A: High... High...

Q: Oh, traitors.

A: People committing high treason should not be condemned, right? If they act on their soul searching...

Q: Yes, I understand....

A: and on conviction that they have to oppose Hitler, by force, in order to – in their opinion – prevent a very bad end by eliminating Hitler. That is high treason. One can discuss that. I am telling you that not because you have come to me as an exponent of science, but – my wife knows that – because I have said that again and again for years.

Q: Yes, but this is....

A: But a traitor.... what?

Q: This is private.

A: Yes, but a traitor, I despise him. Here in the book Rosenberg, I have an excerpt.... I have here in the book Rosenberg which I have shown you, an excerpt from a book by Ilse Ribbentrop, the wife of the hanged minister Ribbentrop, who has written a book. And this book is a collection of documents about the greatest treason done in the newer German

history, the State Secretary Freiherr von Weissaecker, of whom we have already spoken, who promptly disclosed all the secret matter, all of them – concerning war preparations – after all, he was included in the hierarchy, to the British. That is a rogue.

Q: Yes.

A: Excuse the coarseness. A traitor.

Q: But you....

A: I could name you many more, Canaris, etc.

Q: Also Canaris?

A: Also.

Q: Yes.

A: General.... Admiral Oster, Oster.

Q: I don't know this name.

A: Yes, who the deployment plan of Reeder against Norway....