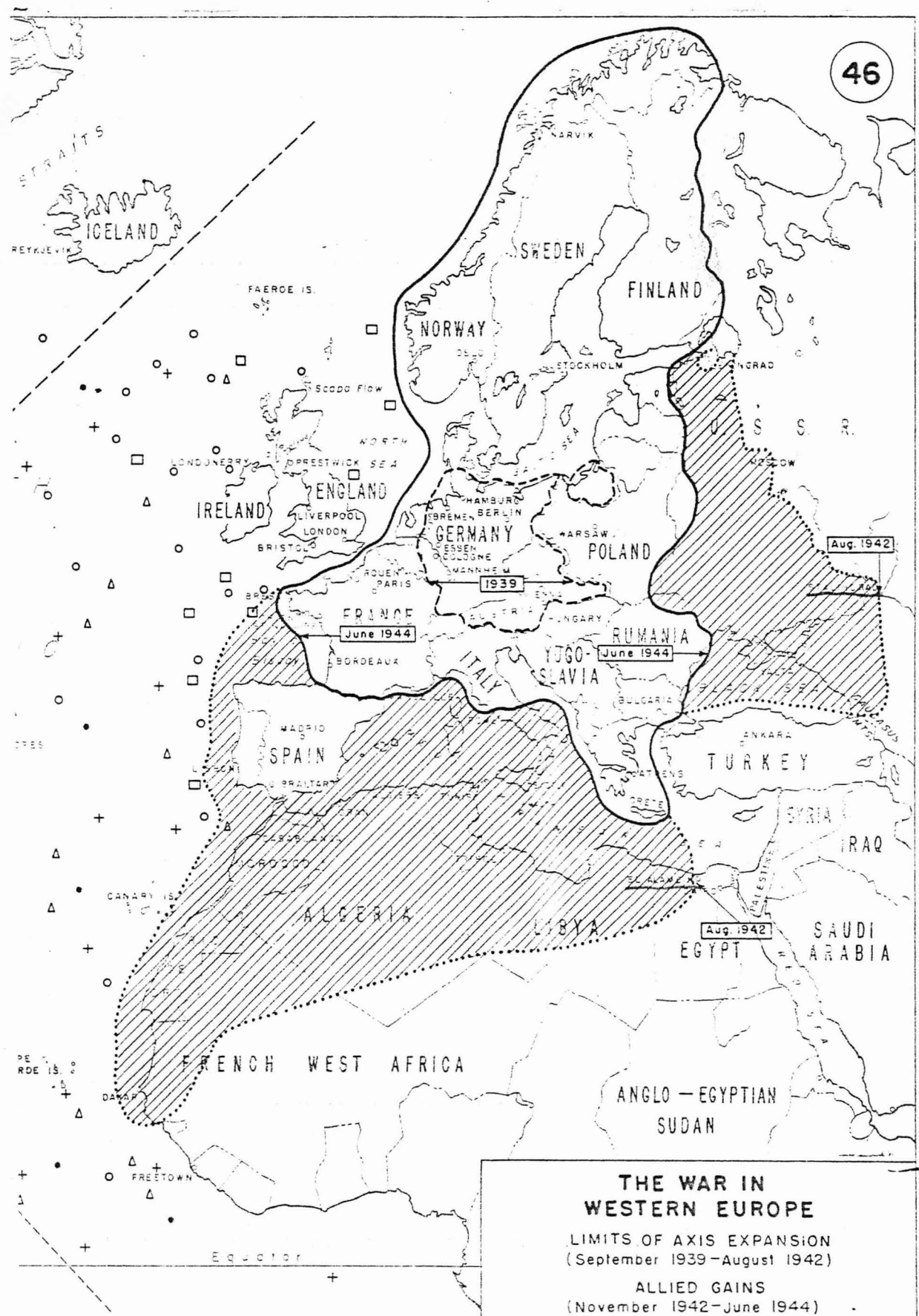


CHAPTER 41
FURTHER EVENTS ON THE WARSCENE.

I had discontinued the description of the major events in the war after the attack of Pearl Harbor, as continuous description of my own affairs and those of my family would have been difficult to maintain. I will now bring these major events in the war in chronological order. I had mentioned some of the events in the far East, serious reverses, first of the American navy, also of the English navy, then reverses of Japan in sea battles. In Russia, the great offensive of the Germans took them deep into the Caucasus and they also crossed the Don River and opened an offensive against Stalingrad on the Volga River on August 22, 1941. American and British supplies were shipped to Russia by railroad through Iran. The Germans had penetrated Stalingrad on September 14th. But then Russian

The map shows the limits of axis expansion in August 1942. From then on the area of German domination diminished in size gradually. There was at first the battle at Stalingrad (underlined red) and as a result of it the withdrawal of the Germans with great losses from large areas of Russia. Soon afterwards, the Americans landed in Northafrika, coming from England with an enormous flotilla of warships and a large army and at the same time the English under Montgomery attacked at El Alamein (underlined red) in Egypt and drove the Germans under Rommel towards Tunisia and the advancing Americans. The Germans under Rommel could not cross the Mediterranean Sea and were annihilated. With that, the Germans lost all the territories in Northern Africa. There followed shortly the invasion of Sicily and Italy by the American and British forces. The map shows the situation, as it prevailed in June 1944, shortly before the landing of the Americans and British under Eisenhower in Northern France and the liberation of France and Belgium that followed.



THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE
LIMITS OF AXIS EXPANSION
(September 1939-August 1942)
ALLIED GAINS
(November 1942-June 1944)

forces counterattacked northeast of Stalingrad and ten days later opened a second thrust southeast of the city. It was an enormous pincer movement, which resulted in a debacle for the Germans. 22 German divisions were cut off at Stalingrad and 500,000 men were killed and captured. On November 8th, 1942, American and British expeditionary forces landed in French North-Africa in the greatest amphibious invasion hitherto attempted, with altogether 850 ships. At about the same time, Allied forces under general Bernard Montgomery started an offensive in El Alamein in Egypt against the German forces under general Rommel, resulting finally in the annihilation of the German forces. Following that, American, British, and Canadian forces invaded Sicily on July 10th, 1943 and on September 3rd crossed the Straits of Messina and landed in southern Italy. Later, bigger contingents of troops landed south of Rome. On June 6th, 1944, Allied forces landed in Northern France near Cherbourg, an enormous undertaking with strong naval support, an armada of 4000 ships and over 10,000 aircraft. They succeeded to occupy within a week a strip of beach, 60 miles long. The beachhead was later enlarged in severe fighting. Cherbourg was taken, later Caen. In another amphibious operation, the Allies effected successful landings on the French Mediterranean coast between Marseille and Nice. The Germans were there on the run. On August 24th, 1944, the citizens of Paris rioted against German forces of occupation, as Allied armed divisions crossed the Seine and approached the capital. French Forces of the Interior, which had been organized for underground resistance and supplied with arms, rose against the retreating Germans. On September 2nd, Allied forces, which had penetrated

into Belgium, liberated Brussels. On September 12th, the American First Army crossed the German frontier near Eupen and north of Trier. The American Seventh and French First Armies, sweeping up the Rhone Valley from beachheads won on the Riviera coast, joined the American Third Army at Dijon. The American, British, and French Forces were re-organized in liberated France for an assault on Germany.

The German Supreme Commander in the West, general Karl von Rundstedt, under orders from Adolf Hitler, dislocated Allied preparations by a sudden drive against thinly held American lines in the Belgian and Luxembourg sector. Suffering heavy losses, the Allied forces were driven back to the Meuse, but they rallied to attack strongly on both sides of the "bulge" and the Germans were checked before the close of December. With the opening of 1945, the American, British, and French drives into Germany from the West, coordinated with the rapid and powerful Russian thrusts from the Danube Valley, Poland, and East Prussia, fused into one vast combined operation.

Military supplies from Great Britain and the United States had helped materially to arm the Russian forces for the campaigns of 1943. Part of the equipment went by northern convoy routes to Archangel, part in Russian ships to Vladivostok, part via the Persian Gulf. Shipments through Iran increased to 100,000 tons a month by autumn of 1943, consisting of 6500 airplanes, 138,000 motor vehicles, shiploads of steel, and industrial machinery for Soviet arms factories. Anglo-American bombing was crippling German industry, greatly reducing the output of German planes, depriving the Germans of their superiority in the air. The Germans were driven back on a wide front.

On November 6th, Kiev was recaptured. In March 1944, the Russian drive brought them to the Rumanian border.

During the last 4 months of fighting, Allied air squadrons roamed Germany almost at will, destroying communications, obliterating plants and stores, and wrecking many of the remaining German aircraft on the ground, where they lay helpless for lack of fuels and repairs. Opening a powerful drive into Poland, the Russians took Warsaw, swept into Crakow and Lodz and by February 20th were within 30 miles of Berlin. On February 7th, the Yalta Conference took place between President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Marshall Stalin, to plan the final defeat and occupation of Germany. At that time, the United States Third Army had crossed the German frontier at ten points and continued its advance toward the Ruhr Valley, entered Trier and Cologne. By April 11th, the United States 9th Army had reached the Elbe River. Eight days later, the Russians fought their way into Berlin, and advance units of the American and Russian armies met on the Elbe at Torgau. The German divisions in Italy surrendered.

President Roosevelt had died a few weeks before on April 12th, 1945, and Harry S. Truman became president. Mussolini, trying to escape into Switzerland, was captured and shot by Italian Anti-Fascist partisans on April 28th, and Adolf Hitler committed suicide on or about May 1st in the Reichschancellery in Berlin. On May 8th, President Truman for the United States and Prime Minister Churchill for Great Britain proclaimed the end of the war in Europe (V-E Day). An Allied Control Committee, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Field Marshall Sir Bernard L. Montgomery and Marshall Gregory K. Zhukow, assumed

full control throughout Germany. German territory was delimited in four zones of occupation under American, British, Russian, and French military administration.

Important parts of the war were not included in this description of the war, since it would have required much work and discontinuation of the family biography which was the main object. Not included was the naval war, the war in Asia and in the Pacific, which ended with the surrender of Japan, after two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the aftermath of the war the United Nations Organization was formed as of October 24th, 1945, and the first session of the U.N. General Assembly opened in London on January 10th, 1946 with 51 nations attending. On July 29th, 1946, a peace conference of the 21 nations, which waged war against the Axis in Europe, met at Paris to discuss the draft treaties for peace with Italy, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland. On February 10th, 1947, the Peace Treaties were signed in Paris. Italy lost 4 small border regions to France, her Adriatic Islands, and most of Venetia Giulia to Yugoslavia, and the Dodecanese Islands to Greece. She also lost the sovereignty over the North-African colonies and agreed to the creation of the Free Territory of Trieste, and also to the payment of \$ 360 million in reparations. Rumania lost Bessarabia and the Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, but received back all of Transylvania. Finland ceased the port of Petsamo, high up in the North, to the Soviet Union. On April 4th, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington by the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United

States, and Canada. It provided for mutual assistance against aggression within the North Atlantic area and for close collaboration in matters of military training, arms production, and strategic planning, under the direction of the North Atlantic Council. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed commander in chief of the North Atlantic Treaty forces, with headquarters in Paris.

With the total defeat of the Hitler regime, no German government remained. Instead supreme authority was vested in an Allied Control Council of Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Each of these powers administered its own occupation zone, with the Soviet Union holding the region east of the Elbe. The former capital, Berlin, was likewise divided into four sectors.

The most immediate measures of the victors were concerned with the liquidation of the Nazi system. On November 20th, 1945, the trial of major Nazi leaders opened at Nuremberg before an Inter-Allied Tribunal. Voluminous evidence was presented to prove the plotting of aggressive warfare, the extermination of civilian populations (especially the Jews), the widespread use of slave labor, the looting of occupied countries, and maltreatment and murder of prisoners of war. A complete description of the war with all details is contained in the book "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" by William L. Shirer, the reading of which I recommend to those who are interested in it. I have added here copies of a few of the last pages of that book as they contain the sentences meted out in Nuremberg, and I am citing here parts of these pages:

"Attired in rather shabby clothes, slumped in their seats,

fidgeting nervously, they no longer resembled the arrogant leaders of old. They seemed to be a drab assortment of mediocrities. It seemed difficult to grasp that such men, when last you had seen them, had yielded such monstrous power, that such as they could conquer a great nation and most of Europe.

There were twenty-one of them in the dock. (Dr. Robert Ley, head of the Arbeitsfront, who was to have been a defendant, had hanged himself in his cell before the trial began. He had made a noose from rags torn from a towel, which he had tied to a toilet pipe). There were Goering, eighty pounds lighter than when last I had seen him, in a faded Luftwaffe uniform without insignia Rudolf Hess, who had been the Number Three man before his flight to England, his face now emaciated, his deep-set eyes staring vacantly into space, feigning amnesia but leaving no doubt that he was a broken man Ribbentrop, at last shorn of his arrogance and his pompousness, looking pale, bent and beaten Keitel, who had lost his jauntiness; Rosenberg, the muddled party "philosopher," whom the events which had brought him to this place appeared to have awakened to reality at last. Julius Streicher, the Jew-baiter of Nuremberg, was there. This sadist and pornographer, whom I had once seen striding through the streets of the old town brandishing a whip, seemed to have wilted. A bald decrepit-looking old man, he sat perspiring profusely, glaring at the judges and convincing himself - so a guard later told me - that they were all Jews. There was Fritz Sauckel, the boss of slave labor in the Third Reich, his narrow little slit eyes giving him a porcine appearance. He seemed nervous, swaying to and fro. Next to him was Baldur von Schirach, the first Hitler Youth Leader and

later Gauleiter of Vienna, more American by blood than German and looking like a contrite college boy who has been kicked out of school for some folly. There was Walther Funk, the shifty-eyed nonentity who had succeeded Schacht. And there was Dr. Schacht himself, who had spent the last months of the Third Reich as a prisoner of his once revered Fuehrer in a concentration camp, fearing execution any day, and who now bristled with indignation that the Allies should try him as a war criminal. Franz von Papen, more responsible than any other individual in Germany for Hitler's coming to power, had been rounded up and made a defendant. He seemed much aged, but the look of the old fox, who had escaped from so many tight fixes, was still imprinted on his wizened face. Neurath, Hitler's first Foreign Minister, a German of the old school, with few convictions and little integrity, seemed utterly broken. Not Speer, who made the most straightforward impression of all and who during the long trial spoke honestly and with no attempt to shirk his responsibility and his guilt. Seyss-Inquart, the Austrian quisling, was in the dock, as were Jodl and the two Grand Admirals, Raeder and Doenitz - the latter, the successor to the Fuehrer, looking in his store suit for all the world like a shoe clerk. There was Kaltenbrunner, the bloody successor of "Hangman Heydrich," who on the stand would deny all his crimes; and Hans Frank, the Nazi Inquisitor in Poland, who would admit some of his, having become in the end contrite and, as he said, having rediscovered God, whose forgiveness he begged; and Frick, as colorless on the brink of death as he had been in life. And finally Hans Fritzsche, who had made a career as a radio commentator because his voice resembled that of

Goebbels, who had made him an official in the Propaganda Ministry. No one in the courtroom, including Fritzsche, seemed to know why he was there - he was too small a fry - unless it were as a ghost for Goebbels, and he was acquitted. So were Schacht and Papen. All three later drew stiff prison sentences from German denazification courts though, in the end, they served very little time. - Seven defendants at Nuremberg drew prison sentences: Hess, Raeder, and Funk for life, Speer and Schirach for twenty years, Neurath for fifteen, Doenitz for ten. The others were sentenced to death.

At eleven minutes past 1 A.M. on October 16th, 1946, Ribbentrop mounted the gallows in the execution chamber of the Nuremberg prison, and he was followed at short intervals by Keitel, Kaltenbrunner, Rosenberg, Frank, Frick, Streicher, Seyss-Inquart, Sauckel and Jodl. - But not by Hermann Goering. He cheated the hangman. Two hours before his turn would have come he swallowed a vial of poison that had been smuggled into his cell. Like his Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, and his rival for the succession, Heinrich Himmler, he had succeeded at the last hour in choosing the way in which he would depart this earth, on which he, like the other two, had made such a murderous impact."

A trial of 28 alleged war criminals was conducted (1946 - 1947) by an eleven-nation tribunal in Tokyo. Evidence similar to that presented against the Nazis brought death sentences to Tojo and others. The U.S. Supreme Court refused an appeal, based on the grounds that the international court was unlawful. Although exact statistics are not available, it is estimated that by 1950 about 8000 persons were tried and about 2000 executed. Of the German war criminals, Rudolf Hess was convicted

to lifetime prison and is still a prisoner in Spandau near Berlin in the Russian zone of occupation.

That Mussolini and his mistress were captured near the Italian-Swiss border, when they tried to escape to Switzerland and killed by a firing squad, I may have mentioned already. The bodies of both were brought to Milano and hanged by their feet, with the heads down, in the center of the city.

In France, Marshall Petain was condemned to death, but on account of his high age the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. But Pierre Laval received a death sentence, and was executed by a firing squad.

In Germany, in addition to the 22 top criminals, thousands of lesser Nazis were removed from office and held for trial. The Control Council approved the transfer of 6,650,000 Germans from Austria, Hungary, Tchechoslovakia, Poland, and the German region beyond the Oder-Neisse line, which had been handed to Poland at the Potsdam Conference, pending a final peace settlement. The International Tribunal at Nuremberg announced its decisions on September 30th, 1946. The Nazi Leadership Corps, the S.S., the Security Police, and the Gestapo were found criminal organizations, while the S.A., the cabinet, and the General Staff were acquitted.

The conferences for a peace agreement with Germany were a long-drawn affair. There was the Potsdam Conference on July 17th to August 2nd, 1945, in which President Truman, Prime Minister Churchill, and Generalissimo Stalin participated. For Germany the decisions reached implied: 1) Disarmament and demilitarization; 2) Dissolution of National Socialist institutions; 3) Trial of war criminals; 4) Encouragement of democratic

ideals; 5) Restoration of local selfgovernment and democratic political parties; 6) Freedom of speech, press, and religion.

Economic restrictions implied: 1) Prohibition of the manufacture of war materials; 2) Controlled production of metals, chemicals, and machinery essential to war; 3) Decentralization of German cartels, syndicates, and trusts, etc. The Conference further ordained "that Germany be compelled to compensate to the greatest possible extent for the loss and suffering that she has caused to the United Nations...." There were disagreements between Russia and the Western Allies in the conferences which followed.

List of members of our family who were
murdered by the Nazis.

1. Ernst Goldschmied
2. Olga (Olli) Goldschmied
3. Anna (Annie) Goldschmied-Vermes
4. Josef Vermes
5. Karl Landler
6. Elsa Landler
7. Grete Landler-Neustatl
8. Karl Neustatl and 1 child
9. Minnie Landler-Feldmann
10. Erwin Feldmann and 1 child
11. Lisa Honig-Fuchs
12. Karl Fuchs and 1 child
13. Cecilia (Cilli) Hannak
14. Simon Hannak
15. Else Honig-Ziegler
16. Jaques Ziegler
17. Trude Ziegler
18. Dorli Ziegler
19. Toni Ziegler
20. Otto Knoepfelmacher
21. Erwin Ziegler
22. Alfred Ziegler
23. Therese (Terry) Ziegler-Tugendhat
24. Dr. Benjamin Ziegler
25. Regina (Gina) Ziegler
26. Rosa Mayer-Ziegler
27. Hilda Ziegler
28. Clara Ziegler-Taenzer
29. Emmy Ziegler-Meisl
30. Walter Meisl
31. Cletetine (Clemi) Ziegler-Wusserl
32. Susi Feingold-Pariser
33. Dr. Josef Feingold
34. Elsa Schaefer-Feingold
35. Kurt Pariser
36. Max Lux
37. Mitzi Knoepfelmacher
38. Elise Knoepfelmacher
39. Ernst Knoepfelmacher
40. Amalie Bruell-Kraus
41. Martin Sobel
42. Clara Sobel
43. Ignaz Brunert
44. Else Brunert

List of members of our family who had survived the
concentration camps of the Nazis

1. Erich Forster
2. Ditti Carter
3. Gustav Carter's 2 daughters
4. Walter Ziegler
5. Anny Lux
6. Ellen Lux
7. René Meisl
8. Eleonore Rosegg, Paul's mother
9. Norbert Rosegg, Paul's uncle

The map of Europe in 1964 shows the big changes which resulted from the Second World War. The biggest loser was Germany, which lost $\frac{1}{4}$ of its territory in the East, the provinces of East Prussia to Poland and Russia and the provinces of Pomerania and Silesia to Poland. Of the $\frac{3}{4}$, which remained, $\frac{2}{4}$ became West-Germany and $\frac{1}{4}$ East Germany. The biggest winner was Russia, which regained the province of Bessarabia from Rumania and also large provinces in the West, which were autonomous after the First World War, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, parts of the provinces of Galicia, which had belonged to Poland, parts of Finland, the Northern Bukowina and East Prussia. Tchechoslovakia regained the Sudetenland. The newly formed country Yugoslavia consisted of Serbia, Croatia and Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and parts of Rumanian and Hungarian territory. Hungary lost a great part of its territory to Tchechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, a small part also to Russia, the so-called Carpatho-Ukraine.

THE
RISE AND FALL
OF THE
THIRD REICH

Books by William L. Shirer

Nonfiction

BERLIN DIARY

END OF A BERLIN DIARY

MIDCENTURY JOURNEY

THE CHALLENGE OF SCANDINAVIA

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH

Fiction

THE TRAITOR

STRANGER COME HOME

THE CONSUL'S WIFE

A History of Nazi Germany

by

William L. Shirer

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

NEW YORK · 1960

To be reviewed by the project 158, 6007

called in his two remaining women secretaries and handed them capsules of poison to use if they wished to when the barbarian Russians broke in. He was sorry, he said, not to be able to give them a better farewell gift, and he expressed his appreciation for their long and loyal service.

Evening had now come, the last of Adolf Hitler's life. He instructed Frau Junge, one of his secretaries, to destroy the remaining papers in his files and he sent out word that no one in the bunker was to go to bed until further orders. This was interpreted by all as meaning that he judged the time had come to make his farewells. But it was not until long after midnight, at about 2:30 A.M. of April 30, as several witnesses recall, that the Fuehrer emerged from his private quarters and appeared in the general dining passage, where some twenty persons, mostly the women members of his entourage, were assembled. He walked down the line shaking hands with each and mumbling a few words that were inaudible. There was a heavy film of moisture on his eyes and, as Frau Junge remembered, "they seemed to be looking far away, beyond the walls of the bunker."

After he retired, a curious thing happened. The tension which had been building up to an almost unendurable point in the bunker broke, and several persons went to the canteen—to dance. The weird party soon became so noisy that word was sent from the Fuehrer's quarters requesting more quiet. The Russians might come in a few hours and kill them all—though most of them were already thinking of how they could escape—but in the meantime for a brief spell, now that the Fuehrer's strict control of their lives was over, they would seek pleasure where and how they could find it. The sense of relief among these people seems to have been enormous and they danced on through the night.

Not Bormann. This murky man still had work to do. His own prospects for survival seemed to be diminishing. There might not be a long enough interval between the Fuehrer's death and the arrival of the Russians in which he could escape to Doenitz. If not, while the Fuehrer still lived and thus clothed his orders with authority, Bormann could at least exact further revenge on the "traitors." He dispatched during this last night a further message to Doenitz.

DOENITZ!

Our impression grows daily stronger that the divisions in the Berlin theater have been standing idle for several days. All the reports we receive are controlled, suppressed, or distorted by Keitel . . . The Fuehrer orders you to proceed at once, and mercilessly, against all traitors.

And then, though he knew that Hitler's death was only hours away, he added a postscript, "The Fuehrer is alive, and is conducting the defense of Berlin."

But Berlin was no longer defensible. The Russians already had occupied almost all of the city. It was now merely a question of the defense of the Chancellery. It too was doomed, as Hitler and Bormann learned

at the situation conference at noon on April 30, the last that was ever to take place. The Russians had reached the eastern end of the Tiergarten and broken into the Potsdamerplatz. They were just a block away. The hour for Adolf Hitler to carry out his resolve had come.

His bride apparently had no appetite for lunch that day and Hitler took his repast with his two secretaries and with his vegetarian cook, who perhaps did not realize that she had prepared his last meal. While they were finishing their lunch at about 2:30 P.M., Erich Kempka, the Fuehrer's chauffeur, who was in charge of the Chancellery garage, received an order to deliver immediately 200 liters of gasoline in jerricans to the Chancellery garden. Kempka had some difficulty in rounding up so much fuel but he managed to collect some 180 liters and with the help of three men carried it to the emergency exit of the bunker.²⁴

While the oil to provide the fire for the Viking funeral was being collected, Hitler, having done with his last meal, fetched Eva Braun for another and final farewell to his most intimate collaborators: Dr. Goebbels, Generals Krebs and Burgdorf, the secretaries and Fraulein Manziarly, the cook. Frau Goebbels did not appear. This formidable and beautiful blond woman had, like Eva Braun, found it easy to make the decision to die with her husband, but the prospect of killing her six young children, who had been playing merrily in the underground shelter these last days without an inkling of what was in store for them, unnerved her.

"My dear Hanna," she had said to Fraulein Reitsch two or three evenings before, "when the end comes you must help me if I become weak about the children . . . They belong to the Third Reich and to the Fuehrer, and if these two cease to exist there can be no further place for them. My greatest fear is that at the last moment I will be too weak." Alone in her little room she was now striving to overcome her greatest fear.*

Hitler and Eva Braun had no such problem. They had only their own lives to take. They finished their farewells and retired to their rooms. Outside in the passageway, Dr. Goebbels, Bormann and a few others waited. In a few moments a revolver shot was heard. They waited for a second one, but there was only silence. After a decent interval they quietly entered the Fuehrer's quarters. They found the body of Adolf Hitler sprawled on the sofa dripping blood. He had shot himself in the mouth. At his side lay Eva Braun. Two revolvers had tumbled to the floor, but the bride had not used hers. She had swallowed poison.

It was 3:30 P.M. on Monday, April 30, 1945, ten days after Adolf Hitler's fifty-sixth birthday, and twelve years and three months to a day since he had become Chancellor of Germany and had instituted the Third Reich. It would survive him but a week.

The Viking funeral followed. There were no words spoken; the only sound was the roar of Russian shells exploding in the garden of the Chan-

* The children and their ages were: Hela, 12; Hilda, 11; Helmut, 9; Holde, 7; Hedda, 5; Heide, 3.

cellery and on the shattered walls around it. Hitler's valet, S.S. Sturm-bannfuhrer Heinz Linge, and an orderly carried out the Fuehrer's body, wrapped in an Army field-gray blanket, which concealed the shattered face. Kempka identified it in his own mind by the black trousers and shoes which protruded from the blanket and which the warlord always wore with his field-gray jacket. Eva Braun's death had been cleaner, there was no blood, and Bormann carried out her body just as it was to the passage, where he turned it over to Kempka.

Frau Hitler [the chauffeur later recounted] wore a dark dress . . . I could not recognize any injuries to the body.

The corpses were carried up to the garden and during a lull in the bombardment placed in a shell hole and ignited with gasoline. The mourners, headed by Goebbels and Bormann, withdrew to the shelter of the emergency exit and as the flames mounted stood at attention and raised their right hands in a farewell Nazi salute. It was a brief ceremony, for Red Army shells began to spatter the garden again and the survivors retired to the safety of the bunker, leaving the gasoline-fed flames to complete the work of eradicating the last earthly remains of Adolf Hitler and his wife.* For Bormann and Goebbels, there were still tasks to perform in the Third Reich, now bereft of its founder and dictator, though they were not the same tasks.

There had not yet been time for the messengers to reach Doenitz with the Fuehrer's testament appointing him as his successor. The admiral would now have to be informed by radio. But even at this point, with power slipped from his hands, Bormann hesitated. It was difficult to one who had savored it to give it up so abruptly. Finally he got off a message.

GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ:

In place of the former Reich Marshal Goering the Fuehrer appoints you as his successor. Written authority is on its way. You will immediately take all such measures as the situation requires.

There was not a word that Hitler was dead.

The Admiral, who was in command of all German forces in the north and had moved his headquarters to Ploen in Schleswig, was flabbergasted at the news. Unlike the party leaders, he had no desire to succeed Hitler; the thought had never entered his sailor's head. Two days before, believing that Himmler would inherit the succession, he had gone to the S.S.

* The bones were never found, and this gave rise to rumors after the war that Hitler had survived. But the separate interrogation of several eyewitnesses by British and American intelligence officers leaves no doubt about the matter. Kempka has given a plausible explanation as to why the charred bones were never found. "The traces were wiped out," he told his interrogators, "by the uninterrupted Russian artillery fire."

chief and offered him his support. But since it would never have occurred to him to disobey an order of the Fuehrer, he sent the following reply, in the belief that Adolf Hitler was still alive.

MY FUEHRER!

My loyalty to you will be unconditional. I shall do everything possible to relieve you in Berlin. If fate nevertheless compels me to rule the Reich as your appointed successor, I shall continue this war to an end worthy of the unique, heroic struggle of the German people.

GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ

That night Bormann and Goebbels had a fresh idea. They decided to try to negotiate with the Russians. General Krebs, the Chief of the Army General Staff, who had remained in the bunker, had once been the assistant military attaché in Moscow, spoke Russian, and on one famous occasion had even been embraced by Stalin at the Moscow railway station. Perhaps he could get something out of the Bolsheviks; specifically, what Goebbels and Bormann wanted was a safe-conduct for themselves so that they could take their appointed places in the new Doenitz government. In return for this they were prepared to surrender Berlin.

General Krebs set out shortly after midnight of April 30-May 1 to see General Chuikov,* the Soviet commander of the troops fighting in Berlin. One of the German officers accompanying him has recorded the opening of their conversation.

KREBS: Today is the First of May, a great holiday for our two nations.†

CHUIKOV: We have a great holiday today. How things are with you over there it is hard to say.²⁵

The Russian General demanded the unconditional surrender of everyone in the Fuehrer's bunker as well as of the remaining German troops in Berlin.

It took Krebs some time to carry out his mission, and when he had not returned by 11 A.M. on May 1 the impatient Bormann dispatched another radio message to Doenitz.

The Testament is in force. I will join you as soon as possible. Till then, I recommend that publication be held up.

This was still ambiguous. Bormann simply could not be straightforward enough to say that the Fuehrer was dead. He wanted to get out to be the first to inform Doenitz of the momentous news and thereby help to insure

* Not Marshal Zhukov, as most accounts have had it.

† May 1 was the traditional Labor Day in Europe.

his favor with the new Commander in Chief. But Goebbels, who with his wife and children was about to die, had no such reason for not telling the Admiral the simple truth. At 3:15 P.M. he got off his own message to Doenitz—the last radio communication ever to leave the beleaguered bunker in Berlin.

GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ

MOST SECRET

The Fuehrer died yesterday at 1530 hours [3:30 P.M.]. Testament of April 29 appoints you as Reich President . . . [There follow the names of the principal cabinet appointments.]

By order of the Fuehrer the Testament has been sent out of Berlin to you . . . Bormann intends to go to you today and to inform you of the situation. Time and form of announcement to the press and to the troops is left to you. Confirm receipt.

GOEBBELS

Goebbels did not think it necessary to inform the new Leader of his own intentions. Early in the evening of May 1, he carried them out. The first act was to poison the six children. Their playing was halted and they were given lethal injections, apparently by the same physician who the day before had poisoned the Fuehrer's dogs. Then Goebbels called his adjutant, S.S. Hauptsturmfuehrer Guenther Schwaegermann, and instructed him to fetch some gasoline.

"Schwaegermann," he told him, "this is the worst treachery of all. The generals have betrayed the Fuehrer. Everything is lost. I shall die, together with my wife and family." He did not mention, even to his adjutant, that he had just had his children murdered. "You will burn our bodies. Can you do that?"

Schwaegermann assured him he could and sent two orderlies to procure the gasoline. A few minutes later, at about 8:30 P.M., just as it was getting dark outside, Dr. and Frau Goebbels walked through the bunker, bade goodbye to those who happened to be in the corridor, and mounted the stairs to the garden. There, at their request, an S.S. orderly dispatched them with two shots in the back of the head. Four cans of gasoline were poured over their bodies and set on fire, but the cremation was not well done.²⁶ The survivors in the bunker were anxious to join the mass escape which was just getting under way and there was no time to waste on burning those already dead. The Russians found the charred bodies of the Propaganda Minister and his wife the next day and immediately identified them.

By 9 o'clock on the evening of May 1, the *Fuehrerbunker* had been set on fire and some five or six hundred survivors of the Fuehrer's entourage, mostly S.S. men, were milling about in the shelter of the New Chancellery—like chickens with their heads off, as one of them, the Fuehrer's tailor, later recalled—preparatory to the great breakout. The plan was to go

by foot along the subway tracks from the station below the Wilhelmsplatz, opposite the Chancellery, to the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof and there cross the River Spree and sift through the Russian lines immediately to the north of it. A good many got through; some did not, among them Martin Bormann.

When General Krebs had finally returned to the bunker that afternoon with General Chuikov's demand for unconditional surrender Hitler's party secretary had decided that his only chance for survival lay in joining the mass exodus. His group attempted to follow a German tank, but according to Kempka, who was with him, it received a direct hit from a Russian shell and Bormann was almost certainly killed. Artur Axmann, the Hitler Youth leader, who had deserted his battalion of boys at the Pichelsdorf Bridge to save his neck, was also present and later deposed that he had seen Bormann's body lying under the bridge where the Invalidenstrasse crosses the railroad tracks. There was moonlight on his face and Axmann could see no sign of wounds. His presumption was that Bormann had swallowed his capsule of poison when he saw that his chances of getting through the Russian lines were nil.

Generals Krebs and Burgdorf did not join in the mass attempt to escape. It is believed that they shot themselves in the cellar of the New Chancellery.

THE END OF THE THIRD REICH

The Third Reich survived the death of its founder by seven days.

A little after 10 o'clock on the evening of the first of May, while the bodies of Dr. and Frau Goebbels were burning in the Chancellery garden and the inhabitants of the bunker were herding together for their escape through a subway tunnel in Berlin, the Hamburg radio interrupted the playing of a recording of Bruckner's solemn Seventh Symphony. There was a roll of military drums and then an announcer spoke.

Our Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, fighting to the last breath against Bolshevism, fell for Germany this afternoon in his operational headquarters in the Reich Chancellery. On April 30 the Fuehrer appointed Grand Admiral Doenitz his successor. The Grand Admiral and successor of the Fuehrer now speaks to the German people.

The Third Reich was expiring, as it had begun, with a shabby lie. Aside from the fact that Hitler had not died that afternoon but the previous one, which was not important, he had not fallen fighting "to the last breath," but the broadcasting of this falsehood was necessary if the inheritors of his mantle were to perpetuate a legend and also if they were to hold control of the troops who were still offering resistance and who would surely have felt betrayed if they had known the truth.

Doenitz himself repeated the lie when he went on the air at 10 P.M. and spoke of the "hero's death" of the Fuehrer. Actually at that moment he did not know how Hitler had met his end. Goebbels had radioed only that he had "died" on the previous afternoon. But this did not inhibit the Admiral either on this point or on others, for he did his best to muddy the confused minds of the German people in the hour of their disaster.

It is my first task [he said] to save Germany from destruction by the advancing Bolshevik enemy. For this aim alone the military struggle continues. As far and as long as the achievement of this aim is impeded by the British and Americans, we shall be forced to carry on our defensive fight against them as well. Under such conditions, however, the Anglo-Americans will continue the war not for their own peoples but solely for the spreading of Bolshevism in Europe.

After this silly distortion, the Admiral, who is not recorded as having protested Hitler's decision to make the Bolshevik nation Germany's ally in 1939 so that a war could be fought against England and later America, assured the German people in concluding his broadcast that "God will not forsake us after so much suffering and sacrifice."

These were empty words. Doenitz knew that German resistance was at an end. On April 29, the day before Hitler took his life, the German armies in Italy had surrendered unconditionally, an event whose news, because of the breakdown in communications, was spared the Fuehrer, which must have made his last hours more bearable than they otherwise would have been. On May 4 the German High Command surrendered to Montgomery all German forces in northwest Germany, Denmark and Holland. The next day Kesselring's Army Group G, comprising the German First and Nineteenth armies north of the Alps, capitulated.

On that day, May 5, Admiral Hans von Friedeburg, the new Commander in Chief of the German Navy, arrived at General Eisenhower's headquarters at Reims to negotiate a surrender. The German aim, as the last papers of OKW make clear,²⁷ was to stall for a few days in order to have time to move as many German troops and refugees as possible from the path of the Russians so that they could surrender to the Western Allies. General Jodl arrived at Reims the next day to help his Navy colleague draw out the proceedings. But it was in vain. Eisenhower saw through the game.

I told General Smith [he later recounted] to inform Jodl that unless they instantly ceased all pretense and delay I would close the entire Allied front and would, by force, prevent any more German refugees from entering our lines. I would brook no further delay.²⁸

At 1:30 A.M. on May 7 Doenitz, after being informed by Jodl of Eisenhower's demands, radioed the German General from his new headquarters

at Flensburg on the Danish Ironclad *Uthmaniyah* to sign the German unconditional surrender. The game was up.

In a little red schoolhouse at Reims, where Eisenhower had made his headquarters, Germany surrendered unconditionally at 2:41 on the morning of May 7, 1945. The capitulation was signed for the Allies by General Walter Bedell Smith, with General Ivan Susloparov affixing his signature as witness for Russia and General François Sevez for France. Admiral Friedeburg and General Jodl signed for Germany.

Jodl asked permission to say a word and it was granted.

With this signature the German people and the German Armed Forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the hands of the victors . . . In this hour I can only express the hope that the victor will treat them with generosity.

There was no response from the Allied side. But perhaps Jodl recalled another occasion when the roles were reversed just five years before. Then a French general, in signing France's unconditional surrender at Compiègne, had made a similar plea—in vain, as it turned out.

The guns in Europe ceased firing and the bombs ceased dropping at midnight on May 8-9, 1945, and a strange but welcome silence settled over the Continent for the first time since September 1, 1939. In the intervening five years, eight months and seven days millions of men and women had been slaughtered on a hundred battlefields and in a thousand bombed towns, and millions more done to death in the Nazi gas chambers or on the edge of the S.S. Einsatzgruppen pits in Russia and Poland—as the result of Adolf Hitler's lust for German conquest. A greater part of most of Europe's ancient cities lay in ruins, and from their rubble, as the weather warmed, there was the stench of the countless unburied dead.

No more would the streets of Germany echo to the jack boot of the goose-stepping storm troopers or the lusty yells of the brown-shirted masses or the shouts of the Fuehrer blaring from the loudspeakers.

After twelve years, four months and eight days, an Age of Darkness to all but a multitude of Germans and now ending in a bleak night for them too, the Thousand-Year Reich had come to an end. It had raised, as we have seen, this great nation and this resourceful but so easily misled people to heights of power and conquest they had never before experienced and now it had dissolved with a suddenness and a completeness that had few, if any, parallels in history.

In 1918, after the last defeat, the Kaiser had fled, the monarchy had tumbled, but the other traditional institutions supporting the State had remained, a government chosen by the people had continued to function, as did the nucleus of a German Army and a General Staff. But in the spring of 1945 the Third Reich simply ceased to exist. There was no longer any German authority on any level. The millions of soldiers, airmen and sailors were prisoners of war in their own land. The millions of civilians were governed, down to the villages, by the conquering enemy

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troops, on whom they depended not only for law and order but through that summer and bitter winter of 1945 for food and fuel to keep them alive. Such was the state to which the follies of Adolf Hitler—and their own folly in following him so blindly and with so much enthusiasm—had brought them, though I found little bitterness toward him when I returned to Germany that fall.

The people were there, and the land—the first dazed and bleeding and hungry, and, when winter came, shivering in their rags in the hovels which the bombings had made of their homes; the second a vast wasteland of rubble. The German people had not been destroyed, as Hitler, who had tried to destroy so many other peoples and, in the end, when the war was lost, themselves, had wished.

But the Third Reich had passed into history.

A BRIEF EPILOGUE

I WENT BACK that autumn to the once proud land, where I had spent most of the brief years of the Third Reich. It was difficult to recognize. I have described that return in another place.²⁹ It remains here merely to record the fate of the remaining characters who have figured prominently in these pages.

Doenitz's rump government, which had been set up at Flensburg on the Danish border, was dissolved by the Allies on May 23, 1945, and all its members were arrested. Heinrich Himmler had been dismissed from the government on May 6, on the eve of the surrender at Reims, in a move which the Admiral calculated might win him favor with the Allies. The former S.S. chief, who had held so long the power of life and death over Europe's millions, and who had often exercised it, wandered about in the vicinity of Flensburg until May 21, when he set out with eleven S.S. officers to try to pass through the British and American lines to his native Bavaria. Himmler—it must have galled him—had shaved off his mustache, tied a black patch over his left eye and donned an Army private's uniform. The party was stopped the first day at a British control point between Hamburg and Bremerhaven. After questioning, Himmler confessed his identity to a British Army captain, who hauled him away to Second Army headquarters at Lueneburg. There he was stripped and searched and made to change into a British Army uniform to avert any possibility that he might be concealing poison in his clothes. But the search was not thorough. Himmler kept his vial of potassium cyanide concealed in a cavity of his gums. When a second British intelligence officer arrived from Montgomery's headquarters on May 23 and instructed a medical officer to examine the prisoner's mouth, Himmler bit on his vial and was dead in twelve minutes, despite frantic efforts to keep him alive by pumping his stomach and administering emetics.

The remaining intimate collaborators of Hitler lived a bit longer. I went down to Nuremberg to see them. I had often watched them in their hour of glory and power at the annual party rallies in this town. In the

Before the International Military Tribunal they looked different. There had been quite a metamorphosis. Attired in rather shabby clothes, slumped in their seats fidgeting nervously, they no longer resembled the arrogant leaders of old. They seemed to be a drab assortment of mediocrities. It seemed difficult to grasp that such men, when last you had seen them, had wielded such monstrous power, that such as they could conquer a great nation and most of Europe.

There were twenty-one of them* in the dock: Goering, eighty pounds lighter than when last I had seen him, in a faded Luftwaffe uniform without insignia and obviously pleased that he had been given the Number One place in the dock—a sort of belated recognition of his place in the Nazi hierarchy now that Hitler was dead; Rudolf Hess, who had been the Number Three man before his flight to England, his face now emaciated, his deep-set eyes staring vacantly into space, feigning amnesia but leaving no doubt that he was a broken man; Ribbentrop, at last shorn of his arrogance and his pompousness, looking pale, bent and beaten; Keitel, who had lost his jauntiness; Rosenberg, the muddled party “philosopher,” whom the events which had brought him to this place appeared to have awakened to reality at last.

Julius Streicher, the Jew-baiter of Nuremberg, was there. This sadist and pornographer, whom I had once seen striding through the streets of the old town brandishing a whip, seemed to have wilted. A bald, decrepit-looking old man, he sat perspiring profusely, glaring at the judges and convincing himself—so a guard later told me—that they were all Jews. There was Fritz Sauckel, the boss of slave labor in the Third Reich, his narrow little slit eyes giving him a porcine appearance. He seemed nervous, swaying to and fro. Next to him was Baldur von Schirach, the first Hitler Youth Leader and later Gauleiter of Vienna, more American by blood than German and looking like a contrite college boy who has been kicked out of school for some folly. There was Walther Funk, the shifty-eyed norentity who had succeeded Schacht. And there was Dr. Schacht himself, who had spent the last months of the Third Reich as a prisoner of his once revered Fuehrer in a concentration camp, fearing execution any day, and who now bristled with indignation that the Allies should try *him* as a war criminal. Franz von Papen, more responsible than any other individual in Germany for Hitler’s coming to power, had been rounded up and made a defendant. He seemed much aged, but the look of the old fox, who had escaped from so many tight fixes, was still imprinted on his wizened face.

Neurath, Hitler’s first Foreign Minister, a German of the old school, with few convictions and little integrity, seemed utterly broken. Not Speer, who made the most straightforward impression of all and who during the long trial spoke honestly and with no attempt to shirk his respon-

sibility and his guilt. Seyss-Inquart, the Austrian speaker, as were Jodl and the two Grand Admirals, Raeder and Doenitz—latter, the successor to the Fuehrer, looking in his store suit for all the world like a shoe clerk. There was Kaltenbrunner, the bloody successor of “Hangman Heydrich,” who on the stand would deny all his crimes; and Hans Frank, the Nazi Inquisitor in Poland, who would admit some of his, having become in the end contrite and, as he said, having rediscovered God, whose forgiveness he begged; and Frick, as colorless on the brink of death as he had been in life. And finally Hans Fritzsche, who had made a career as a radio commentator because his voice resembled that of Goebbels, who had made him an official in the Propaganda Ministry. No one in the courtroom, including Fritzsche, seemed to know why he was there—he was too small a fry—unless it were as a ghost for Goebbels, and he was acquitted.

So were Schacht and Papen. All three later drew stiff prison sentences from German denazification courts though, in the end, they served very little time.

Seven defendants at Nuremberg drew prison sentences: Hess, Raeder and Funk for life, Speer and Schirach for twenty years, Neurath for fifteen, Doenitz for ten. The others were sentenced to death.

At eleven minutes past 1 A.M. on October 16, 1946, Ribbentrop mounted the gallows in the execution chamber of the Nuremberg prison, and he was followed at short intervals by Keitel, Kaltenbrunner, Rosenberg, Frank, Frick, Streicher, Seyss-Inquart, Sauckel and Jodl.

But not by Hermann Goering. He cheated the hangman. Two hours before his turn would have come he swallowed a vial of poison that had been smuggled into his cell. Like his Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, and his rival for the succession, Heinrich Himmler, he had succeeded at the last hour in choosing the way in which he would depart this earth, on which he, like the other two, had made such a murderous impact.

* Dr. Robert Ley, head of the Arbeitsfront, who was to have been a defendant, had hanged himself in his cell before the trial began. He had made a noose from rags torn from a towel, which he had tied to a toilet pipe.