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Jürgen Stroop Speaks: The Trial of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Liquidator before the Warsaw Provincial Court

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Materials

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In March 1947, as a result of over a year of official diplomatic efforts and behind-the scenes talks, Jürgen Stroop, the liquidator of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was put in the Mokotów prison in Warsaw. Far from being just one in a series of cases against German war criminals brought before the Supreme National Tribunal (*Najwyższy Trybunał Narodowy*, NTN) at that time, Stroop's trial was meant to be the final reckoning for Nazi crimes committed during the Holocaust.[1] As Adolf Berman, chairman of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland wrote to the Chief Prosecutor of the NTN in July 1948:

> Unlike the previous major trials of German war criminals, which were only fragmentary in their examination of the principles of the policy of extermination carried out by German occupation authorities toward the Jews, the trial of J[ürgen] Stroop will be the first of a highly political nature. In all likelihood, it will address German policy as a whole; it will not only pertain to the suppression of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, but also to the annihilation of the Warsaw Jewry – the largest and most significant Jewish community in Poland, and in Europe.[2]

[1] See Tadeusz Cyprian, Jerzy Sawicki, *Siedem procesów przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym* (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1962), Janusz Gumkowski, Tadeusz Kołakowski, *Zbrodniarze hitlerowscy przed Najwyższym Trybunałem Narodowym* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1965); Włodzimierz Borodziej, "'Hitleristische Verbrechen': Die Ahndung deutscher Kriegs- und Besatzungsverbrechen in Polen," in *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik: Der Umgang mit deutschen Kriegsverbrechern in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. Norbert Frei (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006, 399–437; Alexander V. Prusin, "Poland's Nuremberg: The Seven Court Cases of the Supreme National Tribunal, 1946–1948,"*Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 24, 1 (2010): 1–25.

[2] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, Główna Komisja [Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, Main Commission] (later: AIPN, GK) 351/346, Akta podręczne dotyczące postępowania przygotowawczego i sądowego przeciwko zbrodniarzowi wojennemu, Adolf Berman do pierwszego prokuratora NTN Stefana Kurowskiego, 29 VII 1948 r. [The Reference Files Regarding the Preliminary and Court Proceedings against a War Criminal, Adolf Berman to the Chief Prosecutor of the NTN Stefan Kurowski, 29 July 1948], p. 117.

Nevertheless, three years passed after Berman's letter before the start of the Stroop trial in April 1951. In the meantime the so-called Little Nuremberg[3] anticipated by the press, fell victim to the new political reality, and the diligently collected expert opinions, monographs and testimonies vanished under layers of political rhetoric.

Even though Jürgen Stroop remains the war criminal the most closely associated with the annihilation of the Warsaw Jews – owing partly to the popularity of the memoir, *Conversations with an Executioner*, written by Kazimierz Moczarski, an officer of the Polish Home Army, and Stroop's cellmate – his trial has been all but forgotten, its records rarely used even in studies about the Warsaw ghetto.[4]

Jürgen Stroop was born Joseph Stroop on 26 September 1895, the son of a police senior constable (*Oberwachtmeister*) in Detmold, in what was then the Principality of Lippe. He changed his name in May 1941 on account of his weltanschauung (*weltanschaulichen Einstellung*), according to the official certificate; during his trial Stroop himself asserted that he had wanted to honor the memory of his son, who died as a child.[5] Stroop began his career as a clerk working in a land registry office. In 1932, at the age of 37, he joined the NSDAP and, later that same year, the SS. During the war, in October 1939, while at the rank of SS-Oberführer, he became commander of the Selbstschutz in Poznań and, starting in March 1940, the commander of 42nd SS District in Gniezno. In October 1941, he was transferred East and assigned to SS-Oberführer Horst Hoffmeyer, chief of the Sonderkommando Russland, to help fight the resistance movement in Ukraine and in the Caucasus, and safeguard the construction of the highway Lemberg [Lwów]–Donetsk. After having been promoted to the rank of SS-Brigadeführer, in February of 1943 he was appointed the SS and Police Leader (*SS- und Polizeiführer*) in Lwów. In his performance appraisal written at that time, Stroop was described as:

[3] Hirsz Wasser, "Proces Stroopa powinien się odbyć jak najszybciej," *Nasze Słowo* 4 (35), 19 March 1949.

[4] The Stroop trial transcript has been translated into Yiddish and published in *Bleter far Geszichte*, in the issue devoted to the 10th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (VI, 1–2). The transcript has been heavily censored and many passages were redacted altering the meaning of some questions and Stroop's answers. Consecutive versions of the censored translation may be found at the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, nos. 344/117a, 344/117 and 344/119, Eksterminacja Żydów – likwidacja getta warszawskiego [The Extermination of Jews – the Liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto]. The Stroop trial-documents were used as a source by, among others, Bernard Mark in his research on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. See for example, Mark, *Walka i zagłada warszawskiego getta* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo MON, 1959).

[5] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Stenogram rozprawy głównej, Drugi dzień rozprawy, 19 VII 1951 r. [Transcript of the main hearing: trial, day two, 19 July 1951], pp. 7–8.

> A good-soldier type. As an officer he remains rather aloof. Arrogant. Not very politically gifted. As commander of the SS and Police in his district, where political concerns are a priority – not entirely well suited. He is just a soldier who carries out orders. As a political leader he lacks versatility and intuition. He seems to be more than he really is. Rather a good man.[6]

Stroop arrived in Warsaw on 17 April 1943. Two days later he took over the task of the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto from the commander of the SS and Police in the Warsaw District, Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankenegg. His mission, for which he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class, ended with the completion of the operation, announced on 16 May; on 29 June he was already appointed SS and Police Leader in the Warsaw District. In September 1943 Stroop took up the post of Higher SS and Police Leader in Greece and was promoted to the rank of SS-Gruppenführer. A month later he was transferred to Germany, where he held the post of SS and Police Leader in Rhein-Westmark through March 1945. One of his objectives was to organize a German special force, *Werwolf*, intended to operate behind enemy lines. On 8 May 1945 he was taken into custody by American soldiers.

Eight months later, in February 1946, the Delegate of the Polish Government to the United Nations War Crimes Commission, Mieczysław Szerer, lodged a formal request for Stroop's extradition with the military governor of the U.S. Zone. He argued for extradition by virtue of the Moscow Declaration, which stated that war criminals were to be judged in the countries in which they committed their crimes. The extradition was refused. At that time Stroop was already under investigation by the U.S. Military Court in Dachau for the murder of American airmen who had been captured in Germany. Were he sentenced to death, his execution would need to be carried out by American authorities. Nevertheless, a compromise was reached after protracted negotiations. In August 1946 Szerer reported to the Ministry of Justice from London:

> I suggested a minor modification: to carry out Stroop's execution in Poland, if his Polish trial also resulted in the death penalty sentence. The reply I received on the second instant stated the official stand of the American occupation authorities: that American regulations made it impossible to accept my proposed solution. However, at the end of his letter the American delegate to the United Nations War Crimes Commission added: "notwithstanding, I am sure, that Colonel Straight (head of the War Crimes Office in Wiesbaden) will gladly verbally discuss this subject with any Polish representative." I assume from this remark, that although the Americans could not formally approve my proposal, were Stroop

[6] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 7, Akta w sprawie likwidacji getta w Warszawie t. 5, Akta personalne J. Stroopa [Files Pertaining to the Liquidation of the Ghetto in Warsaw vol. 5, Personal Files of J. Stroop], p. 10.

hanged in Warsaw, as it were, by mistake, it would not be cause for any diplomatic dispute.[7]

The verdict was pronounced in Dachau on 21 March 1947. Stroop was sentenced to death by hanging for membership in a criminal organization, and for the murder of prisoners of war.

Almost immediately after the sentencing, the Polish Military Mission in Berlin took decisive steps towards his extradition. On 31 May 1947, Jürgen Stroop and Erich Muhsfeldt (a member of personnel at the concentration camps Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, and Flossenbürg; sentenced to life imprisonment in Dachau) were sent from Berlin and handed over to the Provincial Office of Public Security in Warsaw. Four volumes of case files, three envelopes of photographs, one envelope containing a ring and one containing a wallet, a coin purse, and 73 German marks were sent together with them to Warsaw.[8] Muhsfeldt was brought before the NTN as early as November of 1947 and was sentenced to death in the so-called first Auschwitz trial for the atrocities committed in Auschwitz-Birkenau.[9] Stroop was put into Mokotów prison.

Preparations for Stroop's proceedings began almost immediately after his arrival in Warsaw. Still awaiting the review of his appeal from the sentence passed in Dachau, Stroop began preparing his defense. Among other things, he made repeated – and unsuccessful – attempts to have the lawyer who had defended him before the military court in Dachau, appointed as his counsel. [10] On 22 November 1947, Stroop's appeal against the decision of the American military court was rejected and his case was closed. Still, for a year afterwards, Stroop continued to invoke his rights in Poland under Article 62 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (third convention from 1929). His family and friends, with whom he kept up an extensive correspondence, were regularly cautioned to address their letters to *war criminal* – not *prisoner of war* – Jürgen Stroop.[11]

While in prison, Stroop was repeatedly questioned by representatives of the Central Commission for Investigating German Crimes (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce*, GKBZH) and the NTN as a part of the ground-

[7] AIPN, GK 351/346, Mieczysław Szerer do Ministra Sprawiedliwości, 10 VIII 1946 r. [Mieczysław Szerer to the Minister of Justice, 10 August 1946], pp. 8–9.

[8] AIPN, GK 351/346, Polska Misja Wojskowa przy Radzie Kontroli w Niemczech do Najwyższego Trybunału Narodowego, 31 V 1947 r. [The Polish Military Mission at the Control Council in Germany to the Supreme National Tribunal, 31 May 1947], p. 22.

[9] See Anna Żmijewska-Wiśniewska, "Zeznanie szefa krematorium Ericha Muhsfeldta na temat byłego obozu koncentracyjnego w Lublinie Majdanek," *Zeszyty Majdanka* 1 (1965): 133–148.

[10] See AIPN, GK 351/346, pp. 61–63 and 100–101. Stroop was informed that only a Polish citizen could become a defense attorney to defendants accused of war crimes.

[11] AIPN, GK 351/346, M. Ponarski do Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych, 12 II 1951 r. [M. Ponarski to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 February 1951], p. 292.

work for his trial. He also talked to researchers from the Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*, ŻIH) and to journalists.[12] The trial records indicate that, due of the significance of his trial, he was entitled to preferential treatment: yard and library privileges, as well as the right to receive parcels from home.

The notices sent to the prison authorities – confirmed by Kazimierz Moczarski's recollections of the discrepancies between the treatment given to Stroop, and that of former Home Army soldiers kept in the Mokotów prison at that time – stressed the importance of keeping him in "proper physical and mental condition".[13]

Following the demands from Jewish organizations, Stroop's trial was meant to be, from its beginning, a general reckoning for all the atrocities committed in the Warsaw ghetto. In April 1948 when the definitive form of the trial was still emerging (including the matter of who would be Stroop's co-defendant), the Central Commission for Investigating German Crimes in Poland called as an expert witness Józef Kermisz, then deputy director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and having profound knowledge on the history and annihilation of the Warsaw ghetto. In May of the same year, the decision was reached to combine Stroop's trial with the cases against Franz Konrad, an officer responsible for the requisition of Jewish assets, and Hermann Höfle, chief of staff of Operation Reinhardt, who directed the deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka. In the internal records, the trial was referred to as "the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto case" and was described as "unprecedented among Nazi criminal trials in Poland as well as abroad."[14] Indeed, the joint trial of Konrad and Stroop – the extradition of Höfle failed to materialize after his escape to Italy, where he lived under an assumed name until 1951 – was to adress in tandem two different concepts of "the solution of the Jewish problem" implemented by the Nazis in occupied Poland: the concept of physical annihilation represented by Stroop as Heinrich Himmler's man, and the concept of their exploitation as

[12] Stroop met with, among others, journalists for *Życie Warszawy*, and representatives of the Jewish Historical Institute: Józef Kermisz, Artur Eisenbach and Bernard Mark See: Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [[Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute] (later: AŻIH), 234/124, Kwestionariusz przedłożony Stroopowi przez Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (Die Beschreibung der Kampfe und der Liquidation des Warschauer Getto) i stenogram trzech rozmów Jürgena Stroopa z Józefem Kermiszem przeprowadzonych w więzieniu mokotowskim "Die Beschreibung der Kampfe und der Liquidation des Warschauer Getto", questionnaire submitted to Stroop by the Jewish Historical Institute and transcript of his three conversations with Józef Kermisz in the Mokotów prison].

[13] AIPN, GK 351/346, Tadeusz Cyprian do naczelnika Więzienia Mokotowskiego w Warszawie, 23 IX 1948 r. [Tadeusz Cyprian to the Warden of Mokotów Prison in Warsaw, 23 September 1948], p. 118.

[14] AIPN, GK 351/346, Skroński do Tadeusza Cypriana, 4 V 1948 r. [Skroński to Tadeusz Cyprian, 4 May 1948], pp. 96–97.

a slave labor force, which Konrad, a member of the OSTI[15] and Odilo Globocnik's protégée had called for.[16] It was also not without significance that the first extradition application submitted by Poland had rested on Konrad's testimony from January 1946 that incriminated Stroop.[17]

Despite the enormous interest aroused by the trial, the preliminary proceedings lasted longer than expected. In the meantime, key employees of the Jewish Historical Institute had emigrated from Poland, among them Nachman Blumental, director of the Institute, and Józef Kermish, who had been called as an expert witness. This caused further delay in the preparation of expert opinions, and some rewriting was eventually required. In January 1949, acting Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal Tadeusz Cyprian, submitted a request to the Ministry of Justice to call two expert witnesses:

> 1. An expert on the Warsaw Uprising, who could shed light on its sociopolitical background and on the roles played by the leadership of the uprising and by the government in exile.
> 2. An expert on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, who could explain the key role played by the Jewish proletariat, the lack of involvement on the part of the Jewish bourgeoisie, and who could demonstrate the support given to the insurgents by Polish leftists as well as the passivity of the authorities of the Polish Underground State [the Government Delegation for Poland].[18]

Eventually, the ŻIH sent Bernard Mark as an expert on Jürgen Stroop's involvement in the suppression of the Ghetto Uprising, and Artur Eisenbach, who was to give a comprehensive account of Franz Konrad's activity in Warsaw. Mark's opinion was clearly positioned within the political discourse imposed by the Communists, and therefore foreshadowed the direction the proceedings would go; in its 57 pages he mainly described the cooperation of the Jewish resistance movement with Polish underground organizations, in particular with the Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR). In Mark's presentation, insurgent forces – initially comprised solely of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, ŻOB) – drew inspiration from Soviet victories on the Eastern front and were dedicated to the idea of "the fight for

[15] Ostindustrie GmbH (OSTI) – company established by Odilo Globocnik in March 1943 in the Lublin District. OSTI was linked to the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office. Its main objective was to make use of the Jewish property stolen during Operation Reinhardt and to create a network of labor camps and enterprises benefitting from Jewish forced labor.

[16] See, for example, Stanisław Piotrowski, *Misja Odyla Globocnika: sprawozdanie o wynikach finansowych zagłady Żydów w Polsce* (Warsaw: PIW, 1949).

[17] See Katarzyna Person, "The Adventures of a Stamp Collector in the Warsaw Ghetto: Franz Konrad's Story," in this volume.

[18] AIPN, GK 351/346 Tadeusz Cyprian do Ministra Sprawiedliwości, 3 I 1949 r. [Tadeusz Cyprian to the Minister of Justice, 3 January 1949], p. 219.

a new, strong, independent, and democratic Poland, liberated forever from the regime of the *Sanacja* and the National Democrats (*Endecja*).[19] Not until a few days later were the ŻOB supposedly joined by another group of fighters, unnamed by Mark.

During the uprising, both groups were supported by the People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*, GL), the Workers Party of Polish Socialists (*Robotnicza Partia Polskich Socjalistów*, RPPS), and the Democratic Movement (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, SD). In Mark's opinion, however, "bottom-rung, ordinary soldiers of the Home Army eager to fight against the occupying forces" had also participated in the uprising. On the opposite end of the spectrum he placed "*szmalcowniks*" [blackmailers]. According to Mark, these tormentors of the Jews and of the Poles who were helping them came also from the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*, NSZ).[20] Describing in detail the crimes committed by Jürgen Stroop on both Jews and Poles, Mark depicted him as "one of the most depraved, savage, relentless Nazi butchers."[21]

On 5 July 1951, nearly four years after Stroop's arrival in Warsaw, the prosecutor of the capital city of Warsaw Kazimierz Kosztirko finally signed the indictment. Stroop was charged with membership in a criminal organization, the SS (*Schutzstaffel*, the Protective Guard). Other charges were also brought against him:

> 1. From 19 April until 16 May 1943, in Warsaw, while supervising the deportation of the rest of the Jews confined within the Warsaw ghetto – approximately 100,000 people – to extermination camps in the Lublin District, and the liquidation of the ghetto, he gave orders that led to the killings of at least 56,065 people, to the deaths of tens of thousands of others who became trapped in burning sewers and various hideouts, to the destruction of the complex of buildings forming the ghetto, and to the destruction of the synagogue outside the confines of the ghetto. Moreover, he ordered the plunder of the victims' possessions that consisted of at least 10 million Polish zlotys, and a large amount of foreign currency, namely U.S. dollars in bills and in gold coins as well as an undetermined amount in various pieces of jewelry.

[19] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 2, Stenogram rozprawy głównej, Bernard Mark, Jurgen Strop [*sic*] – likwidator getta warszawskiego w okresie kwiecień–maj 1943 roku. Ekspertyza w procesie przeciwko Jurgenowi Stropowi [Transcript of the main hearing: Bernard Mark, Jurgen Strop [*sic*] – the Liquidator of the Warsaw Ghetto, April–May 1943. The trial of Jurgen Strop: an expert report], p. 27.

[20] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 2, Bernard Mark, Ekspertyza w procesie przeciwko Jurgenowi Stropowi [Bernard Mark, The trial of Jurgen Strop: an expert report], p. 50.

[21] Other expert reports were also prepared by Stanisław Kubiak (on the activity of Selbstschutz), and by Prof. Ludwik Hirszfeld and Prof. Jan Czekanowski (on scientific foundations of racism and Nazi ideology).

2. as the Higher SS and Police Leader in the Warsaw, on 16 July 1943, he ordered the execution of 100 Poles in retaliation for an incident the previous day, where a marching column of the SA was attacked with a hand grenade by an unknown person, resulting in the injury of a number of soldiers.
3. as commander of the Selbstschutz in Poznań (9 October 1939, until 6 March 1940) and commander of the SS unit in Gniezno (6 March 1940, until 22 October 1941) he participated in mass murders and persecution of the Polish civilian population within the territory of the so-called 'Warthegau.'[22]

The trial of Jürgen Stroop and Franz Konrad began on 18 July 1951 in the 4th Criminal Division of the District Court for the capital city of Warsaw.

The judicial panel was led by Deputy President of the District Court, Judge Antoni Pyszkowski. Leon Penner and Jan Rusek acted as public prosecutors; defense attorney Jerzy Nowakowski served as Stroop's counsel.

In spite of the multi-count indictment, the main focus of the trial was on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The prosecution's case was based on the premise that Stroop had been "a fixer" who carried out "special assignments" – usually pacifications – for Heinrich Himmler in various trouble spots around occupied Europe.[23] Yet the prosecution was not able to prove beyond a doubt that Stroop was personally responsible for crimes committed by the Selbstschutz, nor that he gave the order to murder 100 Poles in Warsaw. The attempt to prove that the number of Jews deported from Greece had increased during his assignment there, likewise ended in failure.

There was, however, incontrovertible evidence that he was responsible for crimes committed during the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: a document entitled *Es gibt keinen jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau mehr!* [The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More] also known as "The Stroop Report".[24] The report – a collection of daily communiqués on the annihilation of the ghetto, preceded by an introduction and originally intended as a gift for Heinrich Himmler – had been already used twice as evidence in the Nuremberg trials: before the International Military Tribunal in 1947, and before the U.S. Military Tribunal in 1948. In Warsaw the report became the basis for the indictment, helping calcu-

[22] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Akt oskarżenia [Indictment], pp. 2–3.

[23] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Drugi dzień rozprawy [Trial, day two], p. 10.

[24] *The Stroop Report* was first published in *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher von dem Internationalen Militargerichthof, Nurnberg 14. November 1945–1. October 1946*, vol. 25, Nurnberg 1947.

First American edition – a facsimile edition with English translation: *The Stroop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More,* trans. by S. Morton, with introduction by A. Wirth (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979). On the Report see also Andrzej Żbikowski, "Wstęp," in Jürgen Stroop, *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie już nie istnieje* (Warsaw: IPN, 2009), 9–20.

late the number of Jews murdered during the uprising; later it was reused when Stroop was examined before the court.

Stroop's activities were additionally witnessed by his co-defendant, Franz Konrad, who had been by Stroop's side during the uprising, taking photographs which would later illustrate the report, and which – according to Konrad's statement – were to serve as evidence of crimes committed in the ghetto once the war was over. As he testified: "I was an impartial spectator of all things that transpired there [...] I knew I had to somehow remember them"[25]. Konrad listed not only Stroop's orders to murder Jews, but also his direct participation in executions, like the execution by firing squad of 500 political prisoners from the Pawiak prison in the courtyard of the Judenrat. Today it is difficult to establish which parts of Konrad's testimony recounted actual events and which reflected his defense strategy to contrast a casual bystander such as himself with Stroop, the brute who had initiated the pacification of the Ghetto Uprising. Either way, Konrad's role as the sole eyewitness to the crimes committed by Stroop overshadowed the investigation of his own case during the proceedings.

Meanwhile, Stroop assured the court that [he] "never in [his] life had [with his] hands shot anybody, had never killed, nor grabbed, nor hit,"[26] and that Konrad's testimony resulted from the clash between Himmler and Globocnik as well as from Konrad's own frustration since Stroop's arrival in Warsaw had greatly limited Konrad's own willful exploitation of the ghetto inhabitants. Seen as symbolic of this conflict – discussed extensively during the proceedings – was Stroop's order to burn down the warehouses where Konrad had amassed the goods looted from the ghetto residents.

In his testimony, Stroop did not hide his contempt for the OSTI and for the "murky dealings" of people who "would do better service being where they should have been during the war,"[27] that is, at the front line. In juxtaposition to Globocnik and Konrad, he presented himself as a soldier committed to the military ethos and discipline [that had been] drilled into him in his childhood by his policeman father.[28] His defense was shaped by the notion of obeying orders, which – as a result of prior rulings by the International Tribunal in Nuremberg – could be considered a mitigating circumstance. Citing the aforementioned unfavorable performance appraisal, Jerzy Nowakowski painted Stroop as a "politically inexperienced" and "less gifted" officer; one who did not delve deeply into the anti-Semitic ideology, as it was – according to the defense – "outside of the

[25] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Pierwszy dzień rozprawy, 18 VII 1951 r. [Trial, day one, 18 July 1951], p. 61.

[26] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Trzeci dzień rozprawy, 20 VII 1951 r. [Trial, day three, 20 July 1951], p. 74.

[27] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Drugi dzień rozprawy [Trial, day two], p. 73.

[28] Ibidem, p. 7.

sphere of his interests" [29]. First and foremost Stroop was to be "an organizer" sent out by Himmler during wartime "wherever things needed to get put in order."[30] On 17 April 1943 Stroop arrived in Warsaw to face another organizational assignment: to take over command from the inept von Sammern-Frankenegg, to clear Warsaw of Jews, and to raze the Warsaw ghetto to the ground. In all his actions during that time, he was no more than dutiful in carrying out his superiors' orders.

In 1952 there was no need to turn the trial into an element of political struggle, but there remained an unmistakable desire to weave Stroop's crimes into a historiographic narrative convenient to the Polish Stalinist regime. The testimonies of former residents of the Warsaw ghetto, ghetto fighters, and Polish railroad men who had driven trains toward Treblinka, were interlaced with ideological speeches – not only did they underscore the participation but even the leadership of the Polish Communist organizations in the Ghetto Uprising.[31] Since the key activists of the Jewish Fighting Organization had emigrated, Marek Edelman was its only member testifying in the proceedings. In a horrific testimony, he depicted the course of the uprising, and the crimes committed during its suppression.

Ryszard Walewski, a member of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR) who had fought in the ranks of the Jewish Military Union (*Żydowski Związek Wojskowy*, ŻZW) was also called as a witness. Nevertheless, he did not even mention the name of the ŻŻW in his the testimony, focusing instead entirely on his contacts with the ŻOB and with the People's Guard. Some of the witnesses even admitted that they did not have any immediate knowledge of the Ghetto Uprising; their testimony only served to reaffirm that the Communist underground had given aid to the Jewish Fighting Organization. In their testimonies, "the assistance given to the fighting Jewry by the people's democracy [movement] generally, and the Polish Workers' Party in particular," was the apex of Polish-Jewish relations, supposedly initiated by "our great [poet] Mickiewicz, whose commandments summoned us 'to hold out the hand of love to our brothers in [faith], Israel', and marked by "the help given by Polish workers to Jews – the victims of bourgeoisie-organized pogroms.'"[32] The annihilation of the Jews – viewed from the angle of Stalinist propaganda – had been merely the first step on the road to "the

[29] AIPN, GK 351/346, Jerzy Nowakowski, Skarga Rewizyjna [Appeal], p. 2.

[30] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Drugi dzień rozprawy [Trial, day two], p. 18.

[31] In Stroop's case, the testimonies were given, inter alia, by Franciszek Łęczycki, a PPR activist and leader of the Union of Struggle for Liberation, Tadeusz Radwański, commissioner for combating epidemics in the Health Department of the Judenrat, Julian Kudasiewicz, entrepreneur, Józef Pogorzelski, train dispatcher from Treblinka, Czesław Borowy, railroad man, and Marek Edelman.

[32] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Drugi dzień rozprawy, zeznanie świadka Franciszka Łęczyckiego [Trial, day two, Testimony of witness Franciszek Łęczycki], pp. 86–87.

subjugation and systematic extermination of Slavic nations."[33] It was evident, therefore, that not only Jürgen Stroop was put on trial in these proceedings, but capitalism itself, a system that was seen as a threat to Poland and to the Eastern Bloc as a whole. In his closing argument the prosecutor stated: "the motives behind this verdict should aspire to a much loftier goal: to expose and to condemn all the dark forces that [...] are still threatening the peace of the world.[34]

The verdict was delivered on 23 July 1951. Jürgen Stroop was found guilty of the crimes with which he had been charged in the indictment. In accordance with the decree on punishments for Nazi criminals issued by the Polish Committee for National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*, PKWN) on 31 August 1944, he was sentenced to death, the permanent revocation of his public and civil honorary rights (*obywatelskie prawa honorowe*), and the confiscation of all his property. The Court's judgment substantiation reads:

> The nature and proportions of Stroop's crimes, his arrogance and evasive manner of answering questions, reflected not only his lack of remorse, but also his unrelenting commitment to the Nazi worldview; as such, they have not permitted the Court to find any mitigating circumstances. His actions prove that he is a cold-hearted man, devoid of all feeling, an unfeeling type, a Nazi executioner who tormented his victims in cold blood, and who therefore must be wholly eliminated from society.[35]

Franz Konrad was likewise sentenced to death under the terms of the same decree. Stroop's lawyer appealed against the verdict on the basis of a lack of direct evidence of his guilt, but the appeal was dismissed. A plea for pardon submitted by Stroop to Bolesław Bierut[36] was also rejected. Jürgen Stroop was hanged at the Mokotów prison on 6 March 1952. The last official document concerning Stroop's trial is a note in which the Office of the Prosecutor General requests Stroop's wife, Käthe be informed of his death, as she complains that she has had no news from him.[37]

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[33] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 2, Czwarty dzień rozprawy, 23 VII 1951 r., Przemówienie Prokuratora Generalnego Prokuratury – Leona Pennera [Trial, day four, 23 July 1951, Speech of the Chief Prosecutor of the Prosecution Office, Leon Penner], p. 2.

[34] Ibidem.

[35] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 2, Czwarty dzień rozprawy, uzasadnienie wyroku [Trial, day four, Court's judgment substantiation], p. 20.

[36] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 2, Dyrektor Biura Ułaskawień B. Kowalewska do Sądu Wojewódzkiego m.st. Warszawy, 29 II 1952 r. [Head of Reprieve's Office, B. Kowalewska, to the District Court for the capital city of Warsaw, 29 February 1952].

[37] AIPN, GK 351/346, Naczelnik Wydziału V do Wydziału IV Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych, 29 VII 1952 r. [Head of the Fifth Department to the Fourth Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 July 1952], p. 266.

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The eight volume files of the trial of Jürgen Stroop and Franz Konrad are kept in the archive of the Institute of National Remembrance. Five of them (volumes III–VII, "The records pertaining to the liquidation of the ghetto in Warsaw") consist of the documentation from the preliminary proceedings. Volume III ("The Jewish question in the light of Nazi racial ideology and its solution in the G.G.") is comprised of survey reports of the Third Reich legal articles, German anti-Semitic literature, and documentary material related to the implementation of anti-Semitic policies. Volumes IV and V (entitled "The ghetto in Warsaw, its extermination and destruction") contain survey reports of documentary materials related to the creation and functioning of the Warsaw ghetto, inter alia, the thorough documentation of the typhus epidemic and mortality rates in the ghetto, as well as transcripts of witness testimonies in the trial of Ludwig Fischer, Ludwig Leist, Josef Meisinger and Max Daume that was held before the Supreme National Tribunal from December 1946 through February 1947. The volumes also contain an expert report on racism written by professors Jan Czekanowski and Ludwik Hirszfeld. The report evaluates the doctrine of German superiority with respect to other nations – particularly to Jews – in terms of anthropology, biology, and psychology, as well as the thesis that Jews were typhus carriers. Volumes V, VI, and VII concern the three defendants – Franz Konrad, Hermann Höfle, and Jürgen Stroop, respectively – and include their dossiers and witness testimonies describing their activity.

Volumes I and II are comprised of the transcripts of the four-day proceedings. The first day, 18 July 1951, was devoted to the testimony of Franz Konrad, who gave evidence about his own activity in the ghetto as well as about the role Jürgen Stroop played during the Uprising. Stroop himself testified on the second day, 19 July. First, he described the military upbringing he had had from his father, his family life, then he outlined his army career through to his arrival in Warsaw in April 1943. The section pertaining to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which followed, was the most extensive part of his testimony. He was also questioned, if rather cursorily, regarding his order, issued on 16 July 1943, to execute 100 Polish hostages. Witnesses testimonies began the same day and continued the third day, 20 July. The sentence was pronounced on the fourth day, 23 July 1951. Volume II also contains the petitions to appeal the verdict and the convicts' requests of clemency sent to Bolesław Bierut. The volume marked *351/346* consists of reference files regarding the preliminary and court proceedings, mostly records related to extradition and to the time Stroop spent in the Mokotów prison."

Testimony of Jürgen Stroop given on the second day of the trial, 19 July 1951 (excerpts on the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto)[38]*

As I have already mentioned this morning, I was in Lwów when Krüger[39] called the five SS generals, and the head of the [Lwów] police asked me to attend this meeting as an observer [*hospitant*]. It was arranged for 17 April 1943. Before the conference, I was summoned by Krüger. I was in my quarters when I received the order to go immediately to Warsaw, to the SS headquarters. I was to stay there and await further orders. I settled into my quarters and that evening, if I remember correctly, I met the local commander of the SS and police, von Sammern[40]. He, too, knew nothing of any orders for me and so, I considered the matter closed. I had heard that the next morning, 18 April, all commanding officers scheduled to take part in the clearing of the ghetto would have a meeting. Sammern explained to me that he had received an order from SS-Reichsführer and from Krüger to empty the ghetto as soon as possible; all the people and the industrial equipment were to be moved elsewhere, and the ghetto was to be destroyed to create an undeveloped green space. Later, small houses were to be built on this land. Those were the orders that Sammern got. That was it.

As I did not have anything better to do, the next morning I went to the SS and police headquarters. A meeting of the commanding officers, who were to begin the operation, took place at the SS-Polizeiführer's office. I sat there listening, sometimes more carefully, sometimes less, but without any special interest, because I did not know if I would even deal with these matters. Sammern did not attend the meeting. I only talked with him later in the evening. That Sunday, 18 April, Sammern told me that, on the orders of Krüger, he was to hand over

[38] AIPN, GK 317/874, file 1, Drugi dzień rozprawy [Trial, day two], pp. 23–84.

* A court transcript is, by definition, an unedited record of what was said in the courtroom during a trial. It is typical for transcripts to contain grammatical and syntactic mistakes, speech errors, an overuse of demonstratives and mental shortcuts; consequently the translation of a court transcript can be challenging. The transcript of the Polish trial of Jürgen Stroop poses an additional challenge: the translators have had to work from a text, which itself is a product of translation. Jürgen Stroop did not speak Polish. All his statements and answers were translated by a court interpreter. It is unknown whether Stroop's original German-language utterances were recorded or not. The German transcript, if it had ever existed, is not to be found in the archives. Without the original text, it is impossible to say whether the certain ineptness in Stroop's language should be attributed to the haste of the original court translators, or to Stroop's personal style of verbal expression (translator's footnote).

[39] Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger (1894–1945) – SS-Obergruppenführer from October 1939 until November 1943, Higher SS and Police Leader in the General Government (*Generalgouvernement*, GG). From May 1942, state secretary for security matters in the government of the GG.

[40] Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankenegg (1897–1944) – SS-Oberführer, SS and Police Leader in the Warsaw District from July 1942 until 23 April 1943.

the task of clearing the ghetto to me. Only then did he tell me about a dispatch he had received from the ghetto on Saturday evening warning that removing Jews from the ghetto might not go smoothly, as they were likely to put up armed resistance. I believe that Sammern went to Kraków to see General Krüger on account of that dispatch. I believe that on account of that dispatch General Krüger ordered that I was to perform the clearing of the ghetto instead of Sammern. Yet I did not know anything about the ghetto, nor about Sammern's plan of action, while he was familiar with the place and with the task forces, so – for friendly and tactical reasons – I did not take command of the action immediately; Sammern did.

In accordance with his plan, he started to empty the ghetto on April 19th at 5 a.m.; he started the liquidation.

What happened after he entered the ghetto, and before he arrived at my quarters – that I cannot say.

It was 7.30 a.m. when he appeared accompanied by his adjutant.

He looked very upset and said, I believe his words were, "Everything is lost, we are not in the ghetto anymore, we cannot get there, there are casualties."

He was ready to send a teletype to Kraków, and request that Stuka bombers be sent to bomb the ghetto.

I explained to him that under the terms of Krüger's order, which did not have any time constraints, I must step in now. I made it clear that requesting air support was out of the question. I could not imagine how it would not be possible to enter the ghetto with the support of the Waffen-SS, police, and security police units. I told Sammern to return to the ghetto and to wait for me there. Between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., I entered the ghetto for the first time, and began to carry out my military orders. At that moment some facts were indisputable to me: that Germany was at war, furthermore, the order that I had received as a soldier, furthermore, the battle had already begun and there were casualties on both sides. Besides, I understood the significance of Warsaw as a supply base for the army. These were the indisputable realities to me. I met the commanding officers who were there for the first time, and we entered through the large gate of the ghetto.[41] I asked the officers to follow me. There was shooting there, but I ignored that. When one demands of soldiers to enter, one must enter himself, too. By a tree,[42] I asked for a plan of the ghetto and found out what the place looked like according to the map. I gave the commanders the proper orders, in accordance with rules of engagement; so at least the main street could be recaptured by our assault units. And that is how it happened. That there was a battle, and dead and wounded everywhere, is confirmed by the article I have with me. I have shown the article to my defense counsel; it proves that everything happened exactly as

[41] The gate in Nalewki Street. See Mark, *Walka i zagłada warszawskiego getta*, 268.

[42] The tree in question was next to the Judenrat building in Zamenhofa Street; see ibidem, 268.

I have said it did. Your Honors, I ask, if it please the court, that you take this article from Dr. Nowakowski. Or perhaps you wish me to read it aloud?
[Defense] We will later submit this article to the Court.
[Defendant] This article, written by the chairman of the Jews, Dr. Samuel Gringaus, the chairman of the Liberated Jews,[43] was a part of his speech in commemoration of the fight in the ghetto. The article was published in a Munich newspaper on 25 April 1947.[44] I read it while in American captivity, which is where I obtained this newspaper.

I think it was on the first day or maybe later, when we captured the main street – I am not sure, because so many years have already passed, and I can say only what I remember – that some bigger building was burning. I think it was some kind of factory. There were many such enterprises run by Wehrmacht officers or soldiers. I think that the fire broke out at a workshop, a so-called Army Accommodation office.[45] The fire had been caused by insurgents, so assault units were dispatched to attack their main points of resistance. Later, entire compounds of houses were cleared, people were led out from the compounds; eventually, every day thousands of people reported voluntarily to the "Umschlagplatz," the train station located outside of the ghetto. As transport of people from the Warsaw ghetto did not come under my jurisdiction, designated men were appointed by Governor Globocnik [for that purpose][46].

I did not have anything to do with transportation. When this operation was already in progress, I was obliged to secure important supplies stored in the ghetto. I was able to do so because there was a police station inside the ghetto – I do not recall its name – that collected all dispatches. It was headed by some major. As I knew [the situation] on the front, and had heard about shortages of woolen goods and other things, I saw to it that these things were sent from the ghetto to the front line as quickly as possible. On that account I inspected all the factories and warehouses; I assessed the then-situation – insofar as I, a layman, could – and ordered the loading of all goods [for shipment] within a certain timeframe. Only then did I order the liquidation, the destruction of the compound containing a given workshop. The headquarters was responsible for

[43] Samuel Gringauz (b. 1900) – activist in displaced persons camps; in 1946–1947, chairman of the Central Committee of the Liberated Jews, that was set up in the American sector of occupied Germany.

[44] Samuel Gringauz, "Der Kampf um das Warschauer Ghetto," *Münchner Mittag*, 25 April 1947.

[45] The workshop in question – the brushmakers' workshop [*szop*] situated between Bonifraterska, Świętojerska, Wałowa and Franciszkańska Streets – where units of the ŻOB and the ŻZW were positioned. The described battle began at 3 p.m. on 20 April. See *The Stroop Report*, 20 April 1943.

[46] Odilo (Otto) Lotario Globocnik (1904–1945) – SS-Obergruppenführer, from November 1939 until September 1943, served as the SS and Police Leader in Lublin District; responsible for Operation Reinhardt.

all the details. The loading did not cause any difficulties. As far as the supplies for the Wehrmacht were concerned, everything was done with the approval of the commanding officer of the Wehrmacht in Warsaw, the *Generalleutnant*, I do not remember his name; I cooperated with him.[47] The Wehrmacht command, but also Governor Fischer[48] and other representatives [of the administration] pointed out with some urgency, that the uprising in the ghetto could not, under any circumstances, spread into Warsaw. The Wehrmacht headquarters particularly emphasized it, because – as they explained to me, and as I may now reveal – without withdrawing troops from the front, they were not in a position to put down the possible rising in Warsaw.

Never in my life had I seen such a maze, as that of the ghetto. Because of possible air raids, the inhabitants had been allowed to build shelters. What they had built there, instead, were not just shelters, but bunkers connected by passages, which stretched over the entire ghetto. They stocked up on food, supplies, hoarded eggs, flour, and canned foods. Crude means of light production were created.

The tunnels had been built with the purpose of using them in combat. Concrete bunkers were constructed in some special buildings from where the combat forces emerged already on the first day [of the uprising].

And I wish to say something more. That assault unit also included police and security forces, and the Chief of the Security and Police; Dr Hahn[49] was in constant contact with the Security Main Office, with Dr. Brunner.[50] Thousands of people reported of their own will to the reloading point [at the Umschalgplatz] because they wanted to board a train. As I have said before, this task had been given to the manager of one of the plants; he knew all these people and he was known to them, so he was able to lead them.[51] And I have something else to add. When Himmler gave the order regarding the immediate destruction of the ghetto, it was difficult to decide how it should be done. Because of the fire I mentioned before, an SS expert from the Warsaw construction department – I do not recall his rank – advised me that it would be useful to burn down all the houses, so that later it would be easier to tear down the walls and to clear away the bricks and stones.

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[47] Probably Fritz Rossum, see footnote 87 below.

[48] Ludwig Fischer (1905–1947), governor of the Warsaw District in the General Government (*Generalgouvernement*).

[49] Ludwig Hahn (1908–1986) – SS-Standartenführer, from 1941 until 1944 chief of the Sipo (*Sicherheitspolizei*, Security Police) and the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*, Security Service) in the Warsaw District.

[50] Alois Brunner (b. 1912) – Hauptsturmführer, associate of Adolf Eichmann in the subdepartment of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, RSHA) known as Referat IV B-4.

[51] The person in question was probably Walter C. Többens, an owner of ghetto workshops [*szops*].

To carry out Himmler's order, I followed this advice, knowing that this matter was of great importance to Himmler. Wishing to accomplish this, I decided to burn all the empty houses. Before that was done, every complex of buildings was searched, emptied, and – only then – torched. In the meantime, the inhabitants of the ghetto, who fought and put up resistance, were being called to come forward voluntarily. In this, many people were involved, announcing the appeal in Polish, Jewish [*żydowski język*] and German. On my order, contact was established immediately with the so-called Jewish Council, which was told to use all its influence toward persuading people to report willingly – as it was planned and as everybody knew what they should do. This was on account of Himmler's order, the one which dealt with The Hague Convention, and had been already in effect for some time, that the concepts of "*franc-tireur*"[52], "partisan" and "bandit" were recognized. Under the terms of The Hague Convention, bandits could not be treated as combatants [*kombatanci*], but rather had to be executed on the spot.

I received two teletype messages from Himmler; the first told me to carry out the order I just cited, at "full steam." This was some time later. The subsequent message was similar. I sent a daily teletype to Krüger who, since the second or third day [of the operation], constantly reminded me of the order. What I wanted above all was to have these people report voluntarily. For that reason I acted in a way no soldier should act; every night I withdrew all units from the ghetto, dismissing them to their barracks, and every morning I reassembled the forces to resume the fight. That way the ghetto inhabitants had the chance to gather and respond to my call. As I have said, thousands of people did exactly that. As a result, I was even summoned by Krüger but, as far as that issue was concerned, I did what I saw fit. Later Krüger admitted that I had been right.

Under the terms of Himmler's order, all people who did not report on my call voluntarily, who were armed and put up resistance, were considered bandits and would be executed as such. That order was known to the commanding officers, as I myself had pointed it out to them and quoted it. There were also women who fought in the ghetto. The Chalutzim movement, if I recall correctly, or maybe some other, I tend to forget these names. These women most often had American pistols. The ghetto inhabitants had no problems obtaining weapons because of poor guarding. I do not want to say "guarding", rather, "poor supervision;" because anything one desired could be found in the ghetto, even weapons, steel helmets, everything needed to produce gunpowder and ammunition.

I noticed that the inhabitants of the ghetto were in possession of homemade bombs. I saw these bombs myself, or rather steel pipes, thirty centimeters high [12 inches], sealed at the bottom, and with a welded cap on the top; each had an inserted string running through the hole at the capped end of the pipe, and the surface around the hole was covered by explosives. The insurgents in the

[52] French; a member of a resistance movement.

ghetto were in possession of a lot of bottles filled with gasoline, Molotov cocktails, as they were called on the frontline. It was the name for this type of bottle. I have already said this, there was a place [in the ghetto] where the orders came from, and – unknown to the units fighting inside the ghetto – the command [of the German troops] was in the hands of detachments of the Police and Security stationed there. The warehouses [*zakłady*] were run by defendant Konrad[53]. He was properly knowledgeable about it since he had been an officer of the Sicherheitspolizei in the ghetto before. It was difficult determine whether the uprising had ended, because people were still in the ghetto. Things were taken care of, brought to an end. Himmler had me called to the telephone and ordered me to blow up the synagogue in Warsaw, as conclusion. I did not know where this synagogue was; I did not even know that such [a synagogue] existed. Independently from the order, Dr. Hahn[54] pointed out that there were armed insurgents in the synagogue. I suspect that the police and security sent a dispatch to Himmler and, based on this, Himmler called me; otherwise how would he have thought of that synagogue?
[Presiding Judge] Has the defendant finished his explanations?
[Defendant]: Yes, in a broad sense, I have.
[Judge Hańczakowski]: Is this the defendant's report?
[Defendant] As far as I can see, I assume it is.
[Judge] Is this the defendant's signature?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Judge] Is this the original version of the report on the operation in the ghetto?
[Defendant] I assume it is.
[Judge] When Himmler gave the defendant the order to annihilate Jews while invoking The Hague Convention, did it not occur to the defendant, that an operation which aims at accomplish the liquidation of a civilian population, or a part of a defenseless city, is not encompassed by The Hague Convention?
[Judge] Can the defendant answer the question?
[Defendant] When the order came in so suddenly, at that moment I could only be aware that I had been fighting, that Germany was at war; I had an order to cleanse the ghetto, where I came upon fighting, and I had to end it.
[Judge] In his explanation the defendant spoke of a sudden order, however the liquidation of the ghetto took over a month. During that time, did it occur to the defendant that this was not a military operation?
[Defendant] Yes, I did realize that there was a struggle there, a resistance that had to be overcome. When I talked about the order, when I cited The Hague Convention – I had good reason to quote and refer to Himmler's order. Himmler had explained that all people who did not meet [the criteria of] Article 4 of the

[53] Franz Konrad (1906–1952) – SS-Hauptsturmführer, head of the Werterfassung, an institution responsible for collecting property that belonged to Jews deported from the ghetto.
[54] See note 48 above.

Regulations of The Hague Convention (which had been introduced for the sake of combatants[55]) were – likewise according to The Hague Convention – considered *francs-tireurs*. Later, in the East, the term "partisans" was in use. Himmler and von dem Bach[56] later introduced the expression "bandits." As The Hague Convention stated that they were *francs-tireurs*, they should have been executed on the spot. Since Himmler had ordered that bandits should be executed on the spot, I had to assume that Himmler's order had been reviewed for its international legitimacy, that it was justified and in compliance with The Hague Convention.

[Judge] So what was happening to the people who were captured in the ghetto?

[Defendant] People who were captured, and who did not resist, were transported away.

[Judge] Where were they transported to, and to what end?

[Defendant] I did not receive any written orders, but Sammern told me that all people and machines were to be taken to Lublin or some other camp to keep working on these machines.

[Judge] In that case, why does the defendant write in his report from 25 April that immediate liquidation of 1,690 [*sic*] captured Jews was not possible due to darkness, and that if a train to the T-II was not provided, they would be executed on the following day?[57] In German it reads as follows [he reads the German text[58]].

[Defendant] The T-II was a purely administrative matter.

[Judge] The defendant does not seem to understand the question; why did the defendant write about liquidation, if he believed the people living in the ghetto were sent for labor?

[Defendant] There is an editorial error here. The daily reports, which are here and which I remember, were compiled on the basis of dispatches from commanding officers, to be precise, from the office of the chief of staff, Jezuiter[59],

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[55] According to Art. 4 of The Hague Convention, 1907: "prisoners of war are in the power of the hostile Government, but not of the individuals or corps who capture them. They must be humanely treated. All their personal belongings, except arms, horses, and military papers, remain their property."

[56] Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski (1899–1972) – SS-Obergruppenführer, Higher SS and Police Leader in Silesia, and then in the occupied territory of the Soviet Union. In 1943–1944, in command of anti-partisan troops fighting "bandits" in occupied Europe (*Bandenkampfverbände*). In charge of the pacification action of the Warsaw Uprising.

[57] The T II, an extermination camp in w Treblinka. It operated from July 1942 to November 1943.

[58] *Die sofortige Liquidierung wurde wegen Eintritt der Dunkelheit nicht mehr durchgeführt. Ich werde versuchen für morgen einen Zug nach T II zu erhalten, andernfalls die Liquidierung morgen durchgeführt wird*.

[59] Max Jesuiter (b. 1897), SS-Sturmbannführer, from 1942 Chief of Staff at the office of the SS and Police Leader in the Warsaw District.

who first discussed their content with me on a regular basis, and then edited these letters himself.
[Judge] Was his signature "Stroop"?
[Defendant] I did not care about these reports. What I cared about was ensuring that Sammern would carry out the order to cleanse the ghetto, to make it disappear, exactly as had been commanded by Himmler.
[Judge] The defendant said that he had assigned special soldiers to call on the ghetto inhabitants to surrender. In his report dated 24 April, however, the defendant writes that both Jews and bandits preferred to return into the flames rather than surrender to the Germans. In German, it reads as follows [the German text[60]]
[Defendant] Is his conclusion based on the dispatch from one commanding officer, or from many commanding officers?
[Judge] In this situation, is it possible for the defendant to treat his own statement seriously, that he counted on it, and that every evening he summoned the people to voluntarily surrender?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Judge] In his report dated 22 April, the defendant stresses that in one case, 35 Polish bandits and Communists were caught and immediately executed by firing squad. It was not uncommon that the bandits died with the cry: "Long live Poland" and "Long live Moscow!" Does the defendant remember these instances?
[Defendant] If it is stated there, then it is true.
[Judge] To what purpose were smoke-candles and creosote[61] lowered into the sewers?
[Defendant] I do not know anything about creosote. I only know that Brand,[62] who supervised the sewage system, discovered that there were people in the sewers. Sewage system management reported that it would be pointless to raze the land aboveground while there were still huge rooms underground where people could hide. It was feasible to raise the water level so that staying in the sewers would become impossible. So, owing to the dispatch, I issued an order to carry out the operation. As for the use of creosote, I do not know of any such case; I know that a certain quantity of smoke-candles was placed at the disposal of the units. It is a chemical fog, absolutely harmless. It is an international[ly permitted] agent used to conceal troops. While in training, I lay in this fog myself, as did many of my colleagues, and nobody died of it. It only causes irritation after a while, and a cough. Only these types of candles were employed.
[Judge] The defendant himself writes about creosote in the report dated 22 April, [describing] that it was impossible to prevent some of the Jews from hiding in

[60] *Immer wieder konnte man beobachten, dass trotz der grossen Feuersnot Juden und Banditen es verzogen, lieber wieder ins Feuer zurückzugehen, als in unsere Hände zu fallen*.

[61] Creosote, an oil, a toxic component of pine tar.

[62] Karl Brandt (1898–1945) – SS-Untersturmführer, chief of the section IV B-1 (Jews) at the office of the Security Police and the SD Commander the Warsaw District.

the sewers and – as flooding of the sewers had produced no results – that an attempt was made to use smoke-candles and to introduce creosote into the water. The results are described by the defendant in a report from as early as 8 May, where he writes, verbatim (the judge reads the German text[63]). The smoke candles caused the death of countless Jews.
[Defendant] I insist on what I have said before – I do not know anything about creosote; I know only about smoke candles.
[Judge] So, these are typos as well?
[Defendant] I do not understand.
[Judge] One of the officers, your subordinate, Demko,[64] perished during the action in the ghetto. Is that why the defendant ordered the execution of Jews by firing squad?
[Defendant] No. Others died as well.
[Judge] Does the defendant deny this?
[Defendant] I am not saying no, I just do not know anything about it.
[Judge] Kaleske[65] was the defendant's adjutant during the operation in the ghetto, and Konrad was also always at the defendant's side.
[Defendant] I do not know if always, but frequently.
[Judge] The defendant Konrad took pictures, which were then placed in this album.
[Defendant] I learned about this yesterday.
[Judge] Did the defendant see him taking pictures?
[Defendant] I do not believe that I did. I did not like for pictures to be taken.
[Judge] Did the defendant see Konrad's other activities in the ghetto?
[Defendant] I do not know… what kinds of activities?
[Judge] Did the defendant learn from defendant Konrad's hearing that Konrad attempted to discredit him before Himmler? Is that correct?
[Defendant] I heard a lot out of Konrad yesterday. I was thinking about it last night in my cell, and I realized that Konrad had acted against me. I have never seen this side of Konrad before; to me he seems like a different man today. The SS officer Konrad has just realized that he had been against me from the very beginning, and from the very beginning he collected incriminating evidence against me. In my personal view, we – two Germans – have the misfortune that we are both brought to court; and in my opinion, it is not right when two Germans act against each other. It happened before in the American court by which I was convicted, that four or five people told lies about me, and I did not speak one word of protest. I remained silent while others acted against me.

[63] *Durch die Nebelkerzen waren bereits ungezählte Tote von den hervorgebrachten Juden gemeldet*.

[64] SS-Untersturmführer Otto Dehmke died on 22 April.

[65] Karl Kaleske (b. 1895) – since November 1942, adjutant to Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankengg; since April 1943, adjutant to Jürgen Stroop.

That is why I want to provide a brief explanation [now]. In the ghetto Konrad was somebody. As I hear now, he knew precisely what was going on; he was Oberführer Sammern's right-hand man. Apparently, they were both members of the company that I – being a soldier – did not wish to have anything to do with. When I arrived in Warsaw, Jezuiter pointed Konrad out to me – at that time I did not know anyone there – and cautioned me that I should keep an eye on him because his dealings were entirely murky. Those were the Chief of Staff's very words.
[Judge] The defendant mentioned that Konrad and Sammern were members of some company; could the defendant elaborate?
[Defendant] That was the same company that Konrad talked about at length yesterday. It was named OSTI, I believe[66]. OSTI made use of everything it could, seized everything thoroughly – for what purposes I did not know – and never mind what way. That was the company I spoke of. Please, allow me to finish [to explain], why Konrad acted against me from the very beginning. On account of what the chief of staff, Jezuiter, had pointed out to me, I kept Konrad rather close by, so I would know what was going on and to keep an eye on him. Therefore, he no longer had as much control of the ghetto as before. He felt deprived [of his power]; his pride was wounded, so, in my opinion, that constitutes the reason.
[Prosecutor] Allow me to ask the defendant, does he confess to carrying out Himmler's order to liquidate the ghetto with full determination and in a very meticulous manner?
[Defendant] Yes and no. My order did not mention the liquidation. The order, which I received from Sammern-Frankenengg, and which he himself had obtained directly from Himmler, read: "Cleanse the ghetto; put all people, machines, and stock elsewhere, in Lublin." The transportation was in Globocnik's hands, and only then was I to destroy the ghetto, wipe it off the surface as soon as possible, so that in its place a green area could come into existence with proper, country-style cottages built there.
[Prosecutor] If I understand [the defendant's] answer correctly, people were burned, drowned, people were murdered due to resistance they put up.
[Defendant] It was related to [their] resistance, but also resulted from the order to destroy the ghetto, and wipe it off the surface.
[Prosecutor] And from what resulted the order to burn children, women and the elderly, who did not put up any resistance?
[Defendant] Regardless, buildings were emptied, and we kept calling on those people to leave their houses.
[Prosecutor] Yesterday one incident was described to you, when some children showed up on building ledges, and the defendant gave the order to shoot them.
[Defendant] I did not see any children on rooftops.

[66] See footnote 15 above.

[Prosecutor] Has the defendant ever read The Hague Convention, or the Geneva one – under what circumstances, and when did the defendant become familiar with them?
[Defendant] I have known them for a long time. To gain better understanding I reviewed these clauses once again in 1948, when I was being interrogated.
[Prosecutor] After the destruction of the ghetto?
[Defendant] At the time of the interrogation.
[Prosecutor] Since the defendant had familiarized himself with The Hague Convention, does the defendant regard his behavior as being in conformity with its clauses?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant know, that the resolutions of The Hague and Geneva Conventions do not apply to cases of aggressive war, and specifically that the invading aggressor cannot make use of these clauses? What does the defendant think; did Germany invade Poland and other nations?
[Defendant] I'm not a politician.
[Prosecutor] The defendant names himself general, but in truth is a war criminal.
[Defendant] No, I am a general.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant know international law, [does he know], that [only] a man with clean hands is allowed to cite international conventions, that there is a clean-hands doctrine, which dictates that a soldier who seeks justice must have clean hands? The defendant's hands are dripping with blood.
[Defendant] That I do not know.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant believe, that the murder of children is in conformity with the dictates of his conscience?
[Defendant] As far as I know, children were not murdered. I am not charged with that. In my life I have always tried to act chivalrously. It was the most important thing [I could give] my wife and children. Throughout my life I tried to extend to other women the chivalry I had toward my wife.
[Prosecutor] Had the defendant heard that in the autumn of 1942 the governments of the Allied Powers issued a declaration, in which they claim the right to judge war criminals? That President Roosevelt released a statement on 12 October 1942, and the Soviet Union on 14 October, announcing that the names of these criminals were known to them, and that these criminals would be brought to justice in the countries where the crimes were committed?[67]
[Defendant] Of what year?
[Prosecutor] 12 October 1942.
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Has the defendant ever heard that the governments of these countries promised that war criminals would be punished?

[67] The Moscow Declaration of 30 October 1943.

[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant consider himself a soldier today – in light of what he has just heard, in light of the evidence presented during the investigation – or does he not?
[Defendant] I have acted as a soldier my entire life. I have always been a military man, and I do not believe that I can shed that skin.
[Prosecutor] I do not believe that shooting at children and the elderly, and destroying their homes, is in line with military conduct or is part of soldier's duty.
[Defendant] I was not shooting at children and the elderly; I was putting down the uprising and breaking the resistance. It happens during war that buildings have to be destroyed.
[Prosecutor] A war against whom? Against civilians?
[Defendant] It does not matter in this case. In my opinion, if a country is at war, struggling hard for its existence, and an uprising breaks out or resistance is put up, then it has to be overcome. A country would commit suicide if it did not do this.
[Prosecutor] The defendant has used the phrase "struggle for existence." Were not those the words used by Hitler? Does the defendant believe that the German nation struggled for existence when it was invading other countries?
[Defendant] I was not thinking of Hitler when I used that phrase.
[Prosecutor] And what is your opinion? Was the war a struggle of the German nation for its existence?
[Defendant] I am standing here a man who has been named a war criminal by the victorious nation. I am not in a position to talk about this and to express my opinions. They will not be reliable.
[Prosecutor] They certainly will not. This is about the defendant's position on the matter.
[Defendant] But please understand what I have just said.
[Prosecutor] The defendant does not wish to answer.
[Defendant] It is pointless.
[Prosecutor] And what would be the defendant's position on the Jewish question?
[Defendant] This I can speak of. Himmler used to share his knowledge about all issues with more than one of his SS leaders, [but] he did not say everything. I cannot speak for what Himmler wished to do with the Jews, or what were his reasons for doing this or that. For me, personally, it was not a political question, and I have never attached importance to population [*sic*] problems – whether someone was a Catholic, a Lutheran, or a Jew. I grew up in a small town of fourteen thousand inhabitants. And although I do not wish to give the impression here that I am trying to act as a friend to the Jews, or their supporter, or that I want to beg for my life, I still would like to stress, that there were Jewish schoolboys in my town, too, and Jews living in my neighborhood as well.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant tell us what his position on the Jewish question is, what is his basic outlook?

[Defendant] I am getting to it. However, these small things are important to me, to my outlook. After I arrived in Warsaw and found out that there was resistance here, it was of no importance to me whether those who resisted were Jews or not. Such is my outlook.
[Prosecutor] The defendant had been a member of the party since 1932, so he knew the point of view of the party, he knew the position of the party on the Jewish question, was aware that Nazism fed the whole nation, poisoned it with anti-Semitism, he was familiar with Hitler's speeches and *Der Stürmer*.[68]
[Defendant] That I did not read, it was prohibited.
[Prosecutor] What position on this ideology did the defendant hold as a member of the party? What was his attitude toward anti-Semitism, toward its goal?
[Defendant] That is exactly why I had a difficult time in Hamburg, for example, when I when I had rejected putting up display cases of *Der Stürmer* anywhere, not just in my unit[69].
[Prosecutor] From the defendant's explanations it would seem that he was against anti-Semitism, that he did [not] agree with the party as far as anti-Semitism was concerned.
[Defendant] Not with the kind of politics practiced by Streicher[70], anyway.
[Prosecutor] And what kind of politics did the defendant agree with?
[Defendant] I knew that the party had chosen anti-Semitism as its goal, but it did not mean that, as a member of the party, I needed to be an active anti-Semite.
[Prosecutor] [The defendant] was one of the higher-ranking officials, one of Himmler's immediate subordinates, so he had to be perfectly knowledgeable about the party line, the party ideology.
[Defendant] I have already said that I know of it, but there is a difference between my knowing something and my actively supporting it.
[Prosecutor] But what is the defendant's stance on anti-Semitism? The defendant has said that his opinion today is different. What was Hitler's anti-Semitism aiming for?
[Defendant] Its ultimate goal was to eliminate Jewish influence from Germany.
[Prosecutor] By what means did Heydrich, Kaltenbrunner, Keitel, Ziegler,[71] and others such as Stroop want to eliminate that influence?

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[68] *Der Stürmer* – published 1932–1945, German propaganda weekly affiliated with the NSDAP.

[69] Apart from being sold, copies of *Der Stürmer* were put on view in special cases, so called *Stürmer-Kästen*, to be readily available to the public.

[70] Julius Streicher (1885–1946) – SA-Obergruppenführer, publisher of *Der Stürmer*.

[71] Reinhard Heydrich (1904–1942) – SS-Obergruppenführer and Police General, chief of the Security Police (SD), the Security Service (Sipo), and the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA). Ernst Kaltenbrunner (1903–1946) – SS-Obergruppenführer; in 1943–1945, chief of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA). Wilhelm Keitel (1886–1946) – Field Marshal, in 1938–1945, chief of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces. Joachim Ziegler (1904–1945) – SS-Brigadeführer and Waffen-SS General.

[Defendant] I did not know anything about Kaltenbrunner's goals, since [*sic*] I was one of the SS leaders who could still be of service to accomplish that sort of goal.
[Prosecutor] But the goal of the deportations to the T-II – was that known to the defendant?
[Defendant] It is nothing, an editorial alteration.
[Prosecutor] It says here, that 310,000 people were deported for extermination between 22 July 22 and 3 October 1942. Did the defendant know of such goal when he wrote this?
[Defendant] No, I am not familiar with the introduction. This report was compiled at Krüger's command. I saw this version of the summary, placed at the beginning, only once. Governor Fischer authored it.[72]
[Prosecutor] But the defendant signed it. Did the defendant know the size of the Jewish population?
[Defendant] I could not say whether it is mentioned there. I used to sign that type of thing only because an order had been carried out.
[Prosecutor] And when he was burning down the ghetto, was the defendant aware then of the objective of anti-Semitism?
[Defendant] I think that it had nothing to do with anti-Semitism. The buildings were to be destroyed to create a green terrain. It was brought about by Himmler's order and done with Frank's approval.
[Prosecutor] Was the defendant aware of what was written inside, when he put his signature on the first page of the report? Was he aware that it was [a manifestation of] anti-Semitism?
[Defendant] General Krüger suggested the title, gave it to me over the phone.
[Prosecutor] Did the defendant recognize it when Krüger gave the title?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] The whole ghetto had been destroyed but for the prison in Dzielna Street.[73] For what reason? For whom? The only building that escaped destruction at the time when there were no more Jews in the ghetto. For whom was it meant?
[Defendant] The prison was under the authority of the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] And whom did the Security Police intend to put in the prison and for what? A concentration camp was to be set up there, was it not?[74]

[72] The eighteen-page-long introduction to the Report dated 16 May 1943 and signed by Stroop. A section was copied from the report written on 20 January 1941 by Dr. Waldemar Schön, head of the Department of Resettlement [*Umsiedlungstelle*]. See Żbikowski, "Wstęp," in *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie*, 11.

[73] So-called Pawiak, a prison operated by the Sipo and SD, located between Pawia and Dzielna Streets.

[74] Konzentrationslager Warschau set up by Himmler's order from 16 February 1943, and operating since 19 July 1943.

[Defendant] Yes. It was the Security Police prison. My order was to destroy that prison.[75] When I reported that the operation had been completed, the ghetto was taken over by Berlin. I knew about it, it does not make sense to claim that I did not. There were the prisoners brought from Berlin to carry out Himmler's further orders.
[Prosecutor] Himmler's orders to do what?
[Defendant] To create the green terrain.[76]
[Prosecutor] After the destruction of the ghetto and the raising of a camp on its ruins, was not the liquidation of other nations Himmler's and Hitler's main goal? The Jews were just the lowest rung of that ladder, were they not?
[Defendant] I do not know anything about that.
[Prosecutor] Whom was the concentration camp meant for? There were no more Jews.
[Defendant] This must be some kind of a misunderstanding.
[Prosecutor] The intention of my question is to ask the defendant what did he deduce from the fact that the concentration camp was created in a non-Jewish milieu? Does he agree that the erection of that camp reflected the racist politics against Jews, the politics aimed at their liquidation, at the liquidation of other nations?
[Defendant] No. My answer to this question is that I did not know that.
[Prosecutor] Why then was the prison on Dzielna Street spared?
[Defendant] I repeat once again, it was a prison run by the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] The Police had other prisons. What was so special about that one? What made it so valuable?
[Defendant] My order stipulated clearly, destroy the ghetto except for the prison, and, since the Police and Security had explained to me that the area belonged to them, I was not interested anymore.
[Prosecutor] But at the time the ghetto was a part of Warsaw surrounded by walls, and the prison was exactly within these walls.
[Defendant] It was also surrounded by walls, forming an enclave.
[Prosecutor] Every prison is surrounded by walls. Does the defendant know that in Greece and in other occupied countries, Germans murdered partisans of various ethnicities?
[Defendant] I, for one, do not know anything about the murder of Greek partisans. I did not fly an airplane over Greece, I travelled by car, and it would even happen that Greek folk would greet me with grapes, so any fight or assault on their part was out of the question.
[Prosecutor] What was your special assignment in Greece?

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[75] Most likely a mistake; later Stroop stated that he had received an order to spare the prison.

[76] The Himmler order of 11 June 1943 commanded the demolition of the ruins of the ghetto and the planting of a park in its place. See Żbikowski, "Wstęp," in *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie*, 15, n. 10.

[Defendant] As a military commander in Greece, *Generalleutnant* Speidel, who is most likely alive and plays [some] role today, did not have enough troops to establish the necessary security. He was not able to manage on his own with the forces at his disposal, as all the police battalions and the whole military police force were in Russia, so there were none in Greece. So, according to an order I was given, I had to reorganize and put the police force to work, and to ensure that every part of Greece that already had its own government, its own president, would have a Greek minister of security. It was my assignment. Only one unit of artillery was sent to me from Germany. The solution had been decided at a conference of high-ranking officials with the minister of security and high-ranking officers of police and military police. I would add that other matters were raised later on, when I was already in Westphalia. I took the former Italian mission as my office, and that was why I started in all this.
[Prosecutor] Who constituted a danger to the security that the defendant had to be sent there?
[Defendant] Because of grave food shortages, the population of smaller towns – but also of Athens – struggled hard to stay alive, and there were people, not to say robbers, who were stealing these scant supplies.
[Prosecutor] And for that reason a Higher SS Leader had to be sent, and that is why people greeted him with grapes?
[Presiding Judge] The court will adjourn for half an hour.

After the adjournment, the testimony of Stroop continues:
[Prosecutor] When did the defendant obtain his order to go to Warsaw?
[Defendant] On 17 April, from Krüger.
[Prosecutor] Did Krüger tell the defendant the purpose [of the reassignment]?
[Defendant] He gave me the order to go to Warsaw and to await further orders at the SS and Polizeiführer's.
[Prosecutor] What would these orders be about?
[Defendant] I did not know.
[Prosecutor] Was Sammern the SS and Police Leader in the Warsaw District at that time?
[Defendant] Yes, he was.
[Prosecutor] What was his rank? Was his rank senior to the defendant's?
[Defendant] He was a SS-Oberführer, a police colonel, while I was a major general.
[Prosecutor] So the defendant was of higher rank than Sammern?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Could the defendant explain [how it was possible] that – according to what the defendant told the Court – on 18 April in Warsaw he received an order from a man who was, by and large, his subordinate because he was of lower rank?
[Defendant] It is not unusual to pass down orders.
[Prosecutor] Was it usual in the Nazi army that orders given to high-ranking officers were channeled through their subordinates?

[Defendant] It has always been like this in the army, that an orderly officer receives an order for his regimental commander.
[Prosecutor] Does that mean that Sammern informed the defendant of his own dismissal on Sunday? And that the defendant would be his successor?
[Defendant] No, Sammern gave me the order he received from Krüger Sunday evening.
[Prosecutor] What did it say?
[Defendant] SS-Reichsführer ordered to empty the ghetto in Warsaw, to have all its inhabitants leave together with their equipment and supplies.
[Prosecutor] Did the order instruct Sammern to hand over his duties?
[Defendant] No, it had nothing to do with the SS and Police Service.
[Prosecutor] Since it was not the order, why did the defendant remove Sammern from his post as the operation commander just two hours after the outbreak of the uprising, on Monday, 19 April?
[Defendant] As I just said, the order was to move people from Warsaw to Lublin, not to relieve Sammern of his duties. The order stated that I was the one to carry out the action in place of Frankenegg.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant not say so during the investigation? Why is he changing his testimony now?
[Defendant] I have never said anything but what I am telling you now.
[Prosecutor] If the defendant had the order to take over command, why did he not step immediately into the action, but instead allowed Sammern to remain for the two hours? Was there any timeframe for the defendant to take the command from Sammern?
[Defendant] The order did not provide a timeframe.
[Prosecutor] If it did not, then how did the defendant, a general of the SS, understand it? If the order to relieve an officer of his duties had no timeframe, should not the defendant have considered it to be effective immediately? Especially since it was an order to carry out a particular military operation?
[Defendant] I did not take over immediately, because I deemed it very important. I allowed the operation to be conducted in accordance with the plan prepared by Sammern by virtue of comradeship, but mostly for tactical reasons.
[Prosecutor] What tactical reasons?
[Defendant] I did not know the commanding officers [*kombatanci*], or the site and – what was most important – I did not know the troops that were to carry out the operation. It would have been a mistake if I had acted forthwith.
[Prosecutor] But two hours after the operation started the defendant was already familiar with the site, and knew the commanding officers? At 8 a.m. of 19 April he was already familiar?
[Defendant] As I have already explained, I arrived in the ghetto between eight and nine. After my arrival, I met the commanding officers under that tree and asked them to show me the map.
[Prosecutor] You could have done the same at 6 o'clock.

[Defendant] But not at night.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant remove Sammern?
[Defendant] It was not a removal, it was a conclusion drawn from the order.
[Prosecutor] But the defendant carried out that order only after Sammern had suffered his first defeat.
[Defendant] Nobody could have foreseen it.
[Prosecutor] Did Sammern come to the defendant's quarters and say "*alles verloren*"?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Did the defendant understand the situation in the ghetto?
[Defendant] From that moment on, I did.
[Prosecutor] The defendant made up his mind as a result of the defeat.
[Defendant] Based on the report obtained from Sammern.
[Prosecutor] It had nothing to do with the defeat?
[Defendant] He reported the defeat, so my decision could have been due to that report. For these two reasons I have just mentioned, I arranged with Sammern that he would begin according to his plan, and that I would take over from him Monday morning.
[Prosecutor] What was the relationship between the governor of the District, especially Fischer, and the chief of police? Was [he] directly responsible to [Fischer] or not?
[Defendant] The SS and Polizeiführer was personally and directly responsible [to the governor]. The governor could give him instructions and orders.
[Prosecutor] When did the defendant report to Fischer?
[Defendant] I cannot give the precise date. I had already been in Warsaw for several days.
[Prosecutor] The defendant was responsible to the governor of the district, yet he did not report to the governor until several days after the start of the operation in his territory?
[Defendant] That was what things were like then. I was not in charge of the SS; my orders encompassed only the territory of the ghetto.
[Prosecutor] The defendant was authorized to liquidate the ghetto and was placed above Fischer. I still wish to ask, what the word "bandits" used in the defendant's report stands for. Where did the term come from? Who taught the defendant about it? Why did he use it?
[Defendant] Because Fischer used it in conversation with me.
[Prosecutor] Whom did it describe?
[Defendant] It was his expression; he was talking about people who were hard to capture.
[Prosecutor] The defendant's comprehension [*świadomość*] and knowledge seem to be limited to repeating what was said by Himmler, Fischer, and others. What does it mean "Fischer said"? The defendant constantly excuses himself by

saying "Fischer said," "Krüger wrote," [anybody] but him. If Fischer used an incorrect term, the defendant did not have to repeat it.
[Defendant] Fischer had been in Warsaw a long time, I was not there long. He knew what was going on.
[Prosecutor] The written word reflects one's thoughts. The defendant wrote the report in May, when he had already been in Warsaw for one month.
[Defendant] As I have said, I adopted that term.
[Prosecutor] Who was a "bandit," in the defendant's opinion?
[Defendant] The people who should be considered bandits in accordance with the order.
[Prosecutor] But why did the defendant also write: "partisans." What is a "partisan," in his opinion?
[Defendant] People who do not belong to regular military units, whose activities are illegal; armed civilians.
[Prosecutor] The same as bandits?
[Defendant] The same as bandits.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant use the word "bandits" instead of "partisans."
[Defendant] The word "partisans" was prohibited by Himmler's order.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant employ the [separate] words "Jews" and "bandits," if the Jews were armed?
[Defendant] It is the same. It is a matter of chance.
[Prosecutor] Let me begin with the origin of the Ghetto Uprising as described in the defendant's reports. In one place, the defendant writes that the ghetto was created to shield the German army and the civilian population from infectious diseases. Is that true?
[Defendant] As I explained this morning and will repeat once again: the report was taken over by the governor.
[Prosecutor] Being a general, is the defendant a thinking person, or does he just repeat Fischer's words? Has the defendant ever in his life exercised independent thinking?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] If he was thinking, he knew what he was signing.
[Defendant] What the governor had written seemed legitimate to me.
[Prosecutor] It is Stroop's report, not Fischer's.
[Defendant] Yes. I have already answered the question whether I edited the introduction or not.
[Prosecutor] Why was the Warsaw Ghetto set up, or, for that matter, any of the ghettos?
[Defendant] It was found necessary to mass Jews in one area in Warsaw, as well as in Łódź.
[Prosecutor] I am not interested in what was found. I am interested in what was the defendant's opinion. [Defendant] I was not involved in the matter.
[Prosecutor] You were not thinking.

[Defendant] I was not involved.
[Prosecutor] How long was the operation in the ghetto expected to take? Sammern had planned the operation for several days. How many days did Sammern expect it to take?
[Defendant] I didn't know Sammern's exact plans; once the fight started, his plans became meaningless.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant write in his report, that the operation was expected to take three days?
[Defendant] Sammern anticipated it to take three days.
[Prosecutor] Did the defendant write the part about the operation being expected to take three days, or did Himmler?
[Defendant] It seemed a likely statement for me, taking into account what Sammern had said.
[Prosecutor] [The defendant] used in his reports such expressions as: "Through posters, handbills, so-called battle groups had been formed, led by Polish-Bolshevists".
[Defendant] I arrived at this conclusion later, after I received a dispatch from von Hahn, the Chief of the Security Police, whose men joined the assault units in the ghetto.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant describe the incident, when a truck driven by members of Polish left wing organizations pulled up on Prosta Street and retrieved 35 Jews from one of the combat units.[77]
[Defendant] It was reported by the Polish police.
[Prosecutor] What does the dispatch say?
[Defendant] Something similar to what is written there, I suppose. I do not remember, but according to what I had heard, the trucks arrived and got the men out.
[Prosecutor] Was the chase of these cars ordered by the defendant?
[Defendant] No, I personally did not order the chase; the Chief of the Security Police must have done so. When I received the dispatch and learned about it, it was already too late.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant tell anything about the women in the ghetto, and how they fought?
[Defendant] I received reports that women often wore breeches and small flat hats, and mostly fired pistols.
[Prosecutor] Were there not also numerous instances of women firing pistols with both hands the same time?
[Defendant] That is saying more on the subject than I have mentioned. [Prosecutor] Besides this, the defendant uses the term "bandits," other times, "Jews"

[77] Pertains to 10 May 1943, when Kazik Ratajzer and a member of the People's Guard, Władysław Gajek, pseudonym "Krzaczek," organized an escape of a group of insurgents from the ghetto.

and "criminals." Whom did he describe by the term "criminals," since there were Jews and bandits there? Here we have a third category of criminals.
[Defendant] Governor Fischer called the ghetto "a refugee." In Warsaw everyone involved in something went to the ghetto when they wanted to disappear, to avoid supervision.
[Prosecutor] So they were criminals and sub-humans. Who were these people?
[Defendant] The same as bandits.
[Prosecutor] But who were "Untermenschen"? Jews, bandits, or criminals?
[Defendant] According to Fischer, it was the element, who disappeared in the ghetto.
[Prosecutor] That means, that after the defendant arrived in Warsaw, he adopted Fischer's vocabulary.
[Defendant] He knew the ghetto for a long time; he had been there for many years.
[Prosecutor] Could the defendant tell us what the resistance in the ghetto was like? Perhaps depict some episodes from the fighting because, as we know it from his report, the Germans fought relentlessly. What brought on this relentlessness of the SS-men?
[Defendant] One has to fight tooth and nail to put down resistance. Otherwise it is not worth starting. When two enemies meet face-to-face, each of them should know how to suffer the lightest casualties, and also how to take action swiftly and with confidence.
[Prosecutor] Is that it?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant tell in what circumstances Demke, perished, the Obergruppenführer, whose death was avenged by the death of so many people?
[Defendant] If I recall correctly, the units could not enter one of buildings that posed a threat and the fight lasted two or three days. I reached the location when Demke, risking his own life, stormed with a raiding party, and was able to enter that house. The shooting from the building did not cease, however, and the Germans had to retreat when the battle ended. Demke and one other man were killed.[78]
[Prosecutor] What orders were issued in connection with his death?
[Defendant] There were no any orders.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant recall the incident when two flags – Jewish and Polish – were raised on the roof of one of the concrete buildings?
[Defendant] I do remember seeing something. I'm not sure about the Polish flag, however. I believe that it was the blue and white Jewish flag.
[Prosecutor] Why did the defendant mislead his superior Krüger by writing in his report that Demke had perished while storming the building with the flag?

[78] During the investigation Stroop testified, that Dehmke perished while trying to size a headquarters of the Jewish Military Union at 7 Muranowska Square. See *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie*, 54, n. 1.

[Defendant] If it is in the report, then that is what happened.
[Prosecutor] The reports suggest that Demke died trying to seize the building with the flag.
[Defendant] It is possible.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant give any other examples?
[Defendant] It was so many years ago; I do not remember everything, I would have to start inventing. Please refer to what is in the reports.
[Prosecutor] The defendant indulges freely in concocting in his other stories. We can distinguish what is fantasy from the truth. Did the defendant dislike red-haired people? Why, by his order, were they selected?
[Defendant] I do not know anything about that.
[Prosecutor] Can the defendant comment on the testimony given by Konrad on the issue?
[Defendant] I do not know what he had in mind.
[Prosecutor] Konrad stated that he witnessed the selection of red-haired people, whom you ordered to be shot.
[Defendant] Absolutely not.
[Prosecutor] The defendant Konrad testified to it.
[Defendant] I heard. It is not true.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant admit that he personally killed people in the ghetto, or that the people were killed in his presence?
[Defendant] I witnessed only one execution.
[Prosecutor] Where did the execution take place?
[Defendant] I cannot recall.
[Prosecutor] Perhaps it took place in the courtyard of the Judenrat?
[Defendant] I do not think so.
[Prosecutor] How did the execution proceed?
[Defendant] There were people who were still armed, and the Security Police shot them on the spot.
[Prosecutor] After the arms were taken from them?
[Defendant] They had been captured, and the Security Police tried them *ex officio*; they were sentenced as bandits for putting up resistance, and they were shot.
[Prosecutor] There were courts operating in the ghetto?
[Defendant] It could happen.
[Prosecutor] I am asking about what did happen – the defendant should stop lying. Our courts are accustomed to defendants telling truth.
[Defendant] I want to, that is why I am not talking much. I only want to tell what I know to be true.
[Prosecutor] Were there any courts [in the ghetto]? These people were captured while armed, and shot before they put down their weapons.
[Defendant] They were caught armed. I believe they were even wearing German uniforms. Members from the Security Police assembled to form a court – they

had the right to do so – three of them made up the police court and each had to decide whether these people were bandits according to the dictates of his own conscience.
[Prosecutor] Were all the killings conducted in accordance with the court's rulings?
[Defendant] If executions by firing squad took place, then it was done in accordance with the court's rulings.
[Prosecutor] Let the defendant see the photograph of the killed child. Was this child also shot in accordance with the court's ruling?
[Defendant] One can assume that this is a child.
[Prosecutor] Was this child shot in accordance with the court's ruling?
[Defendant] That killing happened in battle. It says here that the bandits were destroyed in battle.
[Prosecutor] So, children were bandits as well?
[Defendant] Children were killed if they came under fire together with their parents.
[Prosecutor] And what about the event Konrad described yesterday? The one which involved the child who climbed on the ledge? Was that child, too, a bandit or a partisan, according to Himmler's definition?
[Defendant] I did not see it and it is not true.
[Prosecutor] And the case of the little boy? Could the translator please show the defendant this photograph? The little girl, or the boy in this picture, were they partisans as well?
[Defendant] (examining the photograph shown by the interpreter) No, these are people who were pulled out of the ruins.
[Prosecutor] Why were they shot to death?
[Defendant] They were not.
[Prosecutor] They cannot be found in Warsaw, nor can they be found in Poland.
[Defendant] But they have not been shot to death, Counselor.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant remember the place where executions were always carried out? Does he remember the place in the courtyard of the Judenrat, where the corpses were burned; where, they were piled up with wood, and then doused?
[Defendant] I did not see this.
[Prosecutor] Who thought of the idea of damming up the sewage system?
[Defendant] I said it this morning and will repeat it. The idea came from the appropriate sewage office in Warsaw.
[Prosecutor] How about the defendant's own idea? An idea that he was not willing to share with anyone else? That was his own, his original – not Fischer's, not Himmler's, but Stroop's?
[Defendant] I needed to seek advice.
[Prosecutor] Does a general always seek advice? Does he seek advice from a waterworks, or sewage manager? Does the general of the SS, the lieutenant general, the general of police seek advice of a clerk, or a sewage manager?

[Defendant] Yes, because I was not an expert.
[Prosecutor] Whose idea was it to burn and to flood? Whose idea was to burn down buildings?
[Defendant] It was my decision.
[Prosecutor] And the people?
[Defendant] No people.
[Prosecutor] What about those, who were inside?
[Defendant] In accordance with my order, there were no people in these buildings.
[Prosecutor] I will read the defendant the report dated 22 April 22. It reads: "Our setting the block on fire achieved the result in the course of the night that those Jews whom we had not been able to find despite all our search operations left their hideouts under the roofs, in the cellars, and elsewhere, and appeared at the outside of the buildings, trying to escape the flames. Masses of them – entire families – were already aflame and jumped from the windows or endeavored to let themselves down by means of sheets tied together or the like. Steps had been taken so that these Jews as well as those remaining were liquidated at once." Did it in accordance with the "Standgericht" ruling?[79]
[Defendant] Why, they jumped by themselves.
[Prosecutor] Of course they jumped by themselves. Can you, however, explain the last sentence, that they "were liquidated"?
[Defendant] They took up arms.
[Prosecutor] Because they did not agree to be murdered, thus they were bandits, while Stroop was a soldier. Did the defendant send out several teletype messages daily, or just one?
[Defendant] As far as I know, one per day.
[Prosecutor] So, how does he explain that some days the messages were sent both in the morning and in the afternoon?
[Defendant] Because Krüger was calling, demanding reports.
[Prosecutor] So it was like that.
[Defendant] It was the case with the first one, if I remember correctly.
[Prosecutor] In the afternoon report from 22 April, the defendant writes that at one time 35 Polish bandits, Communist, were caught and liquidated at once. Bandits executed by firing squad died shouting "long live Poland, long live Moscow." Why were they executed?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Why were they executed?
[Defendant] This is a dispatch from the commanding officer.
[Prosecutor] Who ordered the executions?
[Defendant] Himmler did.

[79] German: court of summary jurisdiction. The Police and Security summary courts consisted of a Police and Security Leader and two assessors.

[Prosecutor] Does that mean that when 35 partisans were caught, a phone call was made to Berlin, to Himmler, [who] had to give the order?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Could the defendant, tell us what really happened?
[Defendant] There was a written order issued by Himmler.
[Prosecutor] On 23 May, the defendant writes that the PPR headquarters was found and destroyed. Five of the most important activists and terrorists were captured that day. Maybe the defendant would tell us about that.[80]
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] The defendant wrote the report.
[Defendant] What am I to say?
[Prosecutor] Who are those terrorists?
[Defendant] It was found and eventually reported that many people in the ghetto were expressing their desire to report willingly, but they were stopped by armed men unknown to them. At the time I did not know yet what the abbreviation "PPR" stood for. It was found by the Police and Security, by Brandt.
[Prosecutor] Who, in the defendant opinion, were those terrorists? Was not Stroop himself the worst terrorist in the ghetto? What does it mean "terrorists"?
[Defendant] It was found out, discovered by the Police and Security, that armed strangers operated in the ghetto.
[Prosecutor] Did the Jews come to Berlin to blow up the Reichstag? Or was it Stroop who came to destroy the ghetto and the houses in Warsaw? In this light, who is really the terrorist?
[Defendant] I cannot say anything.
[Prosecutor] Why can not the defendant say anything?
[Defendant] First of all, because I do not understand [the question].
[Prosecutor] The defendant uses the word "terrorists," what does it mean?
[Defendant] In my opinion, one who prevents people from willingly reporting and leaving, he is a terrorist.
[Prosecutor] Not the one who comes to deport these people, to take them to their death, to murder children and the elderly?
[Defendant] That did not happen because of me, and there is nothing that I can say.
[Prosecutor] All of the criminals claim that it all happened because of Hitler, but it happened because of Stroop as well. Who were those activists? The defendant uses terms "activists" and "terrorists."
[Defendant] I have already said, that the Chief of Staff wrote these reports.
[Prosecutor] But they were signed by Stroop.
[Defendant] [They were signed] in my name.
[Prosecutor] He signed.

[80] Correctly 23 April. Information about the PPR headquarters is not confirmed by other sources. See *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie*, 56, n. 2.

[Defendant] I did not sign every single one.
[Prosecutor] The report dated 24 April contains following passages:
"Since some of these Jews resisted, I ordered the building to be set on fire. Not until all the buildings along the street and the back premises on either side were well aflame did the Jews, some of them on fire, emerge from these blocks, some of them endeavored to save their life by jumping into the street from windows and balconies, after having thrown down beds, blankets, and the like. Over and over again we observed that Jews and bandits, despite the danger of being burned alive, preferred to return into the flames rather than risk being caught by us." Is this true?
[Defendant] There was no way to prove it, but it was true.
[Prosecutor] The defendant writes on 25 April: "in my opinion, we have caught a very considerable part of the bandits and lowest elements of the Ghetto."[81] What did the defendant mean by the phrase "the lowest elements of the Ghetto"?
[Defendant] The people who had no business to be in the ghetto. This report was based on a dispatch of the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] Was this the only one, which was based on a dispatch of the Security Police?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Why did those [reports] come from Fischer, and this one from the Security Police?
[Defendant] I personally did not have to know about those issues, but the Security Police, as it has already been established, had its own posts in the ghetto, and its people could notice such different things.
[Prosecutor] This morning the defendant called himself a soldier. As such, he pulled out his troops at night? Is not the statement meaningless, as police units and other troops surrounded the ghetto at all times, and fighting was only conducted at night. How do you explain that?
[Defendant] That is something different. The Warsaw ghetto existed before I ever arrived in Warsaw.
[Prosecutor] I am not talking about walls. The ghetto was cordoned by police and gendarmerie. I am referring to the police.
[Defendant] The cordon had been merely reinforced. The point was to keep everything inside the walls, so it would not be left open.
[Prosecutor] Was not the real reason behind that alleged gesture of yours that you did not want to send your troops to fight in the darkness? All the more so, since later you ordered that soldiers in your units tie rags round their feet to muffle their footsteps at night?

[81] *Mit der heutigen Beute an Juden sind meines Erachtens ein sehr grosser Teil der Banditen und niedrigsten Elemente des Ghettos erfasst worden*.

[Defendant] As I explained this morning, I [did not] act as a soldier,[82] withdrawing everyone at night during the battle, but I did so intentionally, so that all those who wanted to respond voluntarily to our call would be given a chance to do so.
[Prosecutor] Who? The Jews?
[Defendant] [To give] The inhabitants of the ghetto – a chance to report.
[Prosecutor] Report to whom? And where? At night?
[Defendant] The following morning. I even waited in the morning… to give the people time until 9 o'clock.
[Prosecutor] Did the defendant issue an ultimatum?
[Defendant] The people were instructed repeatedly to come.
[Prosecutor] The ultimatum was that either they come voluntarily, or they would be burned?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] So, what was the ultimatum?
[Defendant] To report voluntarily and not to put up resistance.
[Prosecutor] Who gave the order regarding those rags? Whose idea was it? Was it Fischer's idea?
[Defendant] Fischer did not have anything to do with it.
[Prosecutor] But Stroop did?
[Defendant] I did not need to. When I received word of the riots, I ordered scouting parties to put a stop to the running back and forth. That my people tied rags around their feet, I doubt it.
[Prosecutor] In the same paragraph of his report, the defendant says: "While last night a glare of fire could be seen above the former Ghetto, today one can observe a giant sea of flames."[83] Does this mean that in both cases the fire created this sea of flames?
[Defendant] Yes, the fire was big.
[Prosecutor] In his report from 26 April the defendant says: "The operation on 26 April 1943,[84] was terminated at 22.00 hours. General effects of the execution of this operation. The Poles resident in Warsaw are much impressed by the toughness of our operations in the former Ghetto." Was this meant as a kind of warning: if the Poles do not behave, they will suffer the same fate as the ghetto? Is this not how that should be understood?
[Defendant] No, it was just a remark made by the Security Police which was obliged to handle those sorts of matters.

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[82] Earlier Stroop said: "What I wanted above all was to have these people report voluntarily. For that reason I acted in a way no soldier should act; every night I withdrew all units from the ghetto, dismissing them to their barracks, and every morning I reassembled the forces to resume the fight."

[83] *Wenn gestern nacht das ehem. Ghetto von einem Feuerschein überzogen war, so ist heute abend ein riesiges Feuermeer zu sehen*.

[84] Actually, 25 April. See *The Stroop Report*.

[Prosecutor] The sentence was put in that context deliberately, was it not?
[Defendant] This statement says that the police and Waffen-SS are maintaining peace and order, as they should.
[Prosecutor] Practicing Stroop's methods.
[Defendant] I cannot respond to that.
[Prosecutor] That is the point. The report from 26 April contains the sentence: "During today's operation several blocks of buildings were burned down. This is the only and final method, which forces this trash and sub-humanity to the surface."[85] Whom does the defendant consider trash? Is that Fischer's term as well?
[Defendant] It was not my expression.
[Prosecutor] Who wrote it?
[Defendant] It is an accepted term.
[Prosecutor] Pertaining to whom?
[Defendant] As I have said before, the term was used by Fischer and the military command [*komendatura wojskowa*].
[Prosecutor] Please, take the report from 27 April. It is written here: "The external appearance of the Jews whom we are catching now shows that it is now the turn of those Jews, who were the leaders of the entire resistance movement. They jumped from the burning windows and balconies, abusing Germany and the Fuehrer and cursing the German soldiers […]. Today we succeeded furthermore in discovering and liquidating one of the founders and leaders of the Jewish-Polish resistance movement." In what circumstances [did this happen]?
[Defendant] I cannot say anything.
[Prosecutor] These are the combat units' reports; their dispatches. The defendant had to have read them. Did you not read these dispatches when writing your own reports for Krüger?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Take please the report from 30 June. It says: "Altogether, 30 dugouts were discovered, evacuated, and blown up today. Again we caught a great number of bandits and sub-humans." Did Fischer write this as well?
[Defendant] I have already said.
[Prosecutor] Say it again. The defendant stands before the court – he must answer questions. It is written here: "As is learned from depositions made by the Jews, today we caught part of the governing body of the so-called 'Party.' What was this about? What does it mean "so-called party"? [86]
[Defendant] I cannot say anything about it.

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[85] *Im Verlaufe der heutigen Aktion wurden mehrere Häuserblocks niedergebrannt. Dieses ist die einzige und letzte Methode, um dieses Gesindel und Untermenschentum an die Oberfläche zu zwingen*.

[86] Presumably about ŻOB and the bunker on 30 Franciszkańska Street that was captured on 30 May. See *Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Warszawie*, 80, n. 2.

[Prosecutor] In one of his dispatches the defendant writes that combat units reported on the movement of Jews in burned out and destroyed courtyards; the soldiers wound rags around their shoes to surprise the Jews more easily. Thirty Jews were killed in a scuffle. Was that the result of this night truce of yours?
[Defendant] We did not use the military approach later on.
[Prosecutor] Take the report from 6 May, please. It says here: "It could not be reliably ascertained so far whether the so-called 'Party Directorate' of the Jews […] have been caught or destroyed […] It is to be hoped that tomorrow we shall succeed in tracing down this so-called Party Directorate […] In order to enable us to intercept more effectively the Jews and bandits who approach the Ghetto, covering detachments of the external barricade were shifted farther inside the Aryan part." Was that some kind of truce?
[Defendant] No, it was done out of the necessity. It was a necessary move.
[Prosecutor] The report from 7 May states that the blowing up of buildings is time-consuming, and demands a lot of ammunition; that starting fires is still among the best ways to destroy the Jews.
[Defendant] But it is said here. I signed this report.
[Prosecutor] It means, that this is Stroop['s signature]?
[Defendant] I signed it.
[Prosecutor] The defendant writes about splendid cooperation with the Wehrmacht. I would like to know, what did the cooperation consist of?
[Defendant] The men put at my disposal by the Wehrmacht performed their duties diligently and in a friendly manner.
[Prosecutor] With whom was the arrangement made? Specifically, who was in charge from the Wehrmacht side?
[Defendant] That was before I arrived in Warsaw. Cooperation was promised to Sammern by a commanding officer.
[Prosecutor] What was his name?
[Defendant] I am thinking.
[Prosecutor] Rossum[87]?
[Defendant] It might very well have been. He was a lieutenant general.
[Prosecutor] Did the commander of the Wehrmacht offer active support? Specifically, did he provide enough weapons?
[Defendant] They were armed when they reported for duty.
[Prosecutor] Stroop ends his report with the following statement: "But the ruins still contain enormous amounts of bricks, and scrap material, which could be used." For what purpose?
[Defendant] Krüger rang in with the question, whether there were any bricks.
[Prosecutor] Is that so? Did he want to burn the stones as well?

[87] Fritz Rossum (b. 1887) – *Generalleutnant* from 1942 until 1944 served in Warsaw as commanding officer of the administrative area headquarters (Oberfeldkommandantur Warschau).

[Defendant] I was asked whether there were any bricks and I answered.
[Prosecutor] So, what was planned on the site of the ghetto?
[Defendant] It was to be a green terrain.
[Prosecutor] With what kind of development?
[Defendant] I am not an expert, but traditional, rural-style houses.
[Prosecutor] Was the then intention of Himmler, Krüger, and Stroop to transform a part of Warsaw into countryside? The green plain was not needed as pasture, nor for army purposes to feed horses. What was the purpose of turning a part of a big city into meadows?
[Defendant] It was not my idea.
[Prosecutor] I did not say that it was the defendant's idea. But what did the defendant make of that order? After all, the defendant is able to think.
[Defendant] I think it would be pleasant to have a green terrain like this in a big city such as Warsaw.
[Prosecutor] Meadows and fields stretch for miles outside the city limits, do they not?
[Defendant] I was asked about my opinion.
[Prosecutor] So the city had been destroyed, and people had been burned for the sole purpose of creating a meadow. That was the Nazi culture represented by Stroop in occupied territories in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in the Soviet Union, in Greece and in Luxembourg.
[Defendant] My work was not that important.
[Prosecutor] What does it mean, it was not important? Marks are left!
[Defendant] My activity did not have such significance.
[Prosecutor] His reports speak for themselves; hundreds of thousands of people were, as he said, wiped out just to create meadows.
[Defendant] These buildings were destroyed at Himmler's order.
[Prosecutor] And Himmler says, that [it was done] at Hitler's order.
[Defendant] It may well be so.
[Prosecutor] Nonetheless, the defendant was among high-ranking party members, and head of one of the Selbstschutz units.
[Defendant] There were many members.
[Prosecutor] But few lieutenant generals, few generals of the Wehrmacht and the SS.
[Defendant] It cannot be said that [there were] "few."
[Prosecutor] And only few such criminals like Stroop. He was decorated for the obliteration of the ghetto. Did he decorate his subordinates as well; did he put their names forward, so they could be awarded military medals?
[Defendant] Leadership was obliged to do such things, so I had to nominate servicemen for recognition.
[Prosecutor] Had to… did out of necessity… If he did not have to, he would not have recognized them?
[Defendant] I could thank them.

[Prosecutor] Thank them for what?
[Defendant] For their service and their readiness to act
[…]
[Prosecutor] […] Who was in supreme command of the armed forces in the ghetto during the great action?
[Defendant] I was.
[Prosecutor] Were all of the armed forces subordinate to the defendant, the Wehrmacht, as well as the SS police and the Gestapo?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Then all the acts perpetrated by those forces were committed on the defendant's command, were they not?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Why not? Who had the right to issue orders?
[Defendant] Generally, I did, but it was impossible to hold sway over these units all the way to the bottom, as they were external forces.
[Prosecutor] Was the execution of 1,500 people in the square where the Judenrat was situated, something insignificant that was carried out by "external" forces? Was it something that could have escaped the defendant's notice?
[Defendant] It might have been done by the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] The Security Police was subordinate to the defendant.
[Defendant] All the SA and SS units [were].
[Prosecutor] Who was chief of the police force in the entire Reich?
[Defendant] Kaltenbrunner.
[Prosecutor] Who gave Krüger the order to liquidate the ghetto?
[Defendant] Himmler.
[Prosecutor] Who gave the defendant the order to liquidate the ghetto?
[Defendant] Himmler, through Krüger.
[Prosecutor] Were all the units subordinate to the defendant responsible to him, in accordance with Himmler's order?
[Defendant] Yes, except for the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] I think the defendant is trying to mislead us.
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] The defendant wants to transfer the blame for these murders to Hahn. All active forces in the ghetto came under the defendant's command.
[Defendant] Except for the Security Police.
[Prosecutor] In relation to Konrad, please explain, what does it mean that Konrad was involved in murky dealings?
[Defendant] His activities were not strictly supervised.
[Prosecutor] Does it mean that Konrad collaborated with the police?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Does it mean that Konrad's murky dealings were financial in nature?
[Defendant] I decided that the tips I received, were sufficient, and I did not demand any further explanations.

[Prosecutor] Did you ever send any reports concerning the issue?
[Defendant] Konrad said yesterday that I had allegedly advised Himmler or other offices of it; I do not know; I do not suppose that it was possible.
[Prosecutor] So, he lied?
[Defendant] I cannot be sure of it today – what the context was, what it was all about.
[Prosecutor] What kind of murky dealings was Konrad involved in? It is a rather intriguing topic.
[Defendant] I have already said that I didn't press for additional explanations, but as far as I was concerned, those people would have done better service being where they should have been during the war.
[Prosecutor] Meaning, they should not have been in the ghetto, but have served at the front?
[Defendant] I, for one, thought it would have been for the better.
[Prosecutor] The defendant has said before that OSTI was involved in some shady deals. Did he know what OSTI was?
[Defendant] It was a company that collected all kinds of things.
[Prosecutor] That's rather a terse description. Did the defendant know Globocnik?
[Defendant] Yes.
[Prosecutor] Where did he meet him and when?
[Defendant] I met him in Kraków, it must have be on the day, when the conference was to take place.
[Prosecutor] A conference? Of what sort?
[Defendant] It was just a brief encounter typical of such meetings.
[Prosecutor] Did Globocnik visit the ghetto and meet the defendant there?
[Defendant] Yes, at the beginning.
[Prosecutor] What did you talk about? What did Globocnik say?
[Defendant] I cannot recall exactly, we probably talked over some OSTI business. As I did not understand those issues, I was not interested in them. The meeting was short; it was interrupted and we did not finish it.
[Prosecutor] Why did Globocnik leave the ghetto during the action? What was the reason of his departure?
[Defendant] Coincidence.
[Prosecutor] But what kind of coincidence? Could the defendant clarify?
[Defendant] He saw that I was not interested in those issues.
[Prosecutor] What issues?
[Defendant] I cannot remember exactly.
[Prosecutor] Perhaps he wanted to take the Arbeitskommando [forced workers] to Lublin, while the defendant wanted to murder them outright, at the ghetto?
[Defendant] No, it was about furniture and other things, about warehouses.
[Prosecutor] Were [the whole] warehouses, those repositories, burnt down together with buildings? Or were the commodities taken away?

[Defendant] As far as I know everything had been dispatched.
[Prosecutor] Globocnik had arrived in Warsaw on the same day as the defendant did, or maybe even earlier and was of the same rank as the defendant – why did he not carry out the liquidation of the ghetto, instead of Stroop?
[Defendant] I cannot assess that.
[Prosecutor] But the defendant has said that, although Globocnik had come with his men, he nevertheless retreated, while Stroop stayed?
[Defendant] He came to talk with me.
[Prosecutor] About what?
[Defendant] I have already said.
[Prosecutor] Then repeat.
[Defendant] About OSTI.
[Prosecutor] So, did Globocnik arrive as OSTI's proxy, or as one of the liquidators?
[Defendant] As I recall, he was a representative of OSTI.
[Prosecutor] If that was the case, did Konrad act as Globocnik's proxy representing OSTI?
[Defendant] I suppose so.
[Prosecutor] Does the defendant know anything about a German Nazi journalist, Stürmer, who wrote about the uprising in the ghetto?
[Defendant] No.
[Prosecutor] Thank you.

The court declares a 5-minute recess.

[Judge] Defendant Stroop's hearing continues. The defense may ask their questions.
[Defense Counsel Nowakowski] What is the defendant's stance on the 56,065 Jews who, according to the indictment, allegedly lost their lives in the ghetto? In the defendant's opinion, does this number match the actual casualties?
[Defendant] Since I had ordered to investigate how many Jews were in the ghetto when I was in Warsaw, I was informed by the SS-Police office, that 56,065 lived in the ghetto at the time. That was the total number when I arrived. Over ten thousand reported voluntarily to the railway station to be transported, so this extermination of 56,065 Jews is not possible.
[Presiding Judge] In the report from 16 May 1943, the defendant writes that the total proven number of exterminated Jews amounted to 56,065.
[Defendant] That is not possible, in the light of what I have just explained.
[Presiding Judge] Did the defendant sign this report?
[Defendant] To my horror, I found out about it [only] when it was shown to me.
[Presiding Judge] If this is true, you might have corrected it before signing.
[Defendant] Is it a teletype?
[Presiding Judge] Yes.
[Defendant] I did not sign these. This is a mistake, it is only a copy [*podkładka*].
[Presiding Judge] Maybe the defendant would like to see it? Jezuiter signed it, so it had to be consistent with what you had signed.

[Defendant] It should be interpreted differently. The total number is stated here, that is [the number of] deported and exterminated Jews. Now I see. The total number of the deported and the exterminated amounted to fifty-six thousand.
[Presiding Judge] That is the defendant's interpretation.
[Defendant] That is my deduction.
[…]
[Defense] I would like to ask the defendant to what extent were the Sicherheitspolizei units responsible to him? To be precise, could the commander Hahn directly contact the highest command [and] Kaltenbrunner, without going through the defendant?
[Defendant] If the Security Police [*policja i bezpieczeństwo*] came under the authority of the SS-Polizeiführer, then the SS and Polizei would handle the entire outgoing correspondence. Chief of the Reich Security Main Office, Kaltenbrunner, gave orders directly to Hahn. This way the commander of the Police, Hahn, as well as all other commanders of the Police, could contact the Reich Security Office directly and bypass the SS Leader. It was an official channel.
[Defense] Was this independence of the Security Police somehow temporarily restricted on account of the operation run in the ghetto?
[Defendant] There were no changes in this regard during the operation.
[…]
[Defense Counsel Palatyński] Did Sammern still keep his position when the defendant took command of the liquidation action?
[Defendant] Sammern remained the SS and Police Leader in Warsaw.
[Defense Counsel] For how long?
[Defendant] Effectively, until I became the leader.
[Defense Counsel] That means until June?
[Defendant] I believe so, in June.
[Defense Counsel] Before the defendant became the Police Leader, to whom was Konrad responsible– to him or to Sammern?
[Defendant] Konrad was a member of the Staff of General Globocnik, he was only delegated to the SS and Police command.
[Prosecutor] Being appointed to the Warsaw police, was Konrad Sammern's or Stroop's subordinate in the time period between April and June?
[Defendant] He was assigned to Sammern.
[Prosecutor] Was Konrad dismissed when the defendant became the police leader?
[Defendant] Yes, I think that when I actually became the leader of the police, he was already gone.
[Defense Counsel] What I am asking is, did the defendant demand Konrad's dismissal?
[Defendant] Not at that time.
[Defense Counsel] Then when?
[Defendant] I don't think there were any more duties for Konrad perform.

[Defense Counsel] What I am asking is whether the defendant demanded that Konrad be dismissed.
[Defendant] I do not believe so.
[Defense Counsel] The defendant has stated that he did not demand Konrad' dismissal. In that case, I ask the Court to disclose the document from volume VI, page 1030, containing the report, which states clearly that Stroop had demanded that Ober-... Konrad[88] be removed from his post. I ask to show the document to the defendant, so that he can address this matter.
[Presiding Judge] The motion to read the report out will be handled during the evidentiary hearing.
[Prosecutor] Were many Jewish possessions lost in the burning the ghetto?
[Defendant] In my opinion, no.
[Defense Counsel] Were furniture and other things taken away beforehand, or were they destroyed in the fires?
[Defendant] As far as I know, everything had been taken away.
[Defense Counsel] Were the buildings torched before they were emptied of the inhabitants?
[Defendant] Only after they had been cleared.
[Defense Counsel] The defendant himself told about the cases of people jumping out of windows.
[Defendant] But they [buildings] had been already cleared prior to that.
[Defense Counsel] What was at the root of the dispute between the defendant and Globocnik?
[Defendant] The argument arose because, Globocnik had argued that the warehouses should stay in the ghetto, and my opinion was that we should remove them from the ghetto. That was what caused the disagreement.
[Defense Counsel] Did the defendant show a lot of interest in the matter of Jewish possessions? Did he devote a lot of attention to that subject?
[Defendant] I believed that, as much as it was possible, if something could be taken away, it should be.
[Defense Counsel] Is it true that Globocnik showed greater interest in the subject of Jewish possessions than the defendant did?
[Defendant] In my opinion, he did. Regardless of whether it was Jewish possessions or others', he was more of a merchant than I.
[Defense Counsel] Thank you.
[Defense Counsel Nowakowski] Does the defendant confess to what the defendant Konrad accused him of in the testimony given yesterday – that the defendant allegedly ordered him to shoot two Jews found on the premises of the Weigl Tannery?
[Defendant] I do not.
[Defense Counsel] Is it true or not?

[88] Franz Konrad was of the rank of SS-Hauptsturmführer.

[Defendant] It is not true.
[Defense Counsel] Does the defendant confess to ordering – as Konrad testified yesterday – to shoot a man stopped near the ghetto in spite of doubts as to whether or not he was a Jew?
[Defendant] I do not know anything about it and I plead not guilty.
[Defense Counsel] In the defendant's opinion, did Konrad tell the truth or did he lie?
[Defendant] Whatever he has told is not true.
[Defense Counsel] No more questions, Your Honor.

Translated by *Karolina Dmowska* and *Elżbieta Olender-Dmowska*

Abstract
When Jürgen Stroop, the suppressor of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, was brought in 1947 to Poland, his trial was projected to be the most important of those held to date against prominent Nazi officials in Poland. According to the Jewish press it was to be a "small Nuremburg," a final reckoning for the crimes committed against the Jews of Warsaw during the Holocaust. Yet, four years later, in 1951, when the trial finally took place, its proceedings were barely noticed, both by Poles and by the still numerous Polish-Jewish community. Despite the particular place of the Jewish ghetto uprising in the Holocaust historiography, significant organizational efforts and protracted dealings to obtain extradition rights, the trial was to fall victim to the new era of Polish politics and Stalinist propaganda, exemplifying the growth of politically-shaped historiography. This article looks at the proceedings against Jürgen Stroop and his co-defendant, Franz Konrad, and includes material from the trial, in particular Stroop's testimony regarding the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Key words
Jürgen Stroop, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, war crimes trials