MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Interrogation of Witnesses and Collection of Evidence and Documents for Preparation of Case against the SS.

1. Among the objectives of the case will be establishing that the SS is a criminal organization, that it participated in unlawful and criminal acts and that it was one of the agencies used by the conspirators to carry out their plans. For that purpose we must be able to show the history of the SS, its structure and organization, how membership in it was acquired, how its members were trained, what its objectives were and what it actually did from the time of its establishment until May 1945. Just how such facts are to be presented at the trial, whether in the form of a single document, or through a series of exhibits, or through affidavits or oral testimony of one or numerous witnesses, or through a combination of some or all of these methods, is not yet determined. But evidence of all such facts in some form or other would seem to be necessary.

2. The illegality of the SS as an organization is probably to be established principally on the basis of its following activities:

a. Its function as a strong arm and terror organization of the Nazis prior to their accession to power and thereafter in connection with the election of 5 March 1933 and in the suppression of opposition, including the Purge of June 1934. These might be denominated its activities as a "private army" of the Nazis.
2. Its functions in relation to the police. The SS can be charged with responsibility for the police operations of the SD, which remained a department of the SS despite its collaboration with the police and its eventual combination with the Security Police in the SS. It can also probably be charged with the activities of the Gestapo (at least after 1936), because (1) they were both under Himmler who exercised a dual position and had the dual title of "Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police," (2) the Gestapo was principally manned by SS members and there was an interchange of men between SD and Gestapo, (3) the SD, the Allgemeine SS and the Gestapo were treated as unified forces under the command of "High SS and Police Leaders."

2. Its functions in relation to concentration camps. Whereas the police was responsible for ordering confinement in and release from concentration camps, the SS was responsible for the actual administration of such camps and the treatment of prisoners therein. SS units (Totenkopf Verbände) furnished guards for the camps and the administration of the camps was controlled by the SS Inspector General of Concentration Camps and eventually by the Gruppenführer, a department of SS.

4. Its functions as an armed force—i.e. the activities of the Waffen SS. Although the Waffen SS came to be regarded as distinct from the Allgemeine SS, and its personnel were differently elected and eventually in large measure conscripted with their volunteers, it was still administered by SS Hauptsturmführer (notably SS Führungsauflant) and historically the
Waffen SS was simply an expansion of armed units of the general SS.

3. Its functions in occupied territories. This really is a combination of 1, 2, and 4—i.e. the operation of combined units of Gestapo, SD, Waffen SS, etc., as Einsatzkommandos, etc.

3. Published material presently available in London proves the bare facts of the history of the organization up to 1939, its general structure and publicly announced mission. In official German publications we have proof of the date and fact of its creation, its expansion under Himmler, its organization along military lines, the creation of special full-time armed SS units and concentration camp guards, its increase in size up to 1939, its alliance with the Gestapo, its various departments and their admitted functions. These publications are: Gustav d’Alquen’s Die SS (an official SS history published by order of Himmler); Werner Beet’s Die Deutsche Polizei (an authoritative history and description of the police and the SS by a very high ranking SS and police official); Himmler’s Die Schutzstaffel als anti-holocaustische Kampforganisation; the yearbooks of the NSDAP and the organization books of the NSDAP. These German materials possibly, can be supplemented by E.D.S. studies on the Allgemeine SS, Concentration Camps and the German Police, and by pertinent chapters in the F.I.D. Emile Handebook on Germany, assuming they can be put in evidentiary form.

4. The published German materials, show the functional organization of the SS, however, only so far as it appeared in
paper and reveal only so much of its missions and the missions of its several departments as the Nazis cared to announce publicly. They do not show how the organization operated in practice or the purposes for which it was actually used. Nor do they establish (except by inference) the entirely voluntary character of the SS. They do not show anything as to the type of training SS candidates and members received.

5. So far as performance by the SS of the various types of functions enumerated in paragraph 2 above is concerned, the evidence presently available in London seems to be very scanty.

6. As to its functions as a strong arm and terror organization before and after 1933, the only evidence on hand is: (1) a statement in an affidavit by the widow of Willie Schmidt, as to the murder of her husband in the Purge of 1934, that four men in SS uniform took him away and that he was subsequently found murdered; and (2) documents giving orders to the police and Gestapo as to the anti-Jewish demonstrations and programs in Germany in November 1938, in which reference is made to use of SS men as auxiliaries.

7. As to its police functions, there is some evidence from captured documents, primarily in the form of letters, orders and reports to and from Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSPF) and Commanders of Sipo and SD (SdS) etc., dealing with functions of the Gestapo, the SD and Einsatzkommandos in murdering hostages and prisoners of war, engaging in third degree interrogations, deporting and annihilating inhabitants.
of conquered territories, etc. These all relate to activities after 1941 and mainly to activities in the Eastern occupied territories.

2. As to its functions in relation to concentration camp, the published German material to some degree establishes the responsibility of the SS for administration of such camps. As to what occurred in the camps there is, or will be, probably plenty of evidence.

3. As to the activities of the Waffen SS there is no evidence on hand.

4. As to the activities of the SS in occupied territories, see subparagraph 2 above.

6. In addition to captured documents which have already been processed and are now available, what appears to be a prime source of material exists in a collection of Himmler files (from the Personalabt ERS) now in Berlin under the control of the Director of Intelligence, Allied Control Commission. This collection was partially screened before being moved from London to Berlin and some scattered material of value had been obtained from it. The Himmler collection is now being indexed in Berlin by the Director of Intelligence. We shall have to examine this material fully.

7. The material now on hand, the possible material in the Himmler collection and the evidence that will come in in
the future from document centers undoubtedly will not all fit together to establish the complete case. Such evidence will necessarily be scattered, not the best evidence of some facts, and will leave many gaps to be filled in. No matter how carefully screeners are indoctrinated in the theory of the case, they can produce only such material as by chance happens to come to their attention. An effort should be made, therefore, to seek out particular key documents which will prove the facts we need to establish. It is not possible at this moment to make any comprehensive list of the specific documents we should have. The following specific types of material, however, would probably be of particular value:

a. Official orders or regulations of the SS (equivalent to our Army Regulations).

b. The official list of SS members, ranks, etc. (Dienstalterliste der Schutzstaffel).

c. SS training manuals and material so far as they reflect other than normal military or police training — (i.e., anything showing special methods of training in ideology, brutality, etc. Of course ordinary routine training materials are of no importance.

d. The files or material from the principal departments of the SS, e.g., SS Hauptamt (Central Office);
SS Führungshauptamt (FHA - Operational Sq.); SS Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungs Hauptamt (WVHA - Economic and Administrative Department); SS Rasse und Siedlungs Hauptamt (RHSA - Race and Settlement Department). Of course, the mere fact that material comes from one of these departments does not make it important. But such files should be prime sources of valuable evidence.

4. Any material dealing with the activities of the SS prior to 1933. We are particularly weak on this phase. These suggestions are not intended to indicate that any material on the SS covering any of its phases and activities shall be ignored.

5. Apart from documentary evidence much, if not all, of the proof doubtless can be obtained through interrogation of SS personalities. The following SS officers would seem to be witnesses who should be interrogated:

a. SS Obergruppenfuehrer Karl Wolff. He was personal adjutant to Himmler in 1933. He became head of department of the SS known as Hauptamt Persönlicher Stab NSD (Personal Staff NSD) which was the chief executive Sq. of the SS, representing the personal authority of Himmler, dealing with all SS matters that did not fall under any other SS department and operating as a liaison agency with party and state officials. In 1940 Wolff was appointed chief SS and Police Commander in Italy. Because of his long association
with Himmler and his position as head of Personlicher Stab RNa, Wolff should be intimately acquainted with all aspects of SS history from the earliest days, its organization, training methods and functions and its relation to the police and the State. As Chief of SS and Police Commander in Italy, he should have full knowledge of the operation of the Waffen SS. There would seem to be no phase of the case against the SS as to which he will not be in a position to supply vital evidence.

b. SS Obergruppenfuehrer Gottlich Berger. In 1940 or 1941 he became head of the SS Central Office (SS Hauptamt). This office is one of the oldest of all main departments of the SS, and up to 1940 was one of the three main departments of the organization. It has carried on the administration of the entire SS. It is responsible for the selection and registration of SS members, for recruiting for the Waffen SS, for propaganda, for physical, technical and ideological training of SS members and for administration of foreign units of the SS. Because of his position in this central agency, Berger should have intimate knowledge of the training methods of the SS, its history, development, general organization, and activities.

c. SS Gruppenfuehrer Otto Ohlendorf. He is an old party member and, at least since 1938, has held an important
position in the SD. At the end of the war he was head of Amt III (Security Service) of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Main Security Office). Because of his background and position he should be intimately acquainted with the organization and activities of the SD of the SS, its relations and association with the police and its connection with Gestapo activities.

g. SS Obergruppenführer Carl Albrecht Oberg. He has been connected with the SS since 1928. In 1941 he was SS and Police Leader in Radom (Poland) and since 1942 was Higher SS and Police Leader in France. As an old-time SS officer, he should know a good deal about SS activities in the early days and, because of his position in Poland and France, of the joint operations of the Gestapo, SD and SS in occupied territories.

h. SS Obergruppenführer Werner Best. He has been a leading member of the NSDAP from the earliest days. He became a key official in the Gestapo and eventually Plenipotentiary in Denmark. His book, Die Deutsche Polizei, seems to be the authoritative study of the police and the interrelation of the police and the SS. He should have full information on the fusion of Gestapo, SD and SS, their activities from the earliest days and their functions in occupied territories.

i. SS Brigadeführer Walter Schellenberg. He was
head of Amt VI in RSHA, the department in the Reich Security
Head Office dealing with espionage, sabotage and subversion in
occupied territories. Since Amt VI grew out of the SD,
Schellenberg should have knowledge of SD operations,
particularly with respect to its activities in occupied terri-
tories.

The above list is by no means inclusive, of course.

9. In the collection of documents and interrogation of
witnesses, at least the following specific points should be
developed:

a. That the SS was an entirely voluntary organ-
ization (excluding, of course, the Waffen SS in the course of
the war).

b. That its membership was composed of the most
thoroughgoing and fanatical Nazis.

c. Its endless and violent activities of the SS before
1933 and from 1933 to 1939. This would include the use of the
SS in the purge of 1934, its participation in anti-Jewish
demonstrations and pogroms, and other planned instances of
violence.

d. The fusion of the SS and the police, including
the extent to which the police was infiltrated by SS members.

e. Definite proof of the official responsibility
of the SS departments for administration and control of
concentration camps.

f. The unlawful activities of the Waffen SS.
Sporadic instances of war crimes by Waffen SS men are of little or no importance. It will be necessary to show either widespread activity forming such a definite pattern as to make it evident that the crimes were planned by the higher command, or else orders or directives emanating from responsible higher quarters in the SS.

g. Any special training of SS members in brutality etc.

h. SS propaganda along racial and eugenic lines pointed toward Nordic supremacy, persecution and elimination of inferior races, resettlement of occupied areas etc.

i. All the above relates to the SS as a whole without reference to the specific functions and activity of the SD.
James Riddleberger, Esq.,
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Department of State,
Washington 25, D.C.

My dear Mr. Riddleberger:

Mr. De Witt Foss has suggested that the Department of State might be interested in receiving the Staff Evidence Analysis Sheets prepared in this Office for the information of the staff. Some 2000 of these have already been made, and we estimate that about 150 to 200 are now being prepared weekly.

Not all of the sheets relate to documents in the possession of this Office. Many of them relate to original documents or German decrees with which the Department of State is already familiar. Isolated as we are, we are naturally hard pressed for clerical and stenographic assistance. I am therefore inclosing as illustrative of our material only 16 sheets which might be of interest to the Department.

If you feel that it would be of value to the Department at this time to receive all of our backlog and also perhaps a weekly or bi-weekly distribution of the current sheets, would you be good enough to let me know?

Sincerely yours,

Incls:
Analysis Sheets of Documents: L 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 79, 130, 172, 173, 176, and 388 Rs.

ROBERT G. STORY
Chief,
Documentation Division.