The last Nuremberg judgment, 10 weeks ago, discussed public attention once more on the principles and purposes of the war crimes trials. Except at occasional especially dramatic moments, the Nuremberg trials have not proved particularly "good copy", partly because the average American likes to look toward a cheerful future rather than brood over disagreeable memories, and partly because its attention has been increasingly concentrated on the new tensions generated by the East-West split.

So few people will regret that the Nuremberg trials have ended, and many will find it easy to forget them entirely. And yet I venture to predict that as time goes on we will all hear more about Nuremberg rather than less, and that in a very real sense the conclusion of the trials marks the beginning, and not the end, of Nuremberg as a force in politics, law, and morals. For the Nuremberg trials, like all judicial trials, must be seen not as an episode - they must be part of a process. Nuremberg was part of the process of enforcing law - law that long antedated the trials, and that will endure long after the Nuremberg proceedings have ended.

The Nuremberg Tribunal itself declared in the last judgment:

"We may not, in justice, apply to these defendants because they are German, standards of duty and responsibility which are not equally applicable to the officials of the Allied Powers and to those of all nations. Nor should Germans be convicted for acts or conduct which, if committed by Americans, British, French or Russians would not justify their legal trial and conviction."

By undertaking to judge and punish Germans at Nuremberg, the United States and other participating governments are deeply committed to the standards and principles which were enforced there. And it is awareness of this fact which lies at the root of the controversy engendered by Nuremberg - controversy which, I believe, are largely based on misunderstanding, and which often open with the remark that "Nuremberg has established a dangerous precedent."
As a rule, those anxieties spring from the notion that at Nuremberg the
Nazi diplomats were punished for drafting notes, the generals for making mili-
tary plans, and the business men for manufacturing war materials—things that
were done by our own diplomats and generals and business men. But a glance at
the Nuremberg records and judgments will at once dispel these illusory fears,
and the only real problem is how to make people generally aware of the true
facts.

So Nuremberg defendant was accused or convicted merely because he held
a high position or performed a particular function, but only upon a showing
that he used or abused his position, authority, or skill in a criminal manner.
American doctors do not perform stupid and murderous medical experiments on
ivaling human guinea pigs; American business men do not engage in rounding-up
victims or foreign civilians, deporting thousands of allies, and setting
them to forced labor under inhuman conditions; American generals and diplomats
do not participate in the extermination of racial and religious minorities.

But it was these and other such acts that underlie the Nuremberg judgments,
and the only precedent that Nuremberg has established in that there may be
punished by internationally-constituted courts. It is a precedent that need
stand as American as long our country retires its freedom, and our govern-
ments maintain its devotion to humanitarianism and the cause of peace. It is a prece-
dent which will be welcomed by all who believe that peace and human dignity will
find their surest guarantee in the establishment of "world order under the
rule of law."1

1 See types of "International Consellation", published by the German
Papers. Am. Int'l Peacem. Cont. 1945, p. 53. The paper is addressed to the
Secretary-General of the United Nations and was written by the head of the
Nuremberg Tribunal.