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Nuremberg trials ww2

In November 1945, in the German city of Nuremberg, the winners of World War II began the first international war crimes trial. The choice of the city was significant because this is where the National Socialist Party held its annual rallies. Adolf Hitler intended it to be rebuilt as a 'city of fun'. Now many party leaders have been tried for their lives, just a few short distances from the great arena where the German people fêted them. 21 defendants came from very different backgrounds. Some, like Hitler's chosen successor, Hermann Goering, were senior politicians - their responsibility clear. Others were there because senior party leaders Heinrich Himmler, the head of the fearful SS, and Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda chief - killed themselves rather than face capture and trial. Their deputies or juniors were tried in their place. But most of them were considered by the Western public, rightly or wrongly, to be key playmakers in a system that brought war to Europe and cost the lives of 50 million people. The charges laid at their door were extraordinary. They are collectively accused of conspiracy to commit war and crimes against peace, crimes against humanity (including the newly defined crime of genocide) and war crimes in the ordinary sense (mistreatment and killing prisoners, killing civilians, and so on). This catalogue of sins was difficult for many defendants. One of them, Robert Ley, best known for his role as the leader of the Power through Joy movement, who designed the Volkswagen car, hanged himself in his cell a few weeks before the trial began, so he was embarrassed by the crime charge. Ley's suicide was the most extreme example of the many ways the defendants reacted to the trial. The reaction of the others covered a very wide range, from confident defiance to full recognition of responsibility. In the case of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's former deputy, the reality was almost complete memory loss. In particular, the two inmates came to represent opposing orders in their response to trials and charges of mass crimes. Hermann Goering, the man Hitler chose as his successor in the 1930s and the shiniest and more ambitious in the party hierarchy, ready to defend Hitler and the Reich's war policy instead of admitting that what was done was criminal. On the other hand, Albert Speer, a young architect who rose during the war to lead Germany's weapons efforts, has from the beginning accepted the collective responsibility of the defendants for the crimes they were accused of and tried to distance himself from Hitler's spooky presence in court. Hermann Goering in Nuremberg © goering was captured shortly after the end of the war with large quantities of his looted artworks. He thought he could negotiate with the Allies as Germany's highest. but he found himself in custody, all taken from him and held in a makeshift camp before being transferred to Nuremberg to stand trial. He was a big personality in every way. The guards nicknamed him 'Fat Things' and messed with him. He was charming, reserved and confident, and from the beginning he was determined to dominate the other prisoners and get them to follow his line of defence. Goering insisted that everything they did was the result of their German patriotism. To defy the court was to protect Germany's reputation and maintain allegiance to their dead leader. As the trial began, Goering assumed the unofficial role of leader and spokesman for the entire prisoner group. He got the most prominent position on the dock. When it comes to his cross-examination he prepared carefully and in introductory exchanges with US Attorney General Robert Jackson emerged as an easy winner. So frustrated that Jackson became with Goering's clever, sneering but evasive responses that at the end of the session, he threw away the headphones he was wearing to hear translated answers and refused to continue. 'If you all deal with yourself half as well as I do,' Goering boasted to the other inmates, 'you'll be fine.' It was only after cross-examination that a more experienced British lawyer, Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, was Goering finally reduced to size. For prosecution teams, Goering's dominant role among the prisoner's body was a problem. In mid-February 1946, on the recommendation of a psychologist who monitored the behavior of inmates, Goering was forced to exercise and take meals on his own. His isolation allowed the other inmates to talk freely to each other and in the courtroom. The united front Goering wanted soon collapsed. During the long summer months, when he had to listen to a catalogue of crimes and atrocities laid at the door of the system he served, he became less confident. But he maintained his allegiance to Hitler until the very end, when he finally confessed to the prison psychologist his knowledge that in the eyes of the German people Hitler 'condemned himself'. Goering was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to death. He regarded the entire trial as just a case of justice for the victors and did not expect to escape with his life. At the very end, he tricked his captors. On October 14, 1946, the night

before he was to be executed, he committed suicide by phial cyanide or hidden in a cell or smuggled by a sympathetic guard. Albert Speer in his Nuremberg cell © Speer was the opposite of Goering in almost every way. Tall, conventionally good-looking, capable of quiet charm, he impressed his captors and interrogators more than any other prisoner. For a while, he didn't expect to be one of the main ones. Criminals. From the very beginning, he presented himself as an effective and useful technocrat, willing to give detailed information quite voluntarily about German weapons, economic performance and strategy. He was kept separate from other war criminals, and was transferred to Nuremberg only in the fall when it was clear he was one of those chosen for the trial. Despite his defender's reservations, Speer decided that his best defense was to acknowledge his share of collective responsibility for the regime's crimes and distance himself from Hitler, a man whom Speer freely admitted once kept him in the race like everyone else. At the same time, he rarely expressed his individual guilt in trials and cross-examinations. He was able to present himself as part of the system, but not the driving force. Shortly before the trial opened, he sent a four-page letter to Robert Jackson reminding him again how useful he had been as a source of intelligence and technical information since his arrest. Speer had to confront Goering. He took issue with Goering's efforts to dominate the prisoners and dictate the course of their defense. When Goering was separated from the other prisoners in February, Speer was free to talk openly with them about the regime's crimes. The others did not all share his sincerity, any more than they shared Goering's ebullience, but by the end of the probationary period, a group of prisoners were divided into small groups instead of representing a united front. Speer added to the division when he dramatically discovered early in the trial that at the very end of the war he had tried to find a way to kill Hitler by pouring poison gas into his underground bunker. The plot was abortive, but it reinvented Speer to the prosecution as someone different from the other defendants. When Speer was cross-examined, he came out lightly from others. At the end of the trial, although he was responsible for the mass exploitation of forced foreign labour, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The man who secured the work, Fritz Sauckel, was executed. The story of Speer remained an enigma. There is no doubt that he benefited from his job as a technical manager (whose social background is not much different from those who tried him) and from his willingness to admit responsibility. To what extent he manipulated his story to win sympathy or genuinely believe that the regime he served was criminal, he is still open to assumptions. Rudolf Hess at Spandau prison © most bizarre choice for the trial was Hitler's deputy and party chancellor's chief Rudolf Hess. There was no doubt that he was a key figure in the organisation and leadership of the party in the 1920s and early 1930s. He was the one who downloaded the dictated blueprint of Hitler's Mein Kampf. But since the mid-1930s he has become a more marginal political figure - 'one the great hands of the Third Reich,' Speer said. In May 1941. This is where he was captured by the British, questioned and placed in an institution. He became increasingly paranoid and eventually descended into long periods of self-induced hysterical amnesia. It was in this state of almost complete forgetfulness that Hess was eventually transferred to Nuremberg in October 1945 at the insistence of the Soviets, who were confused and distrustful of what Hess had been doing in Britain for four years. It became clear that a decision had to be made on whether he was capable of speaking out. A panel of medical and psychiatric experts was recruited and finally recommended on 29 October 2015. The next day, to the shock of the court, Hess suddenly stood up finally lucid and posted: 'My memory is ok again.' Hess maintained his lucidity for several weeks, but with partial memory loss. He then returned to full amnesia again and spent time in court reading, occasionally laughing and neglecting the process around him. In a conventional criminal court, he would be considered to be of an unhealthy mind, but allies were concerned about the effect it might have on the public perception of the trial that Hess had been removed. He was sentenced to life in prison, though he pretended not to hear or understand the verdict. He committed suicide at Spandau prison in Berlin in 1987. Goering, Speer and Hess represented extreme responses to the Nuremberg trial, but all shared with the others on the defendant's bench a degree of responsibility. In Goering's case, very big for the programme of oppression, war and genocide to which Hitler's regime embarked from its inauguration in 1933. This did not make them criminals in the ordinary sense, and for many of the offences for which they are on trial, there was still no body of internationally agreed law. They are mostly charged under retrospective law. Over the following years, however, conventions were signed on the laws of war, genocide and human rights, which embodied much of the law drafted in Nuremberg. These legal instruments have not protected innocent populations from violations in the past 60 years, but thanks to Nuremberg there is at least an adequate understanding of what the violation means, even if the international community does not yet have a fully effective means of punishment. that's.

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