ORGANISATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR NAZI CRIMES

1. The organisations most directly responsible for Nazi crimes, whether committed against their own nationals or against those of other states, are

(a) the Gestapo (Geheime Staatspolizei = Secret State Police)

(b) the SD (Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers und der Partei = Security Service of the S.S. and the Party)

(c) the NSU (Schutzstaffel = Guard Section).

The origin and inter-relation of these organisations are briefly described below.

(a) The Gestapo

(i) History. It was first created in Russia by Göring, as Minister-President and Minister of the Interior of Russia, during 1933. Before that date each state (Land) in the German Reich had controlled its own police. Göring purged the pre-existing Russian political police, filled its ranks with trusted 

(c) and 

men and (Nov. 1933) gave it a distinct organisation under the Geheime Staatspolizei Chief of Berlin and North-west Germany.

Himmler did the like for the other states (Länder) and, in June 1936, it was Himmler, not Göring, who was appointed Head of the German Police under the Minister of the Interior. The police had, in fact, been 'nationalised' and the Reich had replaced the states (Länder) as the supreme controlling authority.

On June 26, 1936, Himmler issued a decree dividing control of the entire police force of the Reich between two Head Offices, both subordinate to himself. These two branches were the Ordnungspolizei (Order Police, or Orpo) and the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police, or Sipo). The latter was again subdivided into two branches, the Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police, or Kripo) and the Gestapo (see above).
(ii) Organisation. Organisationally, therefore, the
Gestapo forms a branch of the Reich Ministry of the Interior,
as thus:

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Minister of the Interior
Head of the German Police
Ordnungspolizei  Sicherheitspolizei
Gestapo        Kriminalpolizei
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The Head Office of the Gestapo is Amt IV (Office IV) of the
Reichssicherheitsabteilung (Head Office for security of the
Reich). It has regional and local offices under its Head
Office.

(iii) Function. The Gestapo deals by way of prevention
or punishment with all political offences against the security
of the Reich. Since all human activities were regarded as
political by the Nazis any kind of opposition, even though we
should describe it as economic, cultural or religious fell with­
in the Gestapo's orbit. It should be added that a decision of
the Supreme Administrative Court decided that a Prussian Law
of Feb. 10, 1936, exempting the actions of the Gestapo from
review by the Courts, was valid for the whole Reich. There
was therefore no legal redress against any action taken by the
Gestapo.

(iv) Methods. The method of procedure adopted by the
Gestapo was to arrest any person suspected of hostility to the
Nazis and, after "examination" in a local Gestapo H.Q., to
commit him to "protective custody" (under a decree of 2 March,
1933, in a concentration camp.

These camps were not organised and staffed directly by
the Gestapo but by the S.S. wirtschafts und Verwaltungsamt
(S.S. Economic and Administrative Office) the fourth department
of which was entitled Führung und Verwaltung der konzentrationen
lager (Command and administration of concentration camps). The
head of this last office appointed the Camp Commandants and
the staffs were drawn from the S.S. volunteers to the S.S.
Totenkopfverbände (death's head units, formed originally for
this purpose in 1933).
But, though not on the surface directly responsible organisationally for the routine administration of the camps, there was one (or more) Political Commissar drawn from the political section of the Gestapo in each camp. Little is known directly about these officials. But they were better paid than the Camp Commandants themselves and it seems safe to guess that they were directly responsible for seeing that Gestapo policy was executed and, therefore, for deciding the individual fate of the inmates.

(b) S.D. or Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers S.S. und der Artill.

(i) History. This organisation seems to have been created in 1933 out of the S.S. Press and information service. In 1934 Hitler made it the exclusive information and security service of the Party.

(ii) Functions. The S.D. is an intelligence service. Its function is to collect information about all activities of individuals or groups which, in the Nazi sense, are 'subversive' i.e. hostile in any degree to Nazi policy. This includes surveillance of persons and groups within the Party itself.

(iii) Organisation. The S.D. has a staff of full-time paid officers and officials, assisted by voluntary helpers (ehrenamtliche Mitarbeiter) drawn from the ranks of the Allgemeine (General) S.S. It has regional and local offices 12 Leitabschnitte (Main Sections), 17 Abschnitte (Sections), 20 Hauptaussegnellen (20 Head Outposts).

It is important to observe that the S.D., though formally and by its title a Party formation under the S.S., is very closely connected with the Gestapo. Himmler combined the offices and functions of Head of the German Police with those of Reichsführer S.S. and, at a lower level, the regional Inspectors of the Security Police are also Inspectors of the...
functionally, the S.S. provides the Gestapo with much of the
information upon which it acts.

(i) History. The S.S. was created, in 1929, out of the
earlier small formations.

In January 1929 Himmler was appointed its Chief by Hitler.
It expanded from 270 members to 52,000 between 1929-33, all
specially selected as an elite bodyguard of fanatical Nazis,
sworn to unquestioning obedience to Hitler. It was only made
a special formation of the Party after the purge of June 30,
1932, when its members had struck down many of their old com­
rades of the S.A. Thereafter, though always remaining an
elite specially selected and privileged, it has greatly ex­
panded. By 1939 it contained some 250,000 men.

(ii) Organisation. (a) The Allgemeine. As a whole is known
as the Allgemeine (General, S.S.). Its chief was Himmler,
Himmler, and it had a central office in Berlin,
divided into 10 departments. It was also organised regionally
on the basis of the Sicherheitsdienst (Military Districts) with sub­
ordinate local sections (Abschüttete).

(b) The Sicherheitsdienst. (See above (b).)

(c) The Waffen S.S. Military formations which,
before the war, were divided into S.S. Verf.verbände i.e.
units unattached for particular duties and available for
special duties (e.g. crushing an internal revolt).

(b) Autonome Verbände (see (a), (iv).)

During the war Waffen S.S. divisions to the number of
about 30 have been created and have served on all fronts.

(d) In addition to these police and military bodies
the S.S. developed an educational and training organisation
with its own houses as centres in large towns and at some
universities, and its own officers' training schools. It
had, too, special social service schemes for its members and
its own internal system of disciplinary punishment through
its special courts.
(iii) Function. The S.S. was intended to be the chosen Order of German Men (and Women) to guard and perpetuate the Nazi idea. There is no doubt that upon it and its members, who include the great majority of officers and officials of the Gestapo and S.D., must fall the most immediate and personal responsibility for German atrocities.

2. The other 'para-military' organisations of the Nazis may deserve brief consideration.

They are the following:

(a) The S.A. (Storm Abteilung) usually known in English as Storm Troopers
(b) The N.S.K.K. (Motor Corps)
(c) The N.S.F.K. (Flying Corps)

(a) Of these the S.A. is the oldest and much the largest, its estimated membership being from 1½-2 million men. But though in its early days the S.A., under Röhm, was a powerful body with considerable influence on party policy, and though it then contained some of the worst 'thugs' of the Party, it has never recovered its importance since the purge of June 30, 1934 when its leaders were killed. Some of its most fanatical members were also absorbed into the S.S. between 1933-9. As an organisation the S.A. now performs mainly routine and auxiliary duties. Its main influence in war crimes has probably been through the behaviour of its individual members when incorporated into the Wehrmacht. It has, however, one separate military unit, the S.A. Standarte Feldhernhalle which, when incorporated into the 60th motorised infantry division in June 1943, gave its name to the division (Panzer-Grenadier Division Feldhernhalle).

(b) The N.S.K.K. (Motor Corps) is of much more recent origin (1931) but neither it nor the N.S.F.K. (Flying Corps - founded 1937) has had any policy-making influence, nor any special
reputation for brutality. They have rather been training
grounds and auxiliary formations for the regular motorised and
flying formations.

3. To the mind of a layman certain difficulties arise in indicting
the Gestapo, ..., and ..., which are submitted for consideration.

(i) The Gestapo appears to be, in law, a sub-department
of the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Can a sub-department,
or a ministry, of a sovereign state be indicted as such?

(ii) Successful indictment of the ..., amp whole would
certainly cover the majority of the worst war criminals. But
it would omit a number of political military and industrial
leaders of importance. These would require to be dealt with
by a separate process.

(iii) The S.D. leaders would seek to transfer responsibility
to higher party or state authority, and there would be consider­
able force in their plea. The ultimate responsibility does
seem to fall upon the party as such. It was dominant even over
the state. The first article of the law of 1 December, 1933,
"to safeguard the unity of party and state" expresses the
intimacy of the union between the two in its first paragraph.

41. (i) After the victory of the National Socialist
revolution the National Socialist Workers' Party is the
bearer (Trägerin) of the German state idea (Staatsgedanken)
and is indisputably bound up with the state (mit dem Staat
unmittelbar verbunden).

The nature of that union was defined by Hitler himself at
the party rally at Nuremberg in 1934. "It is not the state
which gives its orders to us, but we who give orders to the
state. It is not the state which has created us; we fashioned
our
for ourselves and state." The dynamic creator of policy,
responsible therefore for its results, has been the Nazi
Party. Its agent, the state, has been filled with Party
officials who, as officers of the state, have carried out
the purposes of the party. It is for consideration whether,
to obviate the plea of orders from higher authority, the Party as such, including its subordinate organisations, should not be indicted.

24th May, 1945.

Research Department,
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