

# Commandant of Auschwitz

Rudolf Höss,  
His Torture  
and  
His Forced Confessions

Carlo Mattogno, Rudolf Höss



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Cover Illustrations: foreground: Rudolf Höss during his time as commandant at Auschwitz in 1943 (left); right after his capture and torture by the British in March 1946 (center); during his trial in Warsaw in 1947 (right); background: entry gate to the Auschwitz Main Camp.

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## Introduction

In the Preface to the complete English translation of Rudolf Höss's notes which he wrote while in Polish custody in Krakow, Steven Paskuly, editor of the work, writes that they "are perhaps the most important document attesting the Holocaust" (Paskuly, p. 11). In his introduction, he adds (*ibid.*, p. 21):

*"There are fanatical groups in the United States, France, and even Australia who call themselves 'The Revisionist Historians.' They actually propose that Höss never wrote these documents – that they are a fraud. They also stated that even if the documents were written by Höss, they were obviously done under duress from the 'Communist authorities' in Poland. The 'research' and the conclusions of these 'historians' are absolute rubbish."*

It is not worthwhile responding to accusations apparently arising from crude ignorance, which extends even to basic notions of current orthodox Holocaust historiography, as I will show below. It is worthwhile, however, to highlight Paskuly's statement that the former commander of Auschwitz "fails to mention that the camp regulations and punishments were formulated by Höss himself" (*ibid.*, p. 22), where he confounds Höss's Krakow writing titled "*Lagerordnung für die Konzentrationslager*"<sup>1</sup> (translated by Paskuly as "Rules and Regulations for Concentration Camps"; *ibid.*, pp. 209-218), which Höss had jotted down from memory (see Chapter III.1.), with the 1941 "*Dienstvorschrift für Konzentrationslager (Lagerordnung)*" ("Service Regulations for Concentration Camps (Camp Regulations)"), of which only the title page and the table of contents are known.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The transcript of this text can be found in Vol. 21 of the Höss Trial (AGK, NTN, 103, pp. 54-66).

<sup>2</sup> "Berlin 1941. Gedruckt im Reichssicherheitshauptamt." GARF, 7445-2-96, pp. 1-3; undated transcript of these regulations by Jan Sehn, signed by a SS-Hauptscharführer Jung and with different contents than what the above-mentioned "*Inhaltsverzeichnis*" indicates, is included as Annex 1 of Vol. 49 of the Krakow Trial (Trial against the Auschwitz camp garrison). AGK, NTN, 131, pp. 172-195). A 43-page "*Lagerordnung*" for the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp is also known: NARA, RG 242/338, Roll No. 18, Frames 628-671.

Already in 1987, I published a book devoted to Höss's various post-war statements (Mattoigno 1987). It listed 60 objections characterized by internal contradictions and insurmountable contradictions to the orthodox Holocaust narrative of that time, thus showing that "the former commander of Auschwitz lied on all essential points of his 'eye-witness testimony,' which must therefore be rejected as a gross fraud." The tortures inflicted by the British on Höss at the time, which in 1987 had already been documented, were therefore not mentioned *a priori* in order to *invalidate* Höss's declarations, but *a posteriori* in order to *explain* the contradictions and absurdities found in his statements.

In the present study, for which I had access to an enormously larger documentation, I approach the topic from a different angle. The fundamental problem which no one has ever considered is whether the core of Höss's first statements mirrored reality, or whether it mirrored some preordained "truth" which the British questioning Höss forced him to comply with in order to "confirm" it. In other words: did those statements come from Höss or from his torturers? Hence, are they sincere and accurate, or in compliance with his inquisitors' predilections? And what is the relationship between Höss's first statements and those he made later?

This study is a well-founded and documented answer to these questions.

PART ONE:  
RUDOLF HÖSS'S STATEMENTS

## I. Arrest and First Statement to the British

### 1. The Arrest

On March 15, 1946, Field Security Section 92 summarized the events of Rudolf Höss's arrest with reference to a report dated 13 November 1945.<sup>3</sup>

*"After five months of continuous investigations, interrogations and extensive searches, this Section has succeeded in arresting SS Obersturmbannführer HOESS Rudolf Franz Ferdinand, who commanded the notorious AUSCHWITZ Concentration Camp which was built under his supervision and who, in 1943, became chief of Amt 1 of Amtsgruppe D (Inspectorate of Concentration Camps) in the SS Wirtschafts und Verwaltungs Hauptamt<sup>[4]</sup>*

*As mentioned in the above quoted previous report, HOESS' wife and her five children were located in this Section's area (Sugar Factory, ST MICHAELISDONN. SUEDERDITMARSCHEN).*

*When last interrogated in November 1945, Frau HOESS stated that she had last seen her husband in RENDSBURG on 30 April 1945. By assessing various psychological aspects of her story, members of this Section gained the firm impression that she was lying.*

*After careful plans for her re-interrogation, based on data accumulated during the elapsed five months, had been worked out, Frau HOESS was arrested during the night of 5 Mar 46. It was only at 1600 hrs on the 11 Mar 46 that she finally broke down and admitted having been visited by HOESS in ST MICHAELISDONN in July 1945, that she had communicated with him later and that she knew his present whereabouts. She named as his address – GOTTRUPEL near FLENSBURG, c/o the farmer, Hans Peter HANSEN."*

Höss's wife, Hedwig, was therefore arrested in the middle of the night, obviously in order to terrorize her and her five children, and "she finally[!] broke down" six days later. We will see later what methods were used to achieve this.

The British had been tracking down Höss for months. A "Report on search for Obersturmbannführer SS – HÖSS and investigation of alleged Nazi cell in ST MICHAELISDONN," signed with "Sgt. 92 Field Security Section (Southern Sub-Area)," undated but written sometime between late October 1945 and prior to Höss's arrest, begins with this statement:

*"339 FS Section, BRUNSBÜTTEL had received information via Umland agency, that the wife of SS Obersturmbannführer HÖSS ex-Kommandant of the notorious AUSCHWITZ Concentration Camp, was living in the Sugar Factory, ST MICHAELISDONN. Two NCO's of that Section interviewed Frau HÖSS,*

<sup>3</sup> MIM. The copy of this document in my possession is devoid of any archival reference.

<sup>4</sup> WVHA, Economic and Administrative Main Office of the SS.

*found her in possession of astonishingly large quantities of dresses, furs, cloth and other valuables, but she disclaimed all knowledge of the whereabouts of her husband. Some time after this, an officer of JAG (War Crimes) contacted 339 FSS and was eventually, since this Detachment had arrived in the area, passed on to us.”*

On October 24, 1945, Field Security Section 92 organized a raid at the sugar factory of St Michaelisdonn, during which they interviewed all employees as well as Höss’s wife. She made detailed statements about her husband, but did not reveal his hiding place. Meanwhile, the British had arrested Karl Sommer, who had been deputy chief of Office D II of the WVHA.<sup>4</sup> Sommer reported that all members of Office Group D had assumed pseudonyms, and that Höss was now Driver Lang.<sup>5</sup> The former commander of Auschwitz called himself Franz Lang.

Field Security Section 92, assisted by Section 318, went to Gottrupel on the night of March 13, where the farm was surrounded at 11 PM. Höss was surprised in pajamas.<sup>6</sup>

*“He was forced down immediately and his mouth prised open. The Medical Officer of 5 RHA, 7 Armd Div rapidly examined him for any hidden poison as we had obtained information that all members of Amtsgruppe D had been issued with the same poison with which Reichsfuehrer SS HIMMLER had succeeded in killing himself after capture.*

*HOESS was living under the alias of LANG Franz at this farm (see attached statement<sup>[7]</sup>) but admitted his true identity within ten minutes of his arrest.*

*He was brought back to the barracks of 5 RHA in HEIDE. After preliminary interrogation, it was thought best to submit an interrogation report in the form of a statement in his own words, signed by him and witnessed by two NCOs of this Section, who were present throughout the entire proceedings. HOESS gave his statement in a very matter of fact way and it appears is quite willing to give information.*

*Rudolf Franz Ferdinand HOESS must be regarded as one of the major War Criminals. While Commandant of AUSCHWITZ Concentration Camp, he was entrusted by the Reichsfuehrer SS HIMMLER with the task of exterminating the Jews of EUROPE.*

*The Reichsfuehrer communicated this to him in the course of a personal interview. During this time in Amtsgruppe D as the head of the Politische Abteilung, he can be held partially responsible for what happened in all other Concentration Camps – eg: – as recently as April 1945, he was advising KRAMER of BELSEN on how to cope with the situation.”*

On the day of the arrest, Captain William Cross, Chief of Field Security Section 92, signed the form “War Criminal Arrest Report” of the “Military Gov-

<sup>5</sup> YVA, O.51-41.1, pp. 22-26.

<sup>6</sup> MIM.

<sup>7</sup> Statement of March 14, 1946. See the following section.

ernment of Germany,” which provides all the relevant details; in addition to the date and time (March 11, 1946, at 23 PM), it contains the following statement (see Document 1):

*“Ich bin Rudolf Höss und war Kommandant [sic] von Auschwitz, mein Rank [sic] war SS Obersturmbannführer[er].”*

*“I am Rudolf Höss and was Kommandant of Auschwitz, my rank was SS Obersturmbannführer[er].”*

The handwriting has some similarities to that of other manuscripts by Höss, but it differs from his handwriting in various letters. If the above sentence was indeed written by Höss, one can be certain that he was seriously deranged.

On March 15, 1946, Höss was handed over to Captain Harvey Alexander of the War Crimes Investigation Team, which placed him under the custody of the Army of the Rhine. On March 30, the prisoner was transferred to HQ 30 Corps District, in a detention facility called “Tomato” in Minden.<sup>8</sup>

After his extradition to Poland (May 25, 1946), while in prison at Krakow, Höss recounted his experience during his arrest:<sup>9</sup>

*“I was arrested on 11 March 1946 (at 11 pm). My phial of poison had been broken two days before. When I was aroused from sleep, I thought at first, I was being attacked by robbers, for many robberies were taking place at that time. That was how they managed to arrest me. I was maltreated by the Field Security Police. I was dragged to Heide where I was put in those very barracks from which I had been released by the British eight months earlier. At my first interrogation, evidence was obtained by beating me. I do not know what is in the protocol, although I signed it. Alcohol and the whip were too much for me. The whip was my own, which by chance had gotten into my wife’s luggage. It had hardly ever touched my horse, far less the prisoners. Nevertheless, one of my interrogators was convinced that I had perpetually used it for flogging the prisoners.*

*After some days, I was taken to Minden-on-the-Weser, the main interrogation center in the British Zone. There I received further rough treatment at the hands of the 1st English public prosecutor, a major. The conditions in the prison accorded with this behavior.” (My emphasis)*

This description, as Robert Faurisson unambiguously clarified in a valuable article (Faurisson 1986, 1987), is fully in line with reality. He drew attention to a book published in 1983: Rupert Butler’s *Legions of Death*, which recounted Höss’s arrest by the team of “Bernard Clarke, a British Jew and a sergeant in 92nd Field Security Section”:

*“At 5 pm on 11 March 1946, Frau Hoess opened her front door to six intelligence specialists in British uniform, most of them tall and menacing and all of*

<sup>8</sup> AGK, NTN, 104-121; see Document 2.

<sup>9</sup> Saija, pp. 158f; Broszat, pp. 149f. I will return to Höss’s texts written in Krakow in Chapter 3.

*them practised in the more sophisticated techniques of sustained and merciless investigation.*

*No physical violence was used on the family: it was scarcely necessary. Wife and children were separated and guarded. Clarke's tone was deliberately low-key and conversational.*

*He began mildly: 'I understand your husband came to see you as recently as last night.'*

*Frau Hoess merely replied: 'I haven't seen him since he absconded months ago.'*

*Clarke tried once more, saying gently but with a tone of reproach: 'You know that isn't true.' Then all at once his manner his changed and he was shouting: 'If you don't tell us we'll turn you over to the Russians and they'll put you before a firing-squad. Your son will go to Siberia.'*

*It proved more than enough. Eventually, a broken Frau Hoess betrayed the whereabouts of the former Auschwitz Kommandant, the man who now called himself Franz Lang. Suitable intimidation of the son and daughter<sup>[10]</sup> produced precisely identical information" (My emphasis)*

And here is the description of the arrest as published by Butler (pp. 235-237):

*"Hoess screamed in terror at the mere sight of British uniforms. Clarke yelled: 'What is your name?'*

*With each answer of 'Franz Lang', Clarke's hand crashed into the face of his prisoner. The fourth time that happened, Hoess broke and admitted who he was.*

*The admission suddenly unleashed the loathing of the Jewish sergeants in the arresting party whose parents had died in Auschwitz following an order signed by Hoess.*

*The prisoner was torn from the top bunk, the pyjamas ripped from his body. He was then dragged naked to one of the slaughter tables, where it seemed to Clarke the blows and screams were endless.*

*Eventually, the Medical Officer urged the Captain: 'Call them off, unless you want to take back a corpse.' A blanket was thrown over Hoess and he was dragged to Clarke's car, where the sergeant poured a substantial slug of whisky down his throat. Then Hoess tried to sleep. Clarke thrust his service stick under the man's eyelids, and ordered in German: 'Keep your pig eyes open, you swine.' For the first time Hoess trotted out his oft-repeated justification: 'I took my orders from Himmler. I am a soldier in the same way as you are a soldier and we had to obey orders.'*

*The party arrived back at Heide around three in the morning. The snow was swirling still, but the blanket was torn from Hoess and he was made to walk completely nude through the prison yard to his cell.<sup>[11]</sup> It took three days to get*

<sup>10</sup> Höss's older son was called Klaus-Berndt and was 16 years old (date of birth: Feb. 6, 1930); his older daughter, Heidetraut, had not yet turned 14 (March 9, 1932)!

<sup>11</sup> This was undoubtedly the reason why Höss had "frozen" feet, according to the "Detention Report."

*a coherent statement out of him. But once he started talking, there was no holding him.”*

While in Nuremberg, Höss told psychologist Leon Goldensohn:<sup>12</sup>

*“I was in Schleswig-Holstein, barefooted in a cell. When the British captured me, I was naked and they just threw a couple of blankets around me and took me to prison. They didn’t give me any shoes or socks.”*

Faurisson noted that the tortures inflicted on Höss had been confirmed by Moritz von Schirmeister, a former associate of Joseph Goebbels at the Reich’s Ministry of Propaganda. On May 7, 1948, he wrote a letter to Höss’s wife at the request of the former commander of Auschwitz:<sup>13</sup>

*“Of course, it is already more than two years ago that I was brought from Minden to Nuremberg together with your husband – on March 31 and April 1, 1946. But I promised your husband back then that after my release I would write you and convey his greetings.”*

At Nuremberg, von Schirmeister was a witness for the defense and was about to be released soon. In the car carrying him, he sat in the backseat together with Höss, with whom he could speak freely during transit; in particular, he remembered Höss’s following outburst (see Document 3):

*“On the things he is accused of, he told me: ‘Certainly, I signed a statement that I killed two and a half million Jews. But I could just as well have said that it was five million Jews. There are certain methods by which any confession can be obtained, whether it is true or not.’”*

Von Schirmeister wrote that Höss thought it was his duty to help his “comrades” by testifying during the Nuremberg trial that only “very few knew about certain events,” but added that the future of his wife and children “was the only thing that worried him.” Although Höss was “treated well” in Nuremberg, meaning that he was no longer subjected to physical abuse, the threat that his wife and children would be handed over to the Soviets, which the British may have arranged already, “proved more than enough.”

While in prison at Minden, Höss was brutally treated to induce him to “confess,” as Ken Jones reported in 1986 (Mason 1986):

*“Mr Ken Jones was then a private with the Fifth Royal Horse Artillery stationed at Heidi [sic] in Schleswig Holstein. ‘They brought him to us when he refused to co-operate over questioning about his activities during the war. He came in the winter of 1945/46 and was put in a small cell in the barracks,’ recalls Mr Jones. Two other soldiers were detailed with Mr Jones to join Hoss [sic] in his cell to help break him down for interrogation. ‘We sat in the cell with him, night and day, armed with axe handles. Our job was to prod him*

<sup>12</sup> See Subsection II.13.2.

<sup>13</sup> A facsimile of a retyped copy of this letter was published by Vincent Reynouard on his web site <http://sansconcessiontv.org/phdnm/lettre-a-mme-hoss/>; see Document 3.

*every time he fell asleep to help break down his resistance,' said Mr Jones. When Hoss was taken out for exercise, he was made to wear only jeans and a thin cotton shirt in the bitter cold. After three days and nights without sleep, Hoss finally broke down and made a full confession to the authorities."*

This "confession" consists of the interrogation minutes signed by Höss at 2:30 AM on March 14, 1946.<sup>14</sup> It will be analyzed in Part Two. It had to be expected that this confession ends with an assertion claiming that it was made voluntarily and is truthful, but in the light of what was revealed here, this sounds tragically ironic: the document states indeed that its content corresponds to the statements made by the interrogatee and constitutes "*die reine Wahrheit*" – "the pure truth." This is followed by the signatures of two witnesses and by Captain William Cross's assertion that Höss had made this statement "voluntarily"!

It is worthwhile keeping in mind what Höss wrote about it in his Krakow notes:

*"I do not know what is in the protocol, although I signed it."*

Jones mentions another person who would have had a major part in the first interrogation of former Auschwitz commander: Vera Atkinson, who had appeared during the TV show "Secret Hunters." Ella "told how Hoss [sic] made a full and frank confession to the killing of two-and-a half million inmates of the concentration camp" (Mason 1986). During a video interview in January 1987, she made the following statements as reproduced in a 2012 book (Footitt/Kelly, pp. 61f.):

*"While she was there [in the British zone], Rudolf Höss was captured and kept in a small prison in Minden (not far from Bad Oeynhausen). Vera was asked to act as interpreter at his interrogation because she was the only trustworthy person who could speak good enough German. Despite her many years of intelligence work, this experience was not without emotional consequences for her.*

*He was disguised as a local countryman, with big moustache disguise. The interrogation started as: 'So you are Blinky Blonk – the assumed name', and he said 'Yes!' 'and you've been on the farm, working on the farm?' 'Yes' 'and you had the lack of feeling to steal a bike from one of the farmers'. That was what we pretended to accuse him of, and he claimed that that was absolutely wrong. 'Well possibly, possibly, possibly that's true. But we know that you are not XX, because we know that you are Rudolph [sic] Höss, former commandant of Auschwitz'. Höss was taken outside to the courtyard, and the sergeant removed his moustache. He no longer denied who he was. 1 million 500 thousand people killed under his surveillance was the accusation, but he claimed that that was their own figure, but the correct one was over 2 million, about 2 million 300 thousand. We were all struck silent for a moment."*

<sup>14</sup> MIM. See Document 2. Facsimile of the original in YVA, O.51-41.3, pp. 1-8.

This story is clearly imaginative; in addition, Atkinson confused Höss with Pohl, as derives from her reference to the theft of a bike. Pohl had been arrested on May 27, 1946 on a farm “ostensibly on a charge of stealing a bicycle.”<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Harding reported that a Jewish great uncle of his, the British Army captain Howard Harvey Alexander, called Hanns, had a prominent role in Höss’s capture.

Earlier, on December 10, 1945, he had arrested Gustav Simon, the former *Gauleiter* and chief of the civilian administration in Luxembourg, who committed suicide a week later.<sup>16</sup> In a report dated “5/DEC/45” [sic] and signed by himself, he reported on the facts of the arrest. At first, he pointed out his qualifications:<sup>17</sup>

*“Report of Captain Alexander H.H. of J.A.G. [Judge Advocate General] Staff Pool, H.Q. B.A.O.R. [British Army of the Rhine] attached to No. 1 War Crimes Investigation Team, c/o H.Q. 4th Wilts. [4th Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment] at Belsen Camp.”*

Other documents confirm that Captain Alexander belonged to this unit headquartered at “Hohne (Belsen) Camp.”<sup>17</sup>

On March 8, 1946, he went to the headquarters of British Field Security Section 92 located at Heide. The British had created more than a hundred Field Security Sections, which controlled the territory of northern Germany with police and counter-espionage jurisdiction. Alexander explained to Cross, the head of this unit, that he had been put in charge of tracking down Höss. Although it was unknown where he was hiding, his family, who lived at an old farm at St. Michaelisdonn, was kept under surveillance. Cross objected that this was not his unit’s task, but was convinced otherwise by the importance of the fugitive. A day earlier, hence on March 7th, Alexander had arrested Höss’s wife Hedwig. She was interrogated in a cell, but refused to reveal her husband’s hiding place. Then Alexander went to the farm and interrogated Höss’s children, all minors (3 to 16 years old) who had been left behind alone. Not getting the answers he wanted, he jailed them as well, but Höss’s wife still wouldn’t talk.<sup>18</sup>

*“With their tactics of isolation and intimidation failing to produce a result, Hanns realised that they must develop an alternative approach. At twilight on 11 March 1946, a noisy old steam train was driven past the rear of the prison. Hanns burst into Hedwig’s cell and informed her that the train was about to take her son to Siberia and that she would never see Klaus again. Allowing the*

<sup>15</sup> “Special interrogation report on SS Ogruf, Gen Lt der Waffen SS Oswald Pohl.” TNA, WO 311/706, p. 15 of the report.

<sup>16</sup> “Report on arrest of Gustav Simon, alias Hans Woffler formerly Gauleiter of Luxemburg by Capt H H Alexander, Pioneer Corps War Crimes Investigation Unit.” TNA, WO 309/1631.

<sup>17</sup> TNA, WO 309/1631.

<sup>18</sup> Harding 2013b, pp. 236-239. In the book, the author calls the two main characters, Alexander and Höss, by their first names, Hanns and Rudolf.

*message to sink in for a few moments, Hanns then added that she could prevent her son's deportation if she told him where her husband was living and under what alias. Hanns then left Hedwig sitting on her cot with a piece of paper and a pencil. When he returned ten minutes later, he saw that she had written a note with Rudolf's location and his alias: the Kommandant of Auschwitz was living at Hans Peter Hansen's farm in Gottrupel under the name 'Franz Lang'."*

Having obtained that information, Cross and Alexander hatched a plan for Höss's arrest:

*"Over the next hour the men of Field Security Section 92 were assembled and briefed on the operation. Many of them were German Jews like Hanns, from the Pioneer Corps – men who had been driven out of their country and who had lost family members in Auschwitz. Some had kept their original names, such as Kuditsch and Wiener. Others had taken on British-sounding names, like Roberts, Cresswell and Shiffers. There were also English-born soldiers from Jewish families, similarly enraged, men such as Bernard Clarke, from the south coast, and Karl 'Blitz' Abrahams, from Liverpool."*

Alexander also got in touch with Field Security Section 318 and brought with him a physician from the 5th Royal Horse Artillery Regiment. This gang, which consisted of 25 men, acted the night of March 11, 1946:

*"Rudolf was 'woken with a start' by the commotion outside. At first, he was unconcerned, assuming 'that it was one of the robberies which were frequent at this time in the area'. Then he heard a stern voice ordering him to open up. Realising that he had no alternative, Rudolf opened the door. Two men in British uniform stood facing him. Rudolf could tell by their insignia that one was a captain, the other a doctor. Behind them stood at least twenty soldiers, their guns drawn. He was confused by the lights and the presence of all these men. Without warning the tall, handsome, fierce-looking captain thrust a pistol in his mouth. He was then searched for cyanide pills. 'Go and see that he is clean,' Hanns said to the doctor, holding Rudolf while his mouth was searched for vials of poison. After a few seconds, the doctor gave the all-clear. The captain began talking in perfect German.<sup>[19]</sup> It was immediately obvious to Rudolf that the man was a native speaker. He introduced himself as Captain Alexander of the British War Crimes Investigation Team, and demanded his identity documents – Franz Lang, temporary card number B22595. Hanns had seen this name on the plate next to the barn door, but knew it to be untrue. The man looked too similar to the figure in the photograph that he carried with him. Older, sicker, thinner, to be sure, but similar. Hanns flashed the photograph and told Rudolf that he believed him to be the Kommandant of Auschwitz. Again Rudolf denied the claim, pointing once more*

<sup>19</sup> This is in sharp contrast to Vera Atkinson's claim that she "was asked to act as interpreter at his interrogation because she was the only trustworthy person who could speak good enough German."

*at his identity papers. Perhaps he would be able to wriggle out of this: after all, the British had let him slip through their fingers in the past. However, Hanns remained convinced. He rolled back the man's shirtsleeves to see if there was a blood group tattooed on his arm, but there was nothing. The conversation went round in circles. Yet Hanns wasn't going to give up. His eyes roved about the barn entrance searching for a way to prove the man's identity. At last Hanns looked down and noticed his wedding ring.*

*'Give it to me,' he said.*

*'I can't, it has been stuck for years,' Rudolf answered.*

*'No problem,' Hanns said, 'I'll just cut off your finger.'"*

Alexander asked one of his soldiers to bring a knife, and at this point Höss caved in and handed it over. Inside the ring there were the names "Rudolf" and "Hedwig."

*"Having identified his man, Hanns was ready to make the arrest. But he sensed that his colleagues wanted to vent their hatred. Indeed, he wanted to join in. He had to make a quick decision: should he allow them free rein, or should he protect Rudolf? Turning to his men, Hanns said, 'In ten minutes I want to have Höss in my car – undamaged' and walked off. He knew that this made him responsible for what was about to happen, but he was prepared to face the consequences.*

*Rudolf was immediately surrounded by the remaining soldiers, who dragged him to one of the barn's slaughter tables, tore the pyjamas from his body and beat him with axe handles. Rudolf screamed, but the blows kept coming. After a short period, the doctor spoke to Hanns: 'Call them off,' he said, 'unless you want to take back a corpse.'*

*Just as suddenly as it had started, the beating stopped. A rough woollen blanket was wrapped around Rudolf's shoulders and he was carried out of the barn."*

Höss was loaded onto a truck and taken to a prison in Heide. Along the way Alexander interrogated him. Höss admitted that he had been the commander of Auschwitz and claimed he was "personally responsible for the deaths of 10,000 people."

The gang stopped in a bar in the city center to celebrate the arrest (Harding 2013b, pp. 240-244):

*"After they were finished celebrating, Hanns walked back to the truck, pulled Rudolf out of the vehicle, removed the blanket from his shoulders, and made him walk naked to the prison on the other side of the snow-covered square. Once inside the prison, Hanns, along with a sergeant from the Field Security Section, began Rudolf's first formal interrogation. Alcohol was forced down the prisoner's throat and they beat him with his own whip, confiscated from the barn in Gottrupel. A pair of handcuffs were on his wrists at all times, and with the temperature in the cell well below freezing, Rudolf's uncovered feet quickly developed frostbite."*

Here Harding reproduces a very telling photograph captioned “Rudolf Höss, after British arrest, March 1946” (*ibid.*, p. 244, see Document 4). There are other photographs of the time, one of which is particularly significant (*ibid.*, p. 245, see Document 4a).

*“Three days later, on 15 March 1946, Hanns delivered Rudolf to Camp Tomato, a British-run prison near the town of Minden. There, Colonel Gerald Draper – the War Crimes Group’s lawyer – began a further round of intensive questioning. A few hours afterwards, Rudolf’s statement was typed into an eight-page confession and a one-paragraph summary. It was the first time that a concentration camp Kommandant had provided details of the Final Solution. Rudolf had confessed to coordinating the killing of two million people.”*

The date of March 15 is obviously incorrect, unless it refers to the English translation of the “confession” (see below).

A Jewish sergeant from Liverpool, Karl Louis Abrahams, was also part of the unit which arrested Höss. On March 24, 1946, he wrote a letter to his wife, Betty, in which he informed her of the capture of “the greatest swine that ever was” (Jackman):

*“His interrogation was an experience I shall never forget. We were at it for about three days and two nights on the trot. No sleep – the atmosphere was weird and unreal as we heard him confessing that he had personally supervised the gassing and burning of over two and a half million human beings – mostly our fellow Jews.”*

On March 27, 1985, William Cross wrote an informative letter to Colonel Robson on Höss’s arrest, in which he confirmed the picture outlined above:<sup>20</sup>

*“With regard to the interrogation of Frau Hoess, we received information that this person was living in a flat in a brewery in our area. We knew from experience that widows usually had photographs of their late husband, and we visited Frau Hoess and three sons; I think the eldest was about sixteen. She was asked where her husband was and she replied that he was dead. Searching the flat we could not find a photograph, and felt that he was alive. After a few months and no trace of him we decided to arrest her and the three sons<sup>[21]</sup> and place them in jail, Frau Hoess was put in a separate cell. For five days she was visited and asked one question – ‘Where is your husband’, and for five days her answer was ‘He is dead’; we knew this was untrue. On the morning of the sixth day we put on an act; the rear of the cells backed on to a railway line and a train was organised to come to the rear of the cells with as much noise as possible, and stop outside.*

<sup>20</sup> The letter, written by W. Cross to Colonel Robson, the then-curator of the Museum of Military Intelligence at Chicksands, is located in this institute’s archive without any classification.

<sup>21</sup> Rather one son and two daughters: Klaus-Berndt, 16 years old, Heidetraut, almost 14 years old, and Inge-Brigitte, 12 years old (born on Aug. 18, 1933).

*We then informed Frau Hoess that the train outside was there to take her three sons to Siberia, unless she told us where her husband was and his aliases; if she did not do this then she could have two minutes to say goodbye to her sons, or tell us what we wanted to know. We left her for ten minutes or so with paper and pencil to write down the information we required. Fortunately our bluff worked; she wrote down the information and she and her sons were sent home.*

*That is how Rudolf Hoess, alias Franz Lang was captured.”*

Inge-Brigitte, Höss’s youngest daughter, was located and interviewed by Thomas Harding while he was doing research for his already-mentioned book. In this interview, she stated (Harding 2013a):

*“‘I remember when they came to our house to ask questions,’ she says, her voice tight. ‘I was sitting on the table with my sister. I was about 13 years old. The British soldiers were screaming:*

*‘Where is your father? Where is your father?’ over and over again. I got a very bad headache. I went outside and cried under a tree. [...]*

*The story continues. ‘My older brother Klaus was taken with my mother. He was beaten badly by the British. My mother heard him scream in pain from the room next door. Just like any mother, she wanted to protect her son, so she told them where my father was.’”*

## 2. Statement of March 14, 1946

The history of this document has quite some enigmatic aspects. There is, first of all, a handwritten text by Höss of 10 pages, with a progressive numbering from 2 to 11 by the British, but without date and signature. The page numbers are at the top within a circle.<sup>22</sup> It consists of a duplicate text, that is, a first version going from pages 2 to 5, and a second, which looks like a neat copy, from pages 6 to 11. Pages 2 and 6, as well as 3 and 7 correspond almost completely to each other (except for minor variations), while pages 4 and 5 have no match in the second version, and pages 9 and 10 have none in the first version. Page 8 corresponds to page 11. The second version has an incomplete page numbering, with the numbers placed at the top left before the text; page 7 has the number 2, page 9 the number 4, and page 10 the Roman numeral “II”; the other pages do not contain numbers.

Next, there is an 8-page typed German-language text that should be the transcript of the manuscript. The last page has the handwritten date “March 14, 46” and the time, 2:30, followed by Höss’s signature. Beneath that the following typed phrase appears:

*“Ich habe das vorher Angefuehrte gelesen und bestaetige dass es meinen eigenen Ausfuehrungen entspricht und dass es die reine Wahrheit ist. 14 mar 46.”*

<sup>22</sup> YVA, O.51-41.1; see Document 5.

*“I have read the text written above and confirm that it corresponds to my statements and that it is the absolute truth. 14 Mar 46.”*

Underneath this, yet another handwritten date and time as well as Höss’s signature appear. This is the only page signed by him.

At the bottom, there are two lines with the label “witnessed,” but only the second is filled out and signed by Sergeant Kudisch and dated, March 14, 1946.

The document closes with this typewritten text (see Document 6):<sup>23</sup>

*“I certify that the above-named NCOs – Sjt KUDISCH M and Sjt ROBERTS HK – were present throughout the entire proceedings whilst the prisoner Rudolf HOESS made this statement voluntarily. 14 Mar 1946. Capt CC 92 Field Security Section.”*

The main mystery is that this German “transcript” contains fundamental passages – such as Höss’s meeting with Himmler in Berlin, his visit to Treblinka, and the figure of three million Auschwitz victims – which have no equivalent passages in the two handwritten texts. Were these missing passages added later by Höss? But if that is so, then why are they not in any of the two handwritten texts? Or were they compiled by the British? If we consider that Höss stated he signed this document without knowing what was in it, this suggests that the second scenario is correct. However, the problem of authenticity of this text is only second in importance to that of its truthfulness, since Höss willingly or unwillingly supported this transcript by formally certifying it as the “absolute truth.” For this reason, I consider Höss to be the author of this text when analyzing it in Part Two, although there are serious doubts about it.

This document was then translated into English. This results from the headline “Production No. AD/2,” which also appears as a header of the German transcript, where it is all hand-written. This 8-page typed text is full of handwritten additions in English, mostly translations of German terms. At the end it is dated March 15, 1946, no doubt the day the translation was made. As is apparent from the attestations appearing on the last page, the translation was created in sections by three interpreters:

*“I hereby certify that I have truly and accurately translated pages 1 – 3 of the original statement of Rudolf Hoess.”*

This is followed by the signature of B. Grant and his qualification. The second certificate covers pages 4-6 and is signed by W. Rose. The last one refers to pages 7-8 and has the signature of P.D. Wuerzburger.

Finally, next to the date, there is the signature of Captain William Cross, Commander of the “92 Field Security Section” (see Document 7).

<sup>23</sup> MIM. The document was sent to me without any archival reference. A carbon copy of this statement (with very few variations) is in YVA, O.51-41.4.

This translation then became Nuremberg Document NO-1210. At least two official transcripts of this translation exist. One is preserved at the *Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine* in Paris and has the archival reference CXXXII-18; the document is classified as “D/749a 167b.” The text is a transcript of the above-mentioned typewritten text without the handwritten additions. Another transcript is headed “Translation of Document No. NO-1210 Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes.” The text, all typed, also includes the handwritten parts of the original text. At the end, after the three translation certifications mentioned earlier, there is a “Certificate of Translation” stating:

*“I, Jules N. Beaumont, Civ. No. X-045038, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the English and German languages and that the above is a true and correct translation of the original document No. NO-1210. Jules N. Beaumont. Civ. No. X-045038.”*

The date given (March 15) is clearly wrong. This version contains two handwritten notes in German that refer to an original. The first, p. 2, says “*unsinnige Übersetzung*” (“senseless translation,” next to the sentence: “I was given the order, by a higher authority the then inspectorate of the concentration camps”), while the other on p. 3, next to the phrase “(page 2 of the original),” says “*Original unleserlich*” (“Original illegible”). This indicates that the person adding these handwritten remarks probably had the German transcript available, and that he disagreed with the translation. It can be ruled out that this is Höss’s handwriting, but it cannot be determined with certainty that it is Beaumont’s, because this translation does not contain his handwritten signature. If these are Beaumont’s remarks, he obviously was not the author of the translation, as one would assume from his attestation.

In addition to the three texts mentioned above, there is another translation, unfortunately without date or signature. The text consists of nine pages, the first of which is torn at the top margin, so the first two lines read only:<sup>24</sup>

*“... Franz LANG – having been duly warned... that the following statements are true.”*

The comparison between this translation and the one appearing in the three documents mentioned earlier is not of particular interest to this study. Hence, I merely list a few examples (the first quote is from the text “Production No. AD/2,” the second from the translation certified by Beaumont):

- 1) “I was given the order, by an higher authority” (p. 1)
- 2) “My higher authority, The Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, instructed me” (p. 1).
- 1) “The Fuehrer ordered the solution of the Jewish question in Europe. A few so-called Vernichtungslager are existing in the general government

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<sup>24</sup> YVA, O.51-41.1, pp. 13-21.

(BELZEK near RAWA RUSKA Ost Polen, Tublinka [sic] near MALINA [sic] on the River Bug, and WOLZEK near Lublin)” (p. 2).

2) “The Fuehrer has ordered a solution of the Jewish problem in EUROPE. At present there are already several extermination camps in the territory of the General Government (BELZEK near RAWA RUSKA, Eastern Poland, TE-BLINKA [sic] near MALINA [sic] on the river BUG and WOLZEK near LUBLIN” (p. 2/14).

1) “These camps were not very efficient and could not be enlarged. I visited the camp TREBLINKA in Spring 1942 to inform myself about the conditions” (p. 2)

2) “But the capacity of these camps is very small and they cannot be further extended (NB – At this point of giving his version of HIMMLER’s instructions, HOESS remarked “I myself visited the camp TREBLINKA in the spring of 1942 in order to acquaint myself with the conditions” (p. 2).

1) “In January 1945 there were about 63000 in all camps. In AUSCHWITZ I imagine about 3,000,000 people were put to death, about 2,500,000 were put through the gas-chambers” (p. 6)

2) “630,000<sup>25</sup> inmates was the combined state of all camps in January 1945. According to my knowledge 3000000 people lost their lives in the concentration camp AUSCHWITZ. I estimate that of these 2500,000 [sic] have been gassed” (p. 7/19).

## 2.1. The Two Handwritten Versions

In this subsection, I translate the most important passages of the two handwritten statements of March 14, 1946:<sup>26</sup>

“[p. 2/6] *i/Nov. [in Nov.] 1939 I became leader of the protective custody camp in that place until my transfer to Auschwitz i.[n] May 1940.*

[p. 3/7] [2.] *I was commissioned by my superior authority, the former Inspectorate of Concentration Camps, to create on the grounds of the former Polish artillery barracks near Auschwitz, a quarantine camp for inmates from Poland. After Himmler had visited the camp in [the spring of] 1941, I received the order to expand the camp as a large concentration camp for the east[,] in particular to deploy the inmates in agriculture, which had to be developed as much as possible, thereby turning the entire swamp and flood plain near the River Vistula into arable land. Furthermore, he ordered to make ~~some~~ 8 – 10,000 inmates available for the construction of a new Buna factory of the I.G. Farben. He concomitantly ordered to create a PoW camp for some 100,000 Russian PoWs in the Birkenau area. [He concomitantly ordered the creation of a PoW camp in the Birkenau area for some 100,000 Russian PoWs].*

<sup>25</sup> This is the correct number; 63000 is an error, probably committed during transcription.

<sup>26</sup> Words in [brackets] indicate text variations of the second version compared to the first; ~~crossed-out~~ words are only in the first version. Some minor text variations cannot be transferred into English.

*The number of [admitted] inmates grew from day to day. Despite my objection [objections] that there weren't enough accommodations, more internments were allocated ~~to me~~. Since the sanitary facilities were not enough [insufficient] in every way, diseases were inevitable[,] hence [Hence] mortality rose as well. Since it was not permitted to bury inmates, crematoria had to be built. In 1941, the first [large] internments of Jews from Slovakia a. [and] the district of Upper Sil. [Upper Silesia] were carried out. Those unable to work were gassed in the vestibule of the crematorium on orders of Himmler, which he gave me personally.*

*Also, Russ. PoWs were transferred for gassings by the state police headquarters of Breslau a. Troppau. [Russ. PoWs were also transferred for gassings by the state police headquarters of Breslau a. Troppau.]*

*Since the newly to be erected [4] crematoria were finished only in 1942[,] the inmates had to be gassed in provisionally erected gassing rooms, and then cremated in pits in the ground. After the 4 large [lg.] crematoria had been completed [finished] mass transports commenced from Greece, France, Belgium a. Holland. All [inmates] capable of working had to be separated at the transport train.*

*My objections to the Reichssicherheitshauptamt [RSHA]<sup>[27]</sup> were rejected[,] always due to an order from Himmler that these operations had to be carried out expeditiously a. that every SS leader[,] impeding this in any way should be held responsible.*

*The physicians tried everything in their power to fight the resulting epidemics; due to the excessive overcrowding, almost all measures used were futile.*

*Of the large transports of Jews, some 90,000 from Slovakia, 65,000 from Greece, – 110,000 from France – 20,000 from Belgium, 90,000 from Holland 400,000 from Hungary – 250,000 from Poland a. Upper Silesia [Upper Sil.], 100,000 from Deutschland a. Theresienstadt were brought to Auschwitz.*

*During these operations, usually 2-3 trains of 2,000 each were brought in.*

*During the Hungary operation at utmost 5 trains, that is, 10,000 people.<sup>[28]</sup>*

*[p. 4] Gassing Procedure*

*a/ in prov. Farmers [houses]*

*2 old farmhouses made free of gaps and equipped with strong wooden doors.*

*The transports are unloaded on a side spur i/ Birkenau. Those who can walk are selected a. led to the camps all luggage is put down a. later brought to the property warehouses.*

*All others on foot to the facilities some 1 km away.*

*At night all in/truck, during days only the sick and those unable to walk.*

*All have to undress in front of the farmhouses.*

*The doors have a sign saying 'Desinfection room' then into the rooms depending on size 2-300*

<sup>27</sup> Reich Security Main Office.

<sup>28</sup> In the second version, these two sentences are on p. 10.

*The doors are screwed shut a. through sm. hatches 1-2 cans of Cyclon B each is thrown in. Duration of exposure depending on weather 3 – 10 minutes.*

*After 1/2 an hour the corpses are dragged out by a unit – who work there constantly – a. burned in pits in the ground. Duration 6-7 hours.*

*Prior to the incineration, gold teeth and rings are removed.*

*2 instructed medical orderlies throw in the gas cans a physician is present.*

*[b/] in the lg. crematoria*

*The transports arrive at a ramp near the 4 cremat. Unloading selection taking away of luggage as above[.]*

*Those to be gassed walk into a large underground room provided with benches a. provisions to keep the clothes. **F***

*After that they walk into the actual gassing room which holds 2000 persons. It is equipped with water pipes a. showers, creating the impression of a washing facility. **F***

*While undressing, the people are told that they have to remember exactly where they put their clothes, so that they find them afterwards.*

*2 sergeants remain in the gas room until the end to prevent any unrest. At the last moment, the iron doors are closed and 4-5 Cyclon [is] a granular blue mass – hydrogen cyanide – acts instantly – numbing.*

*After 1/2 an hour the fans are turned on a. the corpses are driven to the cremation furnaces upstairs*

*The cremation of some 2000 people in 5 furnaces takes some 12 hours.*

*[p. 5] There were 2 facilities with 5 double furnaces at Auschwitz*

*2 facilities w/[ith] 4 large furnaces each.*

*Moreover 1 temp. facility as described earlier.*

*All the accumulating effects were sorted in the effects warehouse*

*Valuables each month to the Reichsbank in Berlin.*

*Clothes after cleaning to armament companies, f. eastern workers a. settlers.*

*Tooth gold gets smelted and sent to the sanitation office.”*

## 2.2. The Transcript

In this subsection, I translate the most important parts of the typewritten “transcript.”<sup>29</sup>

*“[p. 1] In November 1939, I was deployed as leader of a protective custody camp in the rank of an SS captain. Until my transfer to AUSCHWITZ on the first of May 1940.*

*I was commissioned by my superior authority, the former Inspectorate of C[oncentration]C[amp]s, to create from the grounds of the former Polish artillery barracks near AUSCHWITZ, a quarantine camp for inmates from Poland. After Himmler had visited the camp in 1941, I received the order to expand the*

<sup>29</sup> AGK, NTN, 103, pp. 2-8.

camp as a large concentration camp for the east, in particular to deploy the inmates in agriculture, which had to be developed as much as possible, thereby turning the entire swamp and flood plain near the River Vistula into arable land. Furthermore, he ordered making some 8 – 10,000 inmates available for the construction of a new Buna factory of the I.G. Farben. He concomitantly ordered to create a PoW camp for some 100,000 Russian PoWs in the Birkenau area.

The number of inmates grew from day to day despite my objections that there weren't enough accommodations, more internments were allocated to me. Since the sanitary facilities were not sufficient in any way, epidemic diseases were inevitable. Hence, mortality rose as well. Since it was not permitted to bury inmates, crematoria had to be built.

In 1941, the first transports of Jews came from SLOVAKIA and the region of Upper Silesia.[.] Those unable to work were gassed in the vestibule of the crematorium on orders of Himmler, which he gave me personally. In June 1941 [p. 2] I was summoned to Himmler in Berlin where he basically told me the following. The Fuehrer has ordered the solution of the Jewish question in Europe. Several so-called extermination camps already exist in the General Government (BELZEK near RAVA RUSKA eastern Poland, TREBLINKA near MALINA [Malkinia] on the River BUG, and WOLZEK near LUBLIN). These camps were under the authority of the Einsatzkommandos [task forces] of the SECURITY POLICE headed by high SIPO officers and guard details. These camps had a low capacity, however, and could not be expanded.

I myself visited the Treblinka camp in spring of 1942 to acquaint myself with the conditions. The exterminations were conducted using the following method: There were small chambers the size of rooms which were filled with gas from vehicle engines through feed pipes. This method was unreliable, because the engines consisted of old captured vehicles and tanks, which failed frequently. Hence, the transports could not be processed in such a way that an exact implementation of the operational plan, this was about the evacuation of the Warsaw Ghetto, could be carried out. According to statements made by the camp leader, some 800,000 people had been gassed at the TREBLINKA camp in the course of half a year. For all the reasons given above, HIMMLER explained to me that the only opportunity to expand these facilities so that they matched the general plan was at AUSCHWITZ, first as a railway junction of 4 transiting lines, and also because the sparsely populated camp area could be completely cordoned off. For these reasons, he had decided to move the mass extermination to AUSCHWITZ, and I had to immediately start with measures to carry this out. He wished [to see] exact construction plans conforming to these guidelines within 4 weeks. He stated moreover: This task is so difficult and serious that he cannot charge just anyone with it[.] He already intended to entrust another higher SS leader with this task, but during the construction phase it would not be good if 2 leaders were to give orders side by side. Hence, I received the clear instruction to carry out the extermination of the

transports sent by the RSHA. Regarding the sequence of the incoming transports, I had to get in touch with SS Obersturmbannführer [Lieutenant Colonel] EICHMANN of Office 4 (which was headed by Gruppenführer [Lieutenant General] MÜLLER). At the same time, the transports of Russian PoWs from the regions of the Gestapo headquarters BRESLAU, TROPPEAU and KATTO-WITZ also arrived, which had to be exterminated at Auschwitz on HIMMLER's order, written direction of the Gestapo chief in charge. Since the newly to be erected cremation facilities were finished only in 1942, the inmates had to be gassed in provisionally erected gassing rooms, and then cremated in pits in the ground. I herewith describe the procedure of the gassing procedure [sic]:

2 old farmhouses, located secludedly in the BIRKENAU area, were made free of gaps and equipped with strong wooden doors. The transports as such were unloaded on a side spur in BIRKENAU. Inmates fit for work were selected and taken to the camps, all luggage was put down a. later brought to the property warehouses. The others destined for gassings went on foot to the facilities some 1 km away. The sick and those unable to walk were transported there by truck. During transports arriving at night, all were carried there by truck. In front of the farmhouses, all had to undress behind erected brushwood screens. The doors had a sign saying DESINFECTIOIN ROOM. By means of interpreters, the sergeants in charge had to tell the people that they ought to pay close attention to their things, so that they would find them after the delousing. This prevented any agitation right from the start. Those undressed then went into the rooms, 2 – 300 people, depending on the size. The doors were screwed shut, and through small hatches, one to 2 cans of Cyclon B each were spread out[.] This was a granular mass of hydrogen cyanide. Duration of exposure depending on weather 3 – 10 minutes. After half an hour, the doors were opened and the corpses were dragged out by a unit working there constantly and burned in pits in the ground. Prior to the incineration, gold teeth and rings were removed, fire wood was stacked up between the corpses, and when a pile had some 100 corpses in it, the wood was lit using rags soaked with petroleum. Once the incineration was well under way, other corpses were thrown to this. The fat collecting at the bottom of the pit was poured back into the fire with buckets in order to accelerate the incineration process particularly during wet weather. The duration of the incineration lasted 6-7 hours. During westerly winds, the stench of the burned corpses could be noticed even inside the camp. After cleaning out the pits, the remaining ashes were crushed. This happened on a cement slab where inmates pulverized the remaining bones with wooden pounders. These remains were then poured into the Vistula at a remote location using trucks.

After erection of the new large cremation facilities, the following procedure was used:

[p. 3] After the first 2 large-scale crematoria had been finished in 1942 (the 2 others were finished half a year later), mass transports from France, Belgium,

*Holland and Greece commenced. The following procedure was used for this. The transport trains left [sic] at a ramp with 3 tracks which were built right between the crematoria, property warehouse and the Birkenau camp. The selection of those fit for work as well as putting down the luggage happened right on the ramp. Those fit for work were brought to the various camps, and those to be exterminated to one of the new crematoria. There they first walked into a large underground room for undressing. This room was equipped with benches and provisions to hand up clothes; here, too, the people were told by interpreters that they were led to take a bath and to be deloused and that they should pay attention to the location of their clothes. Then they walked into the next room that was also underground [and] that was equipped with water pipes and showers, which thus had to create the impression of a bathroom. Until the very end, 2 sergeants had to remain in the room in order to prevent any unrest.*

*It happened on occasion that inmates realized what this was about, especially the transports from BELSEN knew, for most of them came from the east, when the trains had reached the region of Upper Silesia, that they were most likely being taken to their extermination. During transports from BELSEN, security measures were reinforced, and the transports were split up in small groups, and these groups were then divvied up among the crematoria to prevent riots. SS men formed a tight chain and pushed resisters by force into the gassing rooms. This happened only rarely, though, for the reassuring measures simplified the procedure. I especially remember one example. A transport from BELSEN had arrived, and after roughly 2/3, these were mostly men, a mutiny broke out among the remaining third still present in the undressing room; 3 or 4 of the SS sergeants entered the room with their weapons in order to expedite the undressing, and because the inmates of their own cremation unit couldn't handle this. During this, the lighting cables were ripped out, the SS men assaulted, one of them stabbed, and all robbed of their weapons. Since it was completely dark in this room, a wild shooting broke out between the guards at the exit and the inmates inside. When I arrived, I ordered the doors shut, the gassing procedure of the first 2/3 finished, and then [we] went into the room with flashlights and pistols and forced the inmates into one corner, from where they were then led out individually and shot with a small caliber on my orders. It often happened repeatedly that women hid their little children among their underwear and their clothes and didn't take them along into the gas chambers. The clothes were searched by the permanent unit of the cremation inmates under the [supervision of the] SS in charge, and any children found that way were afterwards also sent to the gas room. After half an hour, the electric fans in the gassing room were turned on, and the corpses were driven to the cremation furnaces located upstairs using elevators. The cremation of some 2,000 people in 5 furnaces lasted roughly 12 hours. At Auschwitz, there were 2 facilities with 5 double furnaces each and 2 facilities with 4 large furnaces each;*

*furthermore, one temporary facility existed as described earlier. The second temporary facility had been eliminated.*

*All the accumulating clothes and effects were sorted in the effects warehouse by the inmate unit that worked there permanently and was also lodged there. The valuables went each month to the Reichsbank to Berlin. Clothes after cleaning to armament companies for the eastern workers working there, and the settlers. The tooth gold was smelted and sent also every month to the sanitation office of the Waffen SS. In charge of this was Quartermaster General SS Gruppenführer BLUMENREUTER. I myself have never personally shot or beaten anyone.*

*Due to these mass admissions, the number of inmates fit for work increased immeasurably. My objections to the RSHA to delay the operations, that is to say, to let fewer transport trains roll, were always rejected with reference to an order by the Reichsführer SS that the operations had to be carried out expeditiously and that every SS leader impeding this in any way would be held responsible.*

*Due to this tremendous overcrowding of the existing inmate accommodations and the at once insufficient sanitary facilities especially in the BIRKENAU camp, new epidemics of typhus, scarlet fever and diphtheria flared up over and over again. The physicians tried everything in their power to fight the resulting epidemics, but almost all measures employed failed. In military respects, the physicians were subordinate to the camp commander, but with respect to medical issues, they had their own chain of command and were subordinate to the head of the WVHA's medical corps, STANDARTENFÜHRER Dr. Lolling, who himself was subordinate to REICHSARZT SS-Obergruppenf. [ührer] Dr. GRAWITZ."*

The statement continues that those condemned to death for non-political reasons were sent to the camp's Gestapo on orders of the RSHA. They were killed with lethal injections, including gasoline. Doctors had to draw up normal death certificates giving a disease as the cause of death. In Auschwitz, several medical experiments were carried out on detainees by Dr. Karl Clausberg and Dr. Horst Schumann (sterilizations).

*"[p. 4] In order to fight the typhus epidemics, various methods were applied to exterminate lice. Severely louse-infested healthy persons were treated with various remedies, such as LAUSETTO,<sup>[30]</sup> among other things, an agent obtained from horse dust, and then it was determined how well the agent worked. Dr. WIRTHS Sturmbannf. [ührer] and garrison physician, picked out women who were suspected of having cancer in order to removed early-stage cancer surgically. In this regard, he relied on experiences of his brother [which] he*

<sup>30</sup> Lausetto was the German trade name of DDT. It was first used in Auschwitz in 1944. The German licensee and producer was the Bayer Company. They delivered to Auschwitz 9 metric tons of DDT on April 18, 15 tons on August 21, and 2 tons on October 3, 1944. Setkiewicz 2011, Note 105, p. 72.

*had made at a Hamburg hospital. Furthermore, this physician also [carried out] experiments to kill persons by means of hydrogen-cyanide injections, [on] such [persons] as had been slated for the death penalty by the Gestapo.”*

The maximum occupancy of the Auschwitz Camp was 140,000 detainees.

The statement goes on to assert that Höss, after his transfer to the WVHA, was assigned to the Political Department (*Politische Abteilung*) of Office DI (see Part Two, Chapter 42).

[p. 6] Applications for death penalties (*Anträge auf Todestrafen*) for grave crimes committed by detainees “had to be amply substantiated and submitted to HIMMLER, who had to approve them”; furthermore, “applications for corporal punishment were decided by Himmler only in case of women. Regarding men, that decision was made by Glücks or his permanent deputy Maurer.” In January of 1945, some 630,000 inmates were present in all camps (the text erroneously states 63000).

The statement then returns to the extermination of the Jews by giving concrete numbers:<sup>31</sup>

*“According to my estimate, some 3,000,000 people perished at Auschwitz itself. I estimate that of these, 2,500,000 were gassed. Apart from personal experiences, these numbers were made entirely officially by Obersturmbannf.[ührer] EICHMANN, the official in charge of Jewish issues at the RSHA, while reporting to the Reichsführer in April 1945. These were mainly Jews. I personally remember having gassed 70,000 Russian PoWs during my time as commander in Auschwitz on the order of the Gestapo chiefs in charge. The maximum number of gassings on one day at Auschwitz was 10,000. This was the maximum that could be carried out on one day with the existing facilities. I personally remember the large mass transports, 90,000 from Slovakia, 65,000 from Greece, 110,000 from France, 20,000 from Belgium, 90,000 from Holland, 400,000 from Hungary, 250,000 from Poland and Upper Silesia, 100,000 from Germany and Theresienstadt.”*

I will discuss the alleged assignment entrusted to Höss in March 1945 in Part Two, Chapter 42.

### 3. The Other Statements of March 1946

On March 16, 1946, Höss signed a handwritten *English* statement with the following text:

*“Statement made voluntarily at [Minden] Gaol by Rudolf Hoess former commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp on 16th day of March 1946. I personally arranged on orders received from Himmler in May 1941 the gassing of 2 million persons between June/July 1941 and the end of 1943 during which time I was commandant of Auschwitz.”*

<sup>31</sup> Typed declaration by Höss dated March 14, 1946, p. 6. MIM.

This is followed by Höss's signature, together with his rank and his former position as the commander of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp.<sup>32</sup>

It is evident that the statement's text was not written by Höss; his handwriting was different, as can already be seen from the way in which the word "Auschwitz" was written by him and by the unknown British hand.

One may ask why the British submitted this text to Höss, which is in contradiction to his alleged statement made two days earlier regarding both the date of Himmler's order (May instead of June 1941) and the number of victims (the gassing victims were reduced from 2,500,000 to 2,000,000). Apparently, the author(s) of these lines did not even know that Höss had returned to Auschwitz in May 1944 – according to the orthodox holocaust narrative in order to assist in the "gassing" of the Hungarian Jews, which is the most significant event, numerically speaking.

Assessing the events ex post facto, it looks like the British needed a brief and incisive way to attract the attention of the press.

Already on March 17, 1946, the *New York Times* published an article on page 31 titled "Nazi Mass Killer Taken; He Used Gas at Oswiecim." The source given is "British Army Headquarters, Germany," dated March 16. The article reads:

*"British agents today<sup>[33]</sup> captured Rudolf Hoess, former commandant of the Oswiecim concentration camp, ending a nine-month search for the man they described as probably 'the greatest individual killer in the history of the world.' Hoess was the missing man at the war crimes trial of Josef Kramer, 'the Beast of Belsen.' Kramer repeatedly accused him of gassing millions of Germans [sic] as Heinrich Himmler's camp administrator."*

On the following days, many newspapers, including German ones, reported on Höss's arrest, always accompanied by the alleged gassing of 2 million people.

On March 19, 1946, the *Berliner Zeitung* carried the front-page headline: "The man who gassed two million people" ("*Der Mann, der zwei Millionen Menschen vergaste*"). That news item, dated March 18, came from an "American news agency" and stated: "During an interrogation, Hoess confessed to having gassed some two million people at Auschwitz."

On the same day, *Der Tagespiegel* published a front-page article titled "The Commandant of Auschwitz Arrested" ("*Der Kommandant von Auschwitz verhaftet*"), also referring to a news item of March 18. The "gassing" story was reported with the same words.

The next day, the same journal returned to that subject with another front-page article titled "Confession of the Auschwitz Commandant" ("*Geständnis des Auschwitz Kommandanten*") that referred to "a remarkable confession" in which Höss had admitted "that he personally, in carrying out Himmler's or-

<sup>32</sup> Facsimile in Russell, outside of numbered pages (between pp. 180 & 181). See Document 8.

<sup>33</sup> This is evidently wrong.

ders, ordered the gassing of two million people in the time between June 1941 and the end of 1943, during which time he was commandant of Auschwitz.”

The British newspapers published the statement of March 16, 1946 even in facsimile; as did for instance *The Daily Herald*, in a front-page article by a certain Denis Martin (“This Man Killed 2,000,000”), which also very briefly summarized the statement of March 14, and *The Daily Telegraph* in a brief article on page 6 without headline.

References to the Belsen Trial were present in all these articles. This confirms that the British knew perfectly well which things “the greatest individual killer in the history of the world” had been made to “confess.”

The British clearly aimed at influencing public opinion, especially in Germany, in view of the future “re-education” following the victors’ prescriptions. Höss’s handwritten signature at the bottom of this document was designed to contribute a lot to this end.

Yet another document, also in English, also dates back to March 16, 1946:

*“Statement of Rudolf Hoess. Statement of Rudolf Hoess, male, made voluntarily at Minden Gaol on 16th March 1946.*

*1. I was commandant of Auschwitz from May 1941 until December 1943.*

*2. During this time the camp was visited by the following high-ranking persons:*

*Schwerin-Krosigk – Finanzminister*

*Thierack – Justizminister.*

*They inspected the camp of Auschwitz, its factories and farms and remained for approximately 3-4 hours.*

*3. I held the position of Adjutant and Schutzhaftlagerführer in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp from 1939 until 1940.*

*4. During this time I saw the following high-ranking persons visit the camp of Sachsenhausen:*

*Frick – Innenminister (Minister of the Interior).*

*The above statement was made voluntarily by me, Rudolf Hoess, at Minden Gaol, Germany, on this 16th day of March 1946.*

*Sgd. Rudolf Hoess [only typed, no handwritten signature]*

*Witnessed by me, Capt A. Vollmar, 22 Dragoons, an officer of the Judge Advocate General’s Branch, HQ, BAOR at Minden Gaol, Germany this 16th day of March 1946.*

*Sgd. A. Vollmar, Capt, JAG Branch, HQ BACR.”*

The declaration closes with this attestation:<sup>34</sup>

*“Certified that the above text was read to the said Rudolf Hoess in German and that he agreed that it was true and voluntarily signed it.”*

On March 20, 1946, Höss signed yet another declaration, which is doubtlessly authentic:

<sup>34</sup> TNA, WO 309/374, E 2.

*“Statement Made voluntarily at Minden Gaol by Rudolf Hoess, former Commandant of Auschwitz Concentration Camp, on the 20th of March 1946.*

*1. I was Commandant of the Concentration Camp Auschwitz from 1 May 1940 to the first of December 1943.*

*2. When I took up my duties there were approximately 50 men Waffen SS as guard platoon and 12-15 men Waffen SS as HQ section.*

*3. At the time I relinquished my command there were 3000 men Waffen SS serving as guards, 300 men Waffen SS as Camp staff, and another 200 men Waffen SS employed on other administrative duties, all told 3500 men Waffen SS at the Concentration Camp Auschwitz.*

*4. Out of those who served originally at the Camp, approximately 2500 men Waffen SS were posted to field units and replaced by others, so that during my term of service all told 6000 Waffen SS served at one time or another at Auschwitz. After my departure this exchange of personnel continued, and I should say another 1000 men Waffen SS were replaced up to the time of the evacuation of the Camp in 1945, so that all told approximately 7000 men Waffen SS have served at one time or another at the Concentration Camp Auschwitz.*

*5. Once a man had been selected from the guard troops for service with the Camp staff, he remained with the staff, unless posted away from the Camp. [followed by Höss’s signature].*

*Witnessed by me, Capt. A. Vollmar. XXII Dragoons, an officer of the Judge Advocate General’s Department, HQ, BAOR, at Minden Gaol in Germany on this 20th day of March 1946”* (followed by the signature)

At the end, there is a statement similar to that of the March 16 statement:<sup>35</sup>

*“I hereby certify that I have accurately translated this deposition from English into German to the said deponent Rudolf Hoess and that he fully agrees the contents thereof.”*

As we will see below, these are more pieces of evidence allowing us to reconstruct the history of Höss’s first statement. Schwerin von Krosigk, by the way, never set foot inside the Auschwitz Camp.

A photocopy of this statement, bearing the stamp “International Military Tribunal” (IMT), became document D 749 b. On April 15, 1946, during the deposition of Höss at the IMT in Nuremberg (see below, Section II.10), Colonel Amen presented the document as Exhibit Number USA-810.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> TNA, WO 309/374, E 1.

<sup>36</sup> IMT, Vol. XI, p. 412.