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VIII-511

REPORT

SS LOOT AND THE REICHSBANK

by  
Col Bernard Bernstein.

dtd

30th October. 45

RG 210, BMBG  
Records of the Economic Office, Office of the Adjutant General  
General Economic Office (Economic File), 1945-49  
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Tab A

Letter of transmittal

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HEADQUARTERS  
OFFICE OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT FOR GERMANY (U.S.ZONE)  
DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION OF  
CARTELS AND EXTERNAL ASSETS  
APO 757

30 October 1945

SUBJECT: SS Loot and the Reichsbank  
TO: Lt. General Lucius D. Clay  
Deputy Military Governor of Germany

1. Attached is a summary and detailed report on the transaction between the Reichsbank and the SS, wherein the bank undertook to receive and dispose of SS loot.

2. A copy of this report is being submitted to the U.S. Representatives who are preparing the economic case against the War Criminals.

*Bernard Bernstein*

Bernard Bernstein  
Colonel GSC  
Division of Investigation of  
Cartels and External Assets

SLK:lgd

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Tab B

Report on the SS Loot

## PART I

SUMMARY

1. In 1942 the Reichsbank and the SS worked out an arrangement whereby the bank undertook to receive and convert into cash loot seized in the various parts of occupied Europe. The proceeds of the sale of the property was placed to the credit of the Ministry of Finance on the books of the Reichsbank.

2. By the time the war ended seventy-six shipments of the loot had been made by the SS to the Reichsbank. The total value of these shipments amount to approximately RM 36,000,000. The estimated value of the property received and the nature of the property, are shown in the following table:-

	Value of Shipments
Total	<u>RM 36.17 millions</u>
Bank notes of foreign countries	RM 21.88 millions
Gold and silver coin and bullion	10.67
Good jewelry and precious metal ware	1.70
Dental gold and broken jewelry	1.65
Securities and postage stamps	.27

3. A more detailed list of the items shipped is as follows:-

- Rings, gold, silver and platinum
- Watches
- Savings, Bank passbooks
- Bank notes
- Handbags
- Cutlery
- Gold and silver coins
- Postal stamps
- Diamonds
- Pearls
- Dental gold
- Securities

4. The total proceeds from sale of the loot, covering the first forty-four shipments, amount to approximately RM 23,455,782. VIII 5/7

5. This transaction was in accordance with an oral directive from Reichsbank President Dr. Walter Funk to Emil Puhl, the Vice-President of the Reichsbank. Schwering von Krosigk, the Minister of Finance, also knew about the arrangements. The Reichsbank knew about the general nature and general sources of the property the SS was to deposit. It knew that jewelry was to be included and it knew that all the property was confiscated property. It knew that the property was to come from occupied countries. Furthermore, the Reichsbank appreciated very clearly the reputation of the Gestapo. It knew that the Gestapo confiscated property of concentration camp victims.

6. The Reichsbank's awareness of wrong is attested to by the fact that all the instructions and agreements were oral and all people participating in it were enjoined to utmost secrecy. The only writings that exist are the bookkeeping records and correspondence resulting from the execution of the agreement.

7. A more detailed report of the transaction is contained in Part II of this report.

## PART II

## Details of the Transaction

1. Directive from Funk. Emil Puhl claims to have first heard of the SS loot when he, Friedrich Wilhelm, and possibly Max Kretzschmann (Reichsbankdirectors) were called into Funk's office in the Reichsbank in the summer of 1942. There Funk told them that he had agreed with the SS that the Reichsbank would accept securities and jewelry, confiscated by the SS in the occupied countries, for deposit and safe-keeping. He also stated that the proceeds of the property, when sold were to be placed to the credit of the Reich. Puhl and Wilhelm objected to the transaction because of its unusual nature, but were told it would continue for only a short time. They were enjoined not to ask for any additional information concerning the source of the loot, and were told to get in touch with Oswald Pohl, Chief of the Economic Department of the SS, to complete the arrangements.

2. Directive from Puhl. Shortly after his conversation with Funk, Puhl called Fromknecht, the Reichsbank director who was referant for cash and vault, into his office and told him to be prepared to receive the SS shipments. Fromknecht after having made the same objections that Puhl had made to Funk called into his office the Chief of the Precious Metals Department, Albert Thoms, and told him that the Reichsbank was to handle a special transaction and to get in touch with Puhl for further information. Thoms, together with the 1st Director of Hauptkasse, Peplau, saw Puhl about this matter. Thoms writes about this conversation as follows:-

"In the summer of 1942, however, I was called into the office of Reichsbank Director Fromknecht, who said that the Reichsbank was going to handle a special transaction, of which he knew very little. However, he said Puhl would know all the details and wanted to see me about them. I went to Puhl's office, and Puhl explained to me that the Reichsbank was going to act as custodian for the SS in the receipt and disposition of deposits. He said that the SS would deliver usual property with which the Reichsbank dealt, namely, gold, silver, and foreign currency. He also explained, however, that the SS had intended to deliver numerous other kinds of property, such as jewelry and we must find a way to dispose of it. I suggested to Mr. Puhl that we transmit the items to the Reichshauptkasse, as we made it in the case of Wehrmacht booty, or that the

items could be given by the "Reichsfuehrer SS" directly to the pawn shop for disposition so that the Reichsbank had no more to do with it than it did in the case of confiscated Jewish property. Puhl told me that it was out of the question and that it was necessary that we arrange a procedure for handling this unusual property in order to hold the whole business secret".

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3. Puhl stressed the secrecy of the transactions, telling Thoms "it was very important not to discuss this with anybody, that it was to be highly secret, that it was a special transaction, and if anybody asked about it that I was to say I was forbidden to speak about it." Thoms was also instructed to get in touch with the Economics Department of the SS.

4. Instructions from Pohl's Office of Puhl. Puhl states that shortly before the first delivery was made, "Pohl (of the Economics Department of the SS) rang me up and asked me if I had heard about this business. I said I couldn't speak over the phone about this matter and that he should come in. He did. I think he was accompanied by his assistant and he told me that a certain part of the jewelry was already in Berlin and that he would be glad if it could be brought as soon as possible into the bank. Then I said we would do what we could and as far as I know the Reichsbank assisted in bringing the jewelry forward".

5. Instructions from Pohl's Office to Thoms. In accordance with the instructions of Puhl, Thoms called Pohl's office and spoke to Brigadefuehrer Frank of the Economics Department of the SS and arranged for the delivery of the loot. Frank told Thoms that the deliveries would be made by truck and would be in charge of an SS man by the name of Melmer. The question was discussed whether Melmer should appear in uniform or civilian clothes, and Frank decided that it was better that Melmer appear out of uniform. Thoms was told merely to give Melmer a preliminary conditional receipt for the cases that constituted the deliveries and that Melmer would later tell him what account was to be credited with the proceeds of the items upon their disposition.

6. Discussion in Direktorium. Puhl claims to have reported the matter to the members of the Direktorium at their next meeting. No objections were raised by the Direktorium.

7. Shipments of Loot. A total of seventy-six deliveries were made by the SS. The first delivery was made 26 August 1942 by SS men Melmer and Schulze. Although Melmer appeared in plain clothes in accordance with the agreement between Funk and Thoms, several uniformed SS men

guarded the liveries. As a result, most of the Hauptkassse personnel handling the loot soon knew that the SS was involved. Melmer and Schulze made the deliveries until delivery No. 53 in August 1944 when Furch replaced Melmer. An old man named Schulz replaced Furch the last few deliveries.

8. Receipt and Bookkeeping. The deliveries were received by the Reichsbank Precious Metals Department for the account of "Melmer"; all records and reports used the name "Melmer" or the abbreviation "M" as the sale designation of the transactions. In the early deliveries, Melmer furnished a short statement as to the contents of the delivery, the original of which was receipted by the Reichsbank. The goods were then itemized in detail and a final receipt delivered to Melmer. Subsequently the Reichsbank also prepared the abbreviated preliminary receipt. All these documents are held by U. S. authorities.

9. Handling and Disposition of Loot. Upon delivery of the loot, the procedure was to sort and distribute the goods to the appropriate department for handling and disposition. The Reichsbank Precious Metals Department distributed the loot as follows:-

<u>Type of Loot</u>	<u>Handled By</u>
Coins and Notes in Circulation	Sorten Dept. - Reichsbank
Securities	Wertpapiere Dept. "
Damaged gold and finest rings	Prussian Mint
Other jewelry	Berlin Municipal Pawnshop
Bank Passbooks	Uncertain - possibly Wertpapiere Dept.

The proceeds of sale were then reported back to the Precious Metals Department which sent reports on sales (Teilabrechnungen) to the Reichsfuehrer SS by hand of Melmer or Furch. The records include nine completed reports on sale of loot and a tenth in preparation. The first report is dated 19 September 1942 and covers sale of items from the first three deliveries (26 August and 4 and 7 September 1942). This first statement included a question by Thoms concerning the name of the account to which the proceeds should be credited. Thoms was orally advised by Melmer that the proceeds should be credited to the Reich Finance Ministry in the account "Max Heiliger". Thoms confirmed this in a telephone conversation with Rechnungsdirektor Patzer of the Ministry of Finance.

10. Nature of the Loot. One of the first hints the Hauptkassse had of the sources of the items occurred early in 1943 when it was noticed that a packet of bills was stamped with a rubber stamp "Lublin". Another hint came when some items bore the stamp "Auschwitz", scene of a crematorium. "We all knew those places were the sites of concentration camps".

Dental gold was first delivered in November 1942. The quantity of the dental gold became unusually large with successive deliveries.

11. Funk and Puhl were aware of the general nature of the loot from the beginning. Puhl also knew that the Economics Department of the SS supervised the concentration camps, he knew that the personal property of the victims "was very often confiscated and sold for low prices or was given without any payment to people to whom they (the SS) were obliged", he read the foreign newspapers and knew, for example, what was done with the dental gold of the victims of the concentration camps. He knew the ugly reputation of the SS.

12. Sources of Information. The tabs that follow contain the testimony of Puhl and Thoms, and correspondence selected to indicate the role played by the Reichsbank.

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Tab C

Interrogation of Emil Puhl, Vice-President  
of Reichsbank

INTERROGATION OF EMIL PUHL

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Interrogating: Maj.S.L.Klepper  
Present: Sgt. Wayne Ball

20 September 1945  
Morning

Q. First, do you know what arrangements were made between the Wehrmacht and the government ministries in Berlin concerning the disposition of military property which the Wehrmacht confiscated in the west?

A. Arrangements were made between the military authorities in the Wehrmacht and the Reichsbank was not involved in these arrangements. We heard about these things only if property was seized in the form of foreign exchange gold bank notes that had to be delivered to the Reichsbank.

Q. What was the procedure whereby the Reichsbank received this foreign exchange?

A. In most cases these things were delivered to the Reichsbank by military authorities directly and we were told to pay the counter-value in RM to the Minister of Finance.

Q. Did the Wehrmacht ever deliver some of these items to Devisen Banks which in turn transmitted them to the Reichsbank?

A. Yes, they did.

Q. On the western front, in what cities were some of these Devisen Banks that received the goods?

A. Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam.

Q. How about the time before the occupation of France, before Germany had completely occupied France?

A. Cologne, Aachen.

Q. Who, in your bank, specifically handled those transactions?

A. All of these transactions concerned the foreign exchange dept., Dezernat, the head of which was Wilhelm, and he was assisted by his referents - Jose, Calavias and Reinel (started in 1944). He had some assistants - Jahnke and Kavel.

Q. Anybody from the Wertpapiereabteilung?

A. If foreign bonds came in they were bought by the Gold Discount Bank.

Q. Did the securities wash through the Reichsbank to the Gold Discount Bank?

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A. Yes, they went directly to the Reichsbank. According to the German bank law the Reichsbank was not allowed to buy foreign bonds. If, among these papers, there were real German papers, then indeed the Reichsbank could buy them.

Q. I am not referring to instances where the Reichsbank bought foreign exchange. Did the Reichsbank ever handle any of the Wertpapiere matters? Did it go through the Reichsbank?

Q. They went through the Reichsbank, for there was an interest that some other authority got the counter-value in RM.

Q. Where did they go?

A. To the Minister of Finance, office of the Reichshauptkasse.

Q. Who in the Reichsbank transmitted these items to the Reichshauptkasse?

A. It was done by the Giro Kontor. It went through the books of this department.

Q. And the Wertpapiere never handled these items?

A. The Wertpapier was only the transmitter of these securities to those depts. of the bank or its affiliations who handled the business. If securities came in they went to the Wertpapier. If these securities were to be sold for account of the Wertpapier they went to the Gold Discount Bank and the Gold Discount Bank made the sale and the counter-value in RM went to the Giro Kontor to the RHK.

Q. Would the procedure be the same if this sale was to be to the credit of somebody other than the Wertpapier?

Q. Then you make a positive statement that all foreign bonds or stock were not sold by the Reichsbank but by the Gold Discount Bank?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know for a fact that the Wertpapier did receive these securities from the Wehrmacht sometimes?

A. Yes, of course, it happened.

Interrogati : Maj. S.L.Klepper  
Present: Sgt. Wayne Ball  
Pvt. Wm. Dunkel

2 September 1945  
1:45 to 3:30 p.m.

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Q. Did the Wehrmacht ever send other items to the Reichsbank besides securities and foreign exchange?

A. No. I never heard of its sending other things. It was another thing with the SS.

Q. Did you ever hear of the Wehrmacht transmitting jewelry to the Reichsbank?

A. No, not by the Wehrmacht.

Q. Will you tell me what arrangements were made for handling the goods which were confiscated as a result of the various decrees aimed for taking over the Jewish property in Germany?

A. There were, I think, 2 actions as to the Jewish property. One a special taxation for property, and later on there was a more general confiscation of Jewish property.

Q. In what year was the special taxation introduced?

A. 1937 or 1938.

Q. Was it before or after the general confiscation?

A. Before.

Q. What year was the general confiscation?

A. 1938. I would say in the Spring, about April 26.

Q. Are you referring to the first decree of the Ministry of Economics which required that the personal property of the Jews be declared, without any further requirement for the sale or confiscation?

A. Yes.

Q. And what was the next step after that decree?

A. There was a declaration and then a confiscation of Jewish property done by the Finanzampter.

Q. What were the mechanics by which the Jews turned in their property?

A. He had to go to this office and they told him what he was to do. He was told to give his securities to the Finanzamt and as to his real estate it was handled by special advertisement.

Q. How about his other personal property such as silverware, etc?

A. It was the same. He was told what to do.

Q. Where did he turn those in?

A. There was a special office designated which took care of these things.

Q. Are you making this up or is that actually what happened?

A. I had a Jewish friend and he did this.

Q. Do you remember reading the decrees?

A. No, I just remember by the facts.

Q. And your friend didn't have to go to a pawn shop?

A. I don't remember.

Q. Are you sure he had to go to a Finanzamt to exchange his jewels? Where did he go to turn in his jewels?

A. He was told by the Finanzamt I am not so sure because it was outside the Reichsbank.

Q. The decrees that we have provide that the property be turned in to the pawn shops.

A. The selling of the securities took place later on thru the Reichsbank and the Seehandlung. They both had to sell the securities and shares for the account of the Reichs Finance Ministry.

Q. Did you ever handle any of the jewelry?

A. Yes, we had jewelry coming in from the SS which we had to take into deposit. I don't know if it was Jewish owned. It might have been.

Q. What about this SS jewelry?

A. This SS jewelry came in by order of Funk. He told us one day that he had arranged with the leading men of the SS and as far as I remember in knowledge of the Minister of Finance that this jewelry had to be deposited in the Reichsbank.

Q. Was there a written order on this subject?

A. No, he told it verbally.

Q. To wh did he tell this?

A. To me and to Wilhelm, and I think to Krezschmann.

Q. When was this?

A. Summer of 1943.

Q. You wouldn't want to be in jail for every year that you are wrong. Think again. I want the exact date.

A. I think 1943.

Q. Where was this conversation?

A. In Funk's room.

Q. Who was present?

A. Wilhelm and possibly Krezschmann.

Q. How was the meeting arranged?

A. He called us in.

Q. Whom did he ask?

A. I, Wilhelm and Krezschmann.

Q. Did he ask them all?

A. His custom was to send somebody around to ask us in. His office was at the Ministry of Economics then. This conversation was in the bank.

Q. Tell me the conversation that occurred at that meeting.

A. Perhaps Himmler, himself, at any rate the responsible man of the SS, like Pohl, had asked him to take the jewelry in as deposit. He said that because they had no vaults available to put it into the Reichsbank. Wilhelm and I made objections because this sort of business was quite outside the general line of our bank, but as everybody had the right to put in deposits (verschlossene deposit) so we had no legal right to refuse it. Funk added that it would be only for a short time and that this jewelry would be sold for account of the Reich. We asked if the Reichsbank should have anything to do with the selling, and he said "no". It would be arranged by other organizations.

Q. Was that all that was said at that meeting?

A. Yes, With the jewelry would come in a certain amount of foreign bank notes.

Q. Did he see anything other than jewelry and foreign bank notes would come in?

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A. No.

Q. Was anything else said?

A. No, there was nothing else said.

Q. Did he tell you whom you had to see in the SS concerning this matter?

A. Yes, Pohl.

Q. Did you ask Funk what the source of this property would be?

A. Yes, I asked and he said that we had not to ask about it but it was confiscated property.

Q. Did he say from whom they would be confiscated?

A. Yes, from the occupied countries.

Q. What else was said?

A. The main point was this: We had nothing to do with this except to take it into our vaults and wait for further instructions.

Q. And you were to get those further instructions from Pohl. Then what did you do?

A. We gave the instructions to our vaults to be prepared to take in these things when they came.

Q. To whom did you speak in the vaults about this?

A. My custom was to speak to the director of the cash department. I told it to the referent for the cash and vault business.

Q. Was that Mr. Fromknecht?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you speak to Mr. Fromknecht?

A. Shortly after the conversation, maybe the next day.

Q. Who was present in the room?

A. Perhaps Wilhelm.

Q. Was this in your office?

A. Yes.

Q. What did Fromknecht say?

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A. Fromknecht made the same objections to me that I had made to Funk.

Q. What was the next thing that you had to do on this matter?

A. Pohl rang me up and asked me if I had heard about this business. I said I couldn't speak over the phone about this matter and that he should come in. He did. I think he was accompanied by his assistant and he told me that a certain part of the jewelry was already in Berlin and that he would be glad if it could be brought as soon as possible into the bank. Then I said we would do what we could and as far as I know the Reichsbank assisted in bringing the jewelry forward.

Q. Did you speak to anybody else in the bank besides Fromknecht about this?

A. To the members of the Direktorium at the next meeting.

Q. Who was present at this meeting?

A. I. Funk was absent. In principal, all the members. I don't remember if anyone was absent.

Q. Did any of the members have any objections?

A. After I had explained the situation, no.

Q. Did you speak to anybody else in the bank about this?

A. Nobody except perhaps the vault people.

Q. Who of the vault people?

A. I think it was Peplau.

Q. Did you ever hear of Brigadefuehrer Frank?

A. I don't remember the name but Pohl had some assistants and maybe one of them was Frank.

Q. Did you ever hear of Gruppenfuehrer Wolff?

A. Maybe he was another assistant of Pohl. The name of Frank I have heard of, but of Wolff I am not so sure.

Q. In whose name were these deliveries to be received?

A. The name of the Reichsbank, as Funk told me, and it was expressively said that this jewelry represented property of the Reich and that the countervalue when sold had to be paid to the Reichshauptkasse.

Q. When was the first shipment made?

A. Immediately after the conversation took place.

Q. Did you see the shipment?

A. No, of course not.

Q. About how many shipments were there?

A. That I don't know.

Q. Weren't you ever curious as to the status of these shipments?

A. No, I was not because this whole business was against my feeling.

Q. But you never asked or tried to learn whether there was one shipment or a thousand?

A. No. It went into the vaults and I did not go down to the vaults except for special business. From time to time I went through the bank as it was my custom, and through the vaults, too, and then I asked, if I saw something that came to my attention, and on such an occasion they told me that they had taken this jewelry.

Q. Tell me exactly what the bank did with a shipment when it came in?

A. A truck came into the court. Then it was unloaded by officials of the Reichsbank. It was brought down into the vaults. There the boxes were labeled if they did not already have a label. They were put into special sections of the vault and they made entries into the book about the name of the depositor.

Q. What was the name of the depositor?

A. I am not sure, but I think it was the SS Organization. I think they called it the Economic Department of the SS.

Q. Wasn't this the most unusual transaction the Reichsbank handled in your career?

A. I have to say yes.

Q. And you don't remember the name of the depositor?

A. The SS.

Q. That is not likely. It would give the whole thing away if you put down SS. The point was to keep it secret.

A. There were many secret things in our vaults and the people were obliged to keep everything secret.

Q. What was the name of the depositor?

A. I don't remember.

Q. What was his name?

A. I don't know.

Q. Who would have given instructions for the name?

A. After I had given these instructions much against my will the matter was finished for me.

Q. Was it? You spoke to other people about this and we have spoken about it. Everybody in the bank knew about it. What was the name of the depositor?

A. If there was another name taken it was made out by our people, maybe Fromknecht. It was used in negotiations between Fromknecht with the assistance of Pohl. We took in, in those times, many deposits which were unusual in the normal course, for instance, the art works of the museums and similar things. We had to do it before and we had to do it now, and these things were arranged in detail by officials who were in charge and who were responsible for the transactions in the vaults.

Q. Let's get back to the vault. The stuff is unpacked and it is placed in somebody's name. Then what happened?

A. It was safe there and later on I saw it myself.

Q. How did you dispose of these items?

A. We waited for instructions what to do with them.

Q. What instructions were given to you?

A. They tried to sell it and it came to my knowledge that several firms and dealers had been asked if they could sell the jewelry.

Q. Who asked?

A. The SS. I am not so sure that the Four Year Plan was not likewise interested in the selling of the jewelry because I occasionally heard that they made conjectures out to use this jewelry.

Q. What instructions did you get on what to do with this jewelry?

A. That I don't know exactly. The SS remained the owner and they could dispose of the jewelry.

Q. A few minutes ago you said the proceeds went to the credit of the Reich. How did you get the proceeds?

A. If something was sold, take the bank notes, it went to the Reich.

Q. How did you dispose of the jewelry in order to get proceeds to put to the credit of the Reichsbank?

A. We ourselves did not handle jewelry. I remember the SS made business through the Berlin Pawn Shop.

Q. Was that done this time?

A. That I don't know. It went down into the routine business and did not come to my attention. It went to Fromknecht and he must have known it.

Q. It wasn't receiving the jewelry that was unusual, was it? It was the disposition of the jewelry that was unusual.

A. I think the SS disposed of the jewelry. I never saw such a disposal. I was not concerned with this question.

Q. You mean you shut your eyes to what was going on?

A. If there was an exceptional case it came to me. If the SS disposed of their jewelry it would not come to me and nobody asked me for a decision.

Q. Did you discuss this with anybody in the Ministry of Finance?

A, No.

Q. Did Funk?

A. In the beginning I remember that Funk and Minister von Krosigk had a knowledge of these things.

Q. What did Funk tell you that Krosigk knew? Did he ever discuss this with anybody in your bank who had some associations with the Ministry of Finance?

A. Bayerhoffer. He was a member of the Direktorium. I mentioned it to him at a meeting of the Direktorium and he was at the same time informed because he was the head of the cash Dezernat.

Q. Did Bayerhoffer tell you that he had heard about this from the people in the Ministry of Finance?

A. No, I think he got the information first from us.

Q. Tell me about these other unusual transactions, such as the art collections.

A. In normal times our vaults were rather empty but during the war the Reichsbank was asked from many sides to take in as

deposits a lot of things which we otherwise never would have taken. First of all, the documents, works of art, paintings, carpets and many other things. It went so far that we had to stop the acceptance of further deposits.

Q. In these cases did you merely act as custodian for safekeeping or did you attempt to dispose of some of them?

A. We acted only as custodian. That was the rule.

Q. What connection did the Reichshauptkasse have with this SS deal?

A. The Reichshauptkasse had no immediate connection with the SS, as the Reichshauptkasse acted as cash department for the Ministry of Finance.

Q. What was the nature of the things that you later learned were connected with these valuables?

A. Pearls and diamonds and maybe some gold.

Q. How about securities?

A. Securities were not involved in it.

Q. How do you know they were not involved?

A. Because nobody told me about it.

Q. You mean if there were securities they would have told you?

A. Yes.

Some discussion off the record - - - -

Q. Did you ever speak to anybody in the Precious Metals Department about this?

A. When I went through the vaults. My custom was to go through the vaults and I was accompanied by the people of the vaults. If I had asked the question, the people might have told me that these things were sold. Now I don't remember that a special case of special question was put to my attention.

Q. Did you ever have a conversation with anybody in the Precious Metals Department before any of these items were delivered?

A. I don't know. My custom was to speak to the manager there, and if there was another man present I don't know. I had to talk to the responsible people and not those who happened to be present.

Q. Did you tell somebody in the Precious Metals Department to get his further information from Frank in the Ministry of Economics in the SS?

A. It is possible that I told it to Peplau. I don't remember that Pohl came into the bank a second time, but of course there were negotiations and they were done by Frank or Wolff.

Q. When this stuff got into the vault, tell me what happened next.

A. It was sold by the Berlin Pawn Shop and it was done by the people in charge of these things. I don't think it was done immediately. It was the custom of our bank when such a matter was started that further development was to be made by people or officials in charge of them. Only if there were decisions to be made by the Vice-President did it come to my knowledge.

Q. Did you have any such decisions to make in the matter of the SS?

A. No, nobody came to me.

Q. What did you do with the securities that came in? How were they disposed of?

A. I don't remember if securities came in. Funk never told me. Securities came in in quite another way. In connection with the jewelry, securities were not mentioned nor did Pohl mention securities. If securities came in, and they came in apart from this transaction, then they were sold for the account of the Reich.

Q. You were dealing with the Gestapo and not with legitimate business people. Did you think you were going to get in only jewelry and RM? Why did you think you were getting only that? I want to know what you expected out of the Gestapo.

A. To make it absolutely clear in this transaction, neither Pohl nor Funk spoke to me.

Q. With the Gestapo in this business you were going to get everything coming in and you must have anticipated securities?

A. I don't deny it. Because the securities would go quite another way and would have been put into our vaults, but we would have received them. We expected securities.

Q. Did you expect anything other than securities?

A. No, we did not.

Q. Did you expect savings bank books?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because these books could not be used and we had to take only things we could use. In our opinion all these things went for the account of the Reich and not the SS. That was the main argument Funk made to me. If it would have been for the account of the SS, Funk and I would have refused it.

Q. How did the Reichsbank handle non bearer securities, securities made payable to a named person?

A. We would have tried to sell it or find a man who was interested in it.

Q. Who would endorse it?

A. Not we. If it was possible to sell them we would do it. We would not forge the endorsements. I am sure of that.

Q. Did you get a commission for handling this stuff for the SS or did the Reichsbank get a commission?

A. Yes. We had a schedule. Everybody had to pay if they made deposits in our bank.

Q. How did that rate run?

A. I didn't do it myself. I am sure they did it as to normal rules. As for the bank, it was a deposit and the rate was established by the amount of space it occupied.

Q. When you assumed the responsibility on other custodian accounts, did you bill them by size or value? If you charged the SS on the same scale that you charged for administering those bonds, you were administering the property.

A. If securities were deposited in this department or this building, we charged the commission on that basis. There were two systems.

## INTERROGATION OF EMIL PUHL

Interrogating: Maj. S.L. Klepper 21 September 1945  
Present: Pfc. William Dunkle 1:30 to 2:15 p.m.  
Capt. Henry Collins, Jr.  
Sgt. Wayne Ball  
Mr. Curtis

Q. We are going to go back to the question, Mr. Puhl, asked you yesterday concerning the way the SS Loot deposits were handled and disposed of. You didn't seem to remember, so I brought some Reichsbank files to refresh your recollection. Here is a letter from the Reichsbank to the Berlin Pawn Shop, dated 15 September 1942. I would like you to look at that and tell me if it refreshes your recollection as to the transaction.

A. That is sufficient for me. You see, it comes to the same point. This is signed by the , and when I said yesterday already, these deposits of the SS Loot were brought into the Reichsbank and the propriety is with the SS. They did not go into the proprietor of the Reichsbank and were only deposited in our vault in the form of what we called verschlossen deposits. When these deposits were made, it was declared that it belonged to the Reich and so our people in the vaults doubtless thought themselves entitled to help to realize these jewelry. It was not a question of principle coming up to the Reichsbankdirektorium but it was done under the competence and responsibility of the Cash Department.

Q. In other words, it was the SS who handled any transaction which converted this jewelry into cash. You are wrong.

A. You see. When the SS brought this jewelry in it was expressly said that they did not go into the ownership of the Reichsbank, and the only thing we could do was only to give them a safe place because they had said that in their cellars they could stay no longer.

Q. But the Reichsbank was to participate in the sale of this jewelry. Is that correct? You said yesterday that the SS did take it out of the vaults and take it to the jewelry shop.

A. So it was arranged, and to buy it.

Q. However, that is not what happened.

A. No. I thought it over. I am not so sure it did not happen any how. But our people in the vaults knowing that this jewelry belonged to the Reich helped them evidently. I suppose it was a matter giving them help in selling these things.

Q. You are not implying are you that the Hauptkasse violated the orders of the Reichsbank?

A. No, not violating, because things belonging to the Reich it was the custom of all our officials to help wherever they could.

Q. But wasn't this the first time the Reichsbank dealt directly with the Berlin Pawn Shop on jewelry which had been deposited?

A. Yes. Only perhaps from collateral securities for loans that were defaulted.

Q. In view of the fact that this was the first time, isn't it very likely that the Hauptkasse had specific instructions?

A. Maybe. If they had instructions they were not given by the Direktorium. It was not discussed in their meetings, and absolutely possible that the head of the Hauptkasse had sanctioned this transaction by the Referat in the Direktorium for cash business, namely Fromkneach.

Q. When I showed you this letter your recollection was refreshed. Are you going to insist that I show you information which proves that the Direktorium authorized this method of treatment, or are you going to remember it yourself?

A. I don't remember because I am sure it was not discussed. In the Direktorium it was not discussed I am sure because I was running the meetings.

Q. Is it possible that a member of the Direktorium gave these instructions?

A. Yes. When cases came up of a higher importance than just departmental competence, then drafts were made for letters in the name of the Direktorium and these were signed by the Referant and the respective member.

Q. Are you sure you didn't give any instructions?

A. Yes. I was not in charge of these things. I may explain this a bit more perhaps?

Q. Did you have other occasions whereby the Reichsbank participated in the sale of this jewelry in the same manner as in the case of the SS Loot?

A. No. You see it was what I had to do. It was to give the general lines for banking activity and policy, and in the frame of these lines they were rather high authority, either in the Abteilung or with the Referants and the respective members.

Q. I have a bunch of records here, Mr. Puhl. I don't want to have to go over these with you. Are you willing to admit very specifically that the Reichsbank in the case of the SS Loot acted as the agent for the SS in arranging for the sale of this jewelry by the Berlin Pawn Shop?

A. I think it was more what we called in German, "to put the good services at the disposal of the SS".

Q. I am using the word "agent". There are loads of letters here showing that the Berlin Pawn Shop was not selling the items at the price the Reichsbank seemed to think they should bring.

A. I would have to ask the official who was responsible for these letters or instructions.

Q. I would like you to take a look at the front page of the first statement prepared by the Reichsbank for the first delivery on this loot and tell me if you remember the name of the man under which it came.

A. That doesn't say anything to me. Even Melmer I don't know.

Q. He is one of the most famous men in Germany.

A. I don't know him.

Q. Do you really expect us to believe that?

A. I don't know it. I would not say here that it comes from the Reichsbank.

Q. You admit that it is an original Reichsbank record?

A. I would not have recognized it. That is absolutely done in the Cash Department.

Q. Let me see if this refreshes your recollection. Here is a report submitted to the Direktorium by the Hauptkasse dated 31 March 1944. Read it and tell me if you remember reading it.

A. That is not from the Direktorium. That comes from the Hauptkasse. I don't remember the name Memler and don't remember it.

Q. You don't remember the reference to your name in the first paragraph?

A. That is possible. In our big machinery. It is signed by the Hauptkasse. Proves that it did not go through the channels of the Reichsbankdirektorium.

Q. This letter went to the Direktorium.

A. No. I had no discussion with him. That must be the original discussion had with Pohl. Here it looks as though I had arranged the work with Melmer in my discussions.

Q. It looks that way.

A. This name, Dr. Maede. This was a report of the Hauptkasse. Not just a letter. If they put my name in to give it --- This wording here (quote first paragraph of document dated 31 March 1944). It is a mixing up of different things. That it couldn't be done. In the first paragraph of the draft of the 31st of March. The beginning words: "German and foreign currencies, gold and silver coins, precious metals, securities", - It is right that these things had to be brought to the Reichsbank and sold by it. That is what I said yesterday. This corresponds to what I said to Pohle when he first spoke to me about this affair. Then I declared that things like above mentioned had to be sold to the Reichsbank according to the German laws.

Q. Mr. Puhl, you are not telling us anything new. You just deny knowing of the contents of this report which was sent to the Direktorium. Is that right?

A. Yes. This was sent up to the Cash people.

Q. It was sent up from the Cash people.

A. To the Direktorium?

Q. Look at the third from the last paragraph. What do you think about the statement in there about the Reichsbank directly participating in the sale of jewels?

A. That was not the meaning of what was arranged with Pohl. They say these people say that as far as they are informed, lying in the vaults of the Reichsbank. Most probably there are things which cannot be explained.

Q. Did you ever speak to Mr. Thoms about this?

A. If I spoke. I seldom spoke. I never discussed things like this. That was quite beyond my job.

Q. How many times have you spoken with Thoms on business in your entire career?

A. Thoms? Mostly I saw him when I went to the vaults. It was my position to go around through the bank from time to time.

Q. And how many times was Thoms in your office on business in your entire career at the Reichsbank?

A. It would be difficult to say. But not so very often.

Q. If he ever came you would remember it because it would be very unusual?

A. You see, I was seen a lot to all these officials. It was in my office -- it was come and go all the day. They looked in and came out and very often it was three or four at a time.

Q. If you ever called Thoms on business you would remember?

A. I had nothing to do with these things. They came accompanied by their respective member.

Q. If you spoke to Thoms on business you would remember?

A. When I spoke to Thoms? Thoms was maybe in my office when we started this business.

Q. Tell me about that.

A. When I had spoken to Pohle I had to give instructions to the people of the vault, through the Referant of the vaults, and probably people of the vaults came up and I told them what was going on.

Q. And Thoms was one of those people?

A. I don't know. For I asked more for the head of the Cash Department. Thoms was only assistant. Not the head. Peplau was his name.

Q. Suppose I refresh your recollection and tell you that you did not give these instructions to Peplau but to Thoms and I would like to know the conversation you had with Thoms.

A. I only told the essential points of what Pohle had told me. The Reichsbank must be prepared to take in the jewelry into custody.

Q. You do remember now, however, that it was Thoms to whom you spoke?

A. I don't. Very numerous talks I had from morning to night.

Q. Would you remember it if I brought up a Dictaphone recording? I want you to remember something before I have to confront you with it.

A. I could not indicate that Thoms was in the conversation. I can't deny it, of course, but if you would ask me if you could take an oath, I would have to say no.

Q. Can you take an oath that it was Peplau to whom you spoke?

A. No. He may be absent, Peplau, or he may have sent another asking. That was my principle for the heads of the office.

Q. I would like you to look through the files in that binder and tell me what else you remember. Glance through it.

A. Here was the name Melmer. Bank notes and coins.

Q. That is enough. Tell me more about this SS Loot case.

A. How it went on? You see, as far as they sold it or brought it to the Pawn Shop. This was an official institution and insofar our people could themselves be entitled to do this business. I suppose that they had to make arrangements too for advertising and keep the Reichstelle for Edalmetal, who was in charge of jewelry informed about what was going on.

Q. Do you remember any other attempt to utilize the Reichsbank in the way it was used in the Melmer deliveries?

A. No. As far as I remember, I had the initial conversation with Pohle, then the business went to the cash vaults and I never more was occupied with this question. It went on and was handled in the frame of the Kassen Department.

Q. I will show you a letter from the Four-Year-Plan, dated 19 March 1944, to the Reichsbank, and ask if that refreshes your recollection as to an attempt to utilize the Reichsbank for the same purpose.

A. Here this letter of the Four-Year-Plan means that the Four-Year-Plan will be asked about this thing too.

Q. The letter from the Four-Year-Plan says that the items seized in the East will be delivered to the Reichsbank.

A. That wasn't so far important, as theoretically at least, the Four-Year-Plan always kept up the opinion that it was to be heard. And what perhaps is important in this letter is to mention the jewelry coming from the Western Districts. That is quite another affair. Here the Four-Year-Plan had its hands in the matter from the very beginning, and the Four-Year-Plan was much more active to use jewelry coming from Holland made for export business of foreign industrial purposes.

Q. I am not interested in a lecture on the Four-Year-Plan's interest. I want to know about the Reichsbank. What did you do about that letter when you got it? What did you decide?

A. I never got this letter. It was the Cash Department. If it came in it had to go to the Referant of the Cash Department and they had to decide what to do. That was the situation.

Q. This letter doesn't say it went to the Cash Department.

A. It was addressed to the Reichsbank and all the letters went to the office we called the administration office. The head of this office put on the basis of what we called "distribution of work" and put on the sign of the referents concerned on the letter.

INTERROGATION OF EMIL PUHL

Interrogating: Maj. S.L. Klepper  
Present: Sgt. Wayne Ball  
Mr. D. Curtis  
Pfc. Wm. Dunkel

21 September 1945  
2:15 to 3:15 p.m.

Q. Tell me about the fees or commissions that the Reichsbank received in handling the Melmer deliveries.

A. I don't know, for I know no specific order to change the handling of these deposits in another way than anything else.

Q. Tell me the regular system for charging fees and commissions.

A. We had the green book. In this book you find all commissions and fees that the Reichsbank charged. I have to refer to the banking law where it was said that the Reichsbank had had to do the business of the Reich Govt. I am not so sure if it just said without charging fees. It was the meaning.

Q. You mean that no fees were charged for handling this loot?

A. If it was considered as a Reich-owned deposit then they could be free of fees.

Q. Let me read you the question and answer of yesterday: "Did you get a commission for handling the stuff for the SS or did the Reichsbank get a commission?"

"Answer: Yes, we had a schedule. Everybody had to pay if they made deposits in our bank."

A. If they took this as a deposit of the SS, then they would have been entitled to charge.

Q. I showed you how the records read - it doesn't say the Reich. It says, Melmer. How do you today say it was a Reich deposit and was therefore free, and yesterday you said it was a Reich deposit but you said there was a commission?

A. The Reich deposits were free on the schedule. The payment for the work we did for the Reich was seen in the interest we earned by taking in the governmental papers and at the end of the year we calculated what percentage the Reich had paid to the Reichsbank and this amount was published in the general assembly of the shareholders. It was an amount about 1.75%.

Q. In other words, on the sale of securities you got 1.75%.

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A. Yes, if you take it as a whole. We calculated what the Reich paid to us in the form of commission. The Reichsbank earned a certain amount of interest by discounting papers of the Reich. On the other side the Reichsbank paid back a certain percentage of interest for governmental paper and granted interest of a certain number of accounts which the government held in the Reichsbank. The difference of this amount was put into a relation to the turnover of the Reich in our books and the percentage which resulted from this calculation was the commission the Reich paid to the Reichsbank.

Q. The Reichsbank charged no fees for the storage or handling or disposition or sale of all the jewelry, securities, and other personal property that made up the Melmer deliveries. Is that right?

A. Yes, as far as I know.

Q. Would you tell me what the reputation of the Gestapo was in the summer of 1942?

A. It was bad.

Q. What were some of the things that they were reputed to be doing?

A. The unjustified way in which they acted in different occupied countries. To some extent, you could read between the lines in the German newspapers. Confiscation of goods of all sorts.

Q. By confiscation you mean the outright seizure of property?

A. Yes. The impossibility of people whose property had been confiscated to make objections. That was the worst part. The unjustified way in which they distributed confiscated goods with whom they had relations.

Q. What about concentration camp victims?

A. The eternal threat to everybody to put people into the concentration camps if they did not agree to their wishes.

Q. What was their reputation for dealing with those people in the concentration camps?

A. Their reputation was bad. They used people in the concentration camps for forced labor in an enormous measure and at the slightest objection they took the most cruel reprisals.

Q. Do you know what they did with the personal property of these people?

A. The personal property of these people was very often confiscated and sold for low prices or was given without any payment to people to whom they were obliged.

Q. Were a lot of Germans aware of how horrible some of the conditions were in these camps by 1942?

A. I don't think so. They kept it very secret.

Q. Nevertheless the reputation was such that the threat of being sent to a concentration camp was pretty severe and everybody became a Nazi?

A. Yes. There were some difficulties about the foreign exchange question. I asked in the name of the president and official of the Gestapo, to come in and discuss the matter. When he came I was not in my room. With very violent protestation he left the bank and pretended that my behavior was an offense to their authority, and that I would have to fear the consequences at the next occasion. As a private example, I had a boy 11 years old. He played in the public park with other children, among these children was a girl of the same age or perhaps younger. This girl told her sister that my boy had said that his father had told him that the Maginot Line could not be taken. The grownup sister told it to somebody else and so it went to three or four other persons until it came to a member of the Gestapo. The effect was that I got an official reprimand and they threatened to take my boy and put him into a Hitler school because I was unable to educate children in the real patriotic sense.

Q. Did you ever speak to Pohle about the concentration camps?

A. He was in charge of the Department of Economics and they were in charge of the concentration camps. I suppose he told me about this organization for when I asked him how his organization was working he said that they used, to a far extent, the cheap manpower in these camps to run brick factories, china plants and similar things.

Q. Did he ever tell you how they were used in experimentation by doctors?

A. No. My impression about Pohle was that he was one of the very rare people who made a serious impression.

Q. You mean that he seemed disgusted with what was going on in the concentration camps?

A. He didn't say anything, but this feeling was confirmed when I looked into his office, which was on my way to the Reichsbank.

Q. Did Pohle ever tell you about the securing of phosphate from the concentration camps or crematories?

A. No. I heard of them later in 1944.

Q. Do you know what was done with the dental gold of the victims of the camps?

A. From him I never heard about it. I saw it in the foreign newspapers. We had The Times.

Q. Did you look very carefully when you made your periodic inspections to the vaults? Did you notice a considerable amount of dental gold there?

A. No.

Q. Did it surprise you to know that all of this gold came to the Reichsbank?

A. I think it might have been in gold bars because it was very soon melted.

Q. When did you first learn that dental gold was coming in with these shipments?

A. I don't remember that they ever told me.

Q. Did Pohle ever tell you how his concentration camps were doing financially?

A. Yes, he did. He said that he had to put a lot of investments in them in spite of the cheap workers.

Q. A lot of barbed wire?

A. Yes. He said he had difficulties to get this money and he asked for advice how to finance this business. I told him that the Reichsbank could not help and I think it was later on that some special arrangements were made for this organization with the Gold Discount Bank about financial help for buying and selling raw materials.

Q. Were you a director of the Gold Discount Bank at that time?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. What do you mean - they bought and sold raw materials?

A. They bought brick clay and the ground where this clay was found and they sold the ready-made bricks. The Gold Discount Bank financed these economic enterprises of the Gestapo.

Q. How much of a loan did the Gold Discount Bank make to the Gestapo?

A. Several millions, about 10.

Q. What year was this?

A. Distributed over several years. It started under Funk - after 1939 and the following years.

Q. Yesterday you said that this SS loot transaction started in 1943. You notice it was 1942? You stand corrected on that?

A. Yes, it is possible. I was so surprised that they came so late. The war started in 1939 and in 1942 they came. At this moment my first idea was: why do they come now?

Q. When did you discuss this question of Gold Discount Bank loans with the SS?

A. I never discussed it. Dr. Dauer discussed it. He spoke to me about it at the next meeting of the Gold Discount Bank Board.

Q. What did he say at that board meeting?

A. He said that Funk, who was the chairman of the board of the Gold Discount Bank, had given the order to the management to discuss the possibility of a credit with the economic section of the SS. This discussion had taken place in the meantime and the result was a credit of 1 or 2 millions, but it was expressively said that it was for economic purposes and that it was a turnover credit. That was very essential for our transactions.

Q. What interest was the Gold Discount Bank charging on this transaction?

A. I would say between 3 and 4%.

Q. Did the SS put up any collateral?

A. None at all. They took the guarantee of the SS formation.

Q. Did the SS pay this entire loan back?

A. No, not yet. Sometimes they would pay it back, but the credit is still outstanding.

Q. How much is outstanding now?

A. 10 to 12 million.

Q. With whom did Dr. Dauer say he had negotiated?

A. First, to Funk, as chairman of the board, and then to the directors. I think it was Dr. Salpeter.

Q. Had Dr. Dauer undertaken these negotiations prior to consulting with the board of directors?

A. Yes, he had made preliminary talkings to SS representatives.

Q. And did the board of directors approve of continuing these negotiations?

A. They agreed after discussing the advisability of giving credits to organizations which were more or less combined with the political party. And it was underlined that this credit could be granted only for real commercial purposes.

Q. Did any of the Nazi party organizations borrow money from the Gold Discount Bank?

A. No.

Q. What did they do with these Nazi party affiliates?

A. Some of the organizations had the Giro accounts in the Reichsbank and they did the normal business with the bank.

Q. How about any of the other formations besides the SS?

A. No credits. If they asked for an account we couldn't refuse, but it may be different in different branches.

Q. What about Party-owned enterprises?

A. Credits in the Reichsbank or any Reichsbank organization, such as the Gold Discount Bank, were not given. Some of the Party-owned enterprises bought, in some cases to high amounts, treasury bills and other securities through the Reichsbank. The most important were Franz Eher Verlag and the NSV.