



MUNES

26

STUDY GUIDE

ICC

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1. Letter from the Secretariat

Dear Delegates,

As Eskişehir's first and only official MUN, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to MUNES'26, a historic Model UN Conference. This conference is a special opportunity to promote cooperation, critical thinking, and diplomacy among young people in our city and beyond. In order to ensure that every aspect of this conference reflects excellence, dedication, and a commitment to providing a truly transformative experience, the Academy has brought together the most gifted students from all management teams of local MUNs. The Eskişehir Municipality and Governorship, along with the prestigious companies that have supported this event, are proud to support MUNES'26. Their contributions and trust demonstrate the importance of MUNES as a catalyst for civic engagement, youth leadership, and the advancement of global awareness in Eskişehir. We really care about setting the rules for talking working together and cooperating with other countries as the only Model United Nations that represents our city. We are the Model United Nations for our city and we want to make sure we do a good job of discussing things and working with other people from different countries. We think it is very important to have discussions, diplomacy and international collaboration as the Model United Nations, for our city. This conference is an opportunity for you to think like world leaders. You get to discuss problems that affect the whole world and come up with new ideas to solve them. As a delegate you are representing the country you were assigned to. You also need to show that you can work well with others respect each other and understand points of view which is what the United Nations is all about. I want each of you to take part fully in your committees. Listen to what other people have to say even if you do not agree with them.. When things get tough be brave and curious and try to find a way to make it work. The United Nations is, about people working together so let us make that happen at this conference.

I want to wish every delegate the best of luck during their sessions on behalf of the organizing team. I hope your discussions are enlightening, your partnerships fruitful, and your MUNES'26 experiences motivating. Let this conference be a journey of self-improvement, deep connections, and a long-term dedication to changing the world and your communities for the better.

Best regards,

Çağlar Baran Topaç - Secretary General

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2. Letter from the Chairboard

2.1 Letter from the Main Chair

Esteemed Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you all to MUNES'26! This conference is set to be an extraordinary journey for each of us, packed with engaging debates, personal growth, and unforgettable moments.

My name is Ecenaz Anbarlı, and I am absolutely thrilled to be serving as your Main Chair for the International Criminal Court (ICC). Being a part of this prestigious committee is a great honor. I know that stepping into the realm of international law and tackling the intense dynamics of the ICC might feel a bit intimidating at first. Please know that those butterflies in your stomach are completely normal! We have all experienced that same nervous energy before a big session. Rest assured, MUNES is far more than just a formal conference; it is a welcoming environment where we uplift one another, learn together, and build lifelong friendships.

In the ICC, our focus will be on the critical pillars of global justice, accountability, and the protection of human rights. As we dive into complex legal cases and ethical dilemmas, I have full faith that your collaborative efforts and sharp arguments will shine a light on the profound challenges of international law. Every single speech, objection, and decision matters—this is your stage to make a real impact.

Please remember that my role here is to guide and support you every step of the way. Whether you have a question about court procedures, need help refining an argument, or just want some words of encouragement, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for bringing your energy and dedication to this committee. I cannot wait to witness the brilliant legal minds you will bring to the courtroom and the incredible memories we will create together. Let's make this conference truly inspiring.

Warmest regards,

Ecenaz Anbarlı - Main Chair

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2.2. Letter from the Vice Chair

Esteemed delegates, firstly, I am more than pleased to be serving as your vice chair. This conference will be my first one as a board member, which makes it even more special for me. This committee especially aims for delegates to actively participate in the discussions during the committee sessions, which makes it even more exciting. Don't forget that debating is where the real fun begins! I honestly can't wait to meet you all! But in the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out! See you at MUNES'26!

With my best wishes,

Ajda Gül Ersöz - Vice Chair

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3. Introduction to Committee

3.1. Introduction to ICC

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the world's first permanent international court created to prosecute individuals responsible for the most serious crimes under international law. These crimes include genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of aggression. The court was established in 2002 through the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court with the aim of ensuring that those responsible for major international crimes do not escape justice.

Unlike national courts, the ICC focuses specifically on crimes that affect the international community as a whole. Its main goal is to hold individuals accountable when national legal systems are unwilling or unable to prosecute them. By doing so, the court aims to promote justice, protect human rights, and prevent future atrocities. The ICC operates based on cooperation with states and international organizations, and it represents an important step toward global accountability.

In order to understand the role and importance of the ICC, it is essential to examine earlier historical efforts to prosecute international crimes. One of the most significant examples is the Nuremberg Trials, which took place after World War II. These trials were conducted to prosecute leading officials of Nazi Germany for crimes committed during the war.

The Nuremberg Trials were groundbreaking because they introduced the idea that individuals -including political leaders and military commanders- could be held personally responsible for international crimes. Before these trials, international law mainly focused on the actions of states rather than individuals. However, the Nuremberg proceedings established that individuals who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity, or crimes against peace can be prosecuted under international law.

Another key principle established during the Nuremberg Trials was that following orders is not always a valid defense. This principle emphasizes that individuals have a responsibility to refuse illegal actions, even when they are ordered by superiors. These legal ideas later became fundamental principles in international criminal law and influenced the development of institutions such as the ICC.

For delegates participating in this committee, examining the Nuremberg Trials provides an opportunity to understand how international justice developed and how legal systems attempt to address mass atrocities. By analyzing these historical trials, delegates can explore the challenges of prosecuting large-scale crimes and discuss how international institutions today can improve accountability and justice worldwide.

3.2. Historical Background

Before the existence of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the events of the mid-20th century, the world operated under a very different set of rules. Historically, war was considered a "state matter." If a country's leader, general, or soldier committed terrible acts during a conflict, they were almost never held personally responsible on a global stage. Kings, dictators, and politicians hid behind the concept of "sovereign immunity," meaning a state and its rulers could not be judged by other nations for what they did within their own borders or during wartime.



Everything changed with the outbreak of World War II (1939-1945). The Nazi regime, led by Adolf Hitler, did not just fight a traditional war; they implemented systematic, state-sponsored terror. The scale of the atrocities -including the mass extermination of millions of Jews and other minorities in the Holocaust, aggressive invasions of independent nations, and extreme violence against civilians- shocked the conscience of the world.

As the war neared its end and the Allied Powers (mainly the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France) began to uncover the full horror of the concentration camps, they faced a massive dilemma: What should be done with the captured Nazi leaders? Some political leaders suggested simply executing them without a trial. However, the Allies realized that to build a lasting peace and prevent such tragedies from happening again, they needed to show the world that justice prevails over revenge. They decided that these leaders must face a fair, legal trial based on evidence.

This monumental decision led to the creation of the International Military Tribunal (IMT), famously known as the Nuremberg Trials. It marked a turning point in human history. For the very first time, the international community declared that "following orders" or "being a head of state" was not an excuse for committing atrocities. This era established the revolutionary idea that individuals, not just abstract countries, can be held criminally responsible for War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, directly laying the foundation for the modern International Criminal Court you are simulating in this committee

4. Crimes Committed by the Nazi Regime

4.1. The Holocaust



The Holocaust (also known as the Shoah) was the systematic, state-sponsored genocide of approximately six million European Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. It was not a sudden act of war, but a calculated, years-long process rooted in a pseudoscientific racist ideology that viewed the "Aryan" race as superior and Jews as a biological threat. The persecution began with legal alienation, most notably the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, which stripped Jews of their

German citizenship and isolated them from society. As World War II began, this segregation escalated into forcing millions of Jews into overcrowded, starving, and disease-ridden ghettos across occupied Eastern Europe. The violence turned into direct mass murder in 1941 when mobile killing squads, known as Einsatzgruppen, followed the German army into the Soviet Union, executing over 1.5 million Jewish men, women, and children into mass graves in what is known as the "Holocaust by Bullets."

Realizing that mass shootings were inefficient and psychologically taxing for soldiers, Nazi leadership formalized the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" at the Wannsee Conference in 1942. This marked the shift to industrialized mass murder. The regime mobilized its entire state infrastructure, using the railway system to transport millions of Jews in cattle cars to specialized extermination camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, and Belzec. Upon arrival, the vast majority of victims were immediately sent to gas chambers disguised as showers and murdered using poison gas, their bodies later burned in massive crematoria. While Jews were the primary target, the Nazis also applied this genocidal machinery to other groups deemed "undesirable," systematically murdering hundreds of thousands of Romani people, individuals with disabilities, and Soviet prisoners of war. For the Nuremberg Trials, the unprecedented, bureaucratic scale of this atrocity demonstrated that traditional war crimes laws were insufficient, ultimately forcing the international community to cement "Crimes Against Humanity" and the concept of "Genocide" into modern international law.

4.2. Concentration Camps

To enforce their policies of persecution and genocide, the Nazi regime established a massive network of over 40,000 camps and incarceration sites across Europe. These were not standard prisons for criminals, but instruments of systemic terror designed to imprison, exploit, and murder targeted populations. The camp system was divided into specific categories, primarily including labor camps, transit camps, and extermination camps. In concentration and forced labor camps like Dachau and Buchenwald, political opponents, Jews, and other minorities were subjected to brutal living conditions, deliberate starvation, and grueling physical exertion under the regime's policy of "annihilation through labor." Transit camps served merely as temporary holding centers before victims were deported eastward. The most lethal facilities within this network were the extermination camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, and Sobibor, which functioned exclusively as industrial death factories. Victims arriving at these camps in packed cattle trains were immediately subjected to a selection process; those deemed unfit for labor were sent directly to gas chambers and murdered using Zyklon B or carbon monoxide gas, their bodies subsequently burned in massive crematoria. The horrific realities and calculated administration of these camps formed a central pillar of the evidence for "Crimes Against Humanity" during the Nuremberg Trials.



(This is a sign outside the Breendonk temporary camp stating that those who cross without permission will be shot.)

4.3. War Crimes

Beyond the unprecedented horrors of the Holocaust and the concentration camp system, the German armed forces and the SS committed severe and systematic violations of the traditional laws and customs of war, collectively prosecuted as "War Crimes" at the Nuremberg Trials. These actions blatantly disregarded established international agreements, such as the Hague and Geneva Conventions, which were designed to protect combatants and non-combatants during armed conflicts. The regime's war crimes encompassed the deliberate targeting and bombing of civilian populations, the execution of civilian hostages as brutal "reprisals" against partisan resistance, and the wanton destruction of cities, towns, and villages without any justifiable military necessity. Furthermore, the German military implemented horrific policies against surrendered soldiers, most notably through the deliberate starvation and mass execution of millions of Soviet Prisoners of War (POWs). This was driven by directives like the infamous "Commissar Order," which mandated the immediate killing of captured Soviet political officers. The systematic plunder of public and private property, including the massive theft of cultural artifacts and economic resources from occupied territories across Europe, further demonstrated the regime's total disregard for international law, forming a massive portion of the evidentiary record presented by the prosecution.

4.4. Forced Labor Programs

As the Nazi war machine expanded and the prolonged conflict severely drained Germany's domestic workforce, the regime orchestrated the largest and most brutal forced labor system in recorded history, a policy heavily prosecuted at the Nuremberg Trials. Over 14 million people, predominantly civilians violently kidnapped from occupied Eastern European territories (known as Ostarbeiter) but also from Western nations, were deported to the Third Reich. Stripped of their freedom and basic human rights, these individuals



were treated as easily replaceable slaves and forced into grueling labor to sustain the German war economy. This economic exploitation was not limited to the state military apparatus; major private German corporations, such as IG Farben and Krupp, actively participated in and profited immensely from this system, renting concentration camp inmates and foreign civilians to work in munitions factories, chemical plants, and treacherous mines. The living and working conditions within these labor camps were intentionally lethal, governed by the SS policy of Vernichtung durch Arbeit ("annihilation through labor"). Laborers were subjected to systemic starvation, absolute physical exhaustion, lack of medical care, and frequent beatings, essentially functioning as a slower, agonizing method of execution that ultimately claimed the lives of millions while fueling the Nazi war effort

4.5. Human Experimentation

One of the most grotesque and profound violations of medical ethics and human rights during the Holocaust was the systematic human experimentation conducted by Nazi physicians on concentration camp inmates. Operating without any regulatory oversight or regard for human life, doctors utilized thousands of non-consenting prisoners—including children, twins, and individuals with disabilities—as disposable test subjects for agonizing, and often lethal, pseudoscientific research. These brutal experiments were broadly categorized into military survival tests, such as submerging victims in freezing water or placing them in low-pressure chambers to simulate high-altitude bailouts for the German Air Force; pharmaceutical trials, where inmates were intentionally infected with deadly diseases like typhus, tuberculosis, and malaria to test new drugs; and ideological experiments aimed at advancing Nazi racial theories, including horrific forced mass sterilization procedures. The sheer cruelty and complete absence of "informed consent" in these atrocities not only resulted in unimaginable suffering, mutilation, and death, but later compelled the international community to prosecute these physicians in the subsequent "Doctors' Trial," ultimately leading to the creation of the Nuremberg Code—a landmark document that forms the absolute foundation of modern medical ethics and human rights in research.

5. World War II Context

The roots of the most destructive conflict in human history lay not in 1939, but in the bitter aftermath of the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles had left Germany economically devastated, stripped of its territories, and humiliated on the global stage. This deep-seated resentment created fertile ground for Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party's radical, hyper-nationalist ideology. Driven by an aggressive desire for territorial expansion (Lebensraum) and a twisted belief in "Aryan" racial supremacy, Germany



began to dismantle the fragile peace of Europe systematically. The global conflict officially ignited on September 1, 1939, when German forces launched a massive invasion into Poland, prompting Great Britain and France to finally declare war. Utilizing devastatingly fast Blitzkrieg (lightning war) tactics, the Axis powers—primarily led by Germany, Italy, and later joined by Japan—quickly overwhelmed European defenses, conquering nations from France to Norway in a matter of months.

What began as a European crisis soon engulfed the entire globe, turning into a "total war" that blurred the lines between soldiers and civilians. In 1941, Hitler made the fateful decision



to break his non-aggression pact and launched Operation Barbarossa, a brutal and racially motivated invasion of the Soviet Union that opened the bloodiest front of the war. Just months later, Japan's surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor dragged the United States into the conflict, fully solidifying the Allied Powers. The years that followed saw warfare on an unprecedented, industrialized scale. However, the momentum shifted decisively in 1943 following the Soviet Union's incredibly costly victory at the Battle of

Stalingrad, which shattered the myth of German invincibility.

This turning tide was accelerated by the successful D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944, opening a crucial western front that slowly trapped the German war machine. By May 1945, with Berlin completely surrounded by Soviet forces and Hitler dead by suicide, Germany unconditionally surrendered. The Pacific theater concluded shortly after in August 1945, following the devastating use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. World War II claimed an estimated 70 to 85 million lives, leaving continents in absolute ruins. But as the smoke cleared, the Allies uncovered the full, horrifying extent of the Nazi regime's atrocities, including the systematic murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust. The sheer scale of this state-sponsored criminality made it clear that traditional treaties and the old rules of war were utterly insufficient. The world did not just need peace; it required a profound legal reckoning, perfectly setting the stage for the creation of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.

6. The Nuremberg Trials

6.1. Establishment of the Tribunal

As the ashes of World War II settled, the victorious Allied Powers faced an unprecedented dilemma: how to punish the architects of a state-sponsored genocide and a devastating global war. In the immediate aftermath, prominent leaders like British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin initially leaned toward swift, summary executions of captured Nazi officials without any trial. However, the United States successfully argued that simply executing them would turn the Nazi leaders into martyrs and fail to establish an undeniable historical record of their atrocities. They insisted that the civilized world must answer absolute tyranny with absolute justice. This pivotal decision led to the signing of the London Charter in August 1945, formally establishing the International Military Tribunal (IMT). The city of Nuremberg was deliberately chosen as the trial's location. Practically, its massive Palace of Justice had miraculously survived the bombings and included a secure,

adjoining prison. But more importantly, the choice was profoundly symbolic: Nuremberg was the ideological heart of the Third Reich, the site of the spectacular Nazi propaganda rallies, and the birthplace of the infamous 1935 anti-Semitic laws. The very city where the regime had legislated its hatred would now be the exact stage where it faced its legal demise.

6.2 Legal Framework and Charges

The legal framework established for Nuremberg was an entirely revolutionary system that bridged the gap between moral outrage and international law. The London Charter defined four specific counts of indictment that would forever change the face of global justice:

1. The first count was *Conspiracy*, charging the defendants with actively planning and coordinating the subsequent crimes years in advance.
2. The second count, *Crimes Against Peace*, penalized the initiation of an aggressive war of conquest, effectively outlawing the unprovoked invasion of sovereign nations.
3. The third count covered traditional *War Crimes*, prosecuting violations of the established rules of war, such as the execution of prisoners and the wanton destruction of cities.
4. However, the most groundbreaking addition was the fourth count: *Crimes Against Humanity*. For the first time in human history, international law pierced the shield of "national sovereignty."

The tribunal declared that state leaders could be held personally and criminally responsible for the systematic murder, enslavement, and persecution of their own civilian population.

6.3. Trial Procedures



To prevent the trial from being perceived globally as merely a vengeful display of "victor's justice," the proceedings brilliantly hybridized the Anglo-American adversarial system (where prosecutors and defense attorneys conduct active cross-examinations) with the Continental European inquisitorial system (where judges play an active role). One of the most daunting logistical challenges in the courtroom was the language barrier. To prevent the

proceedings from dragging on for years due to consecutive translation, a revolutionary technological innovation was introduced to the court: the world's first "simultaneous

interpretation" system, provided by IBM. This allowed judges, defendants, and lawyers to communicate seamlessly in real-time across English, French, Russian, and German through the headsets they wore.

7. Key Defendants

The Nuremberg courtroom brought face-to-face the surviving architects of the Nazi regime. While Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels had escaped justice through suicide before the trials began, the 24 men sitting in the dock represented the highest echelons of Nazi political, military, and economic power. For the delegates of this committee, analyzing the roles and defenses of these key individuals is crucial for understanding the application of the charges.

7.1. Witnesses

7.1.1. Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier



Among the thousands of cold, bureaucratic documents presented at Nuremberg, few pieces of evidence carried the devastating emotional and historical weight of the live testimony given by Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier. A prominent French photojournalist, communist politician, and fiercely dedicated member of the French Resistance, she was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942 and subsequently deported to the notorious Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück concentration camps. Standing

before the tribunal on January 28, 1946, as key witness for the French prosecution, she completely shattered the sterile atmosphere of the courtroom. Utilizing her highly trained journalistic eye and an incredible memory for detail, Vaillant-Couturier provided a chilling, agonizingly precise account of the daily realities of industrialized mass murder. For nearly nine hours, she looked directly at the Nazi high command—men who had never set foot in the mud of the camps they created—and described the brutal "selection" processes upon the arrival of the trains, the specific horrors of the medical experiments performed on healthy women and twins, and the agonizing screams of children being thrown alive into the crematorium ovens when the camps ran low on Zyklon B gas. Her testimony was a defining, unforgettable moment in the trials; it forced the world, the judges, and the defendants to confront the raw, unfiltered human agony hidden behind the statistics of the Holocaust, forever cementing the undeniable reality of Crimes Against Humanity into the historical record.

7.1.2 Otto Ohlendorf

If Marie-Claude Vaillant-Couturier represented the agonizing voice of the victims at Nuremberg, SS-Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf represented the terrifying, bureaucratic voice of the perpetrators. Ohlendorf did not look like a monster; he was a highly educated economist and a mild-mannered intellectual who served as the commander of Einsatzgruppe D, one of the mobile killing squads deployed behind the German army during the invasion of the Soviet Union. When he took the witness stand on January 3, 1946, he delivered one of the most chilling testimonies in legal history precisely because of his complete lack of emotion. Speaking in a calm, flat, and clinical tone—as if he were reading an agricultural report—Ohlendorf freely admitted to the tribunal that under his direct command, his unit had systematically murdered approximately 90,000 men, women, and children in southern Ukraine and Crimea in just one year. He meticulously detailed the logistics of the "Holocaust by Bullets," explaining how victims were lined up in front of anti-tank ditches to be shot, and later described the introduction of mobile gas vans designed to alleviate the "psychological burden" on his executioners. What shocked the courtroom most was not just the staggering death toll, but Ohlendorf's absolute lack of remorse; he chillingly justified the slaughter of Jewish children as a military necessity to prevent them from growing up and avenging their parents. His testimony was a devastating blow to the defense attorneys, as it provided undeniable insider confirmation of the state-ordered genocide and perfectly demonstrated the horrific extremes of the "superior orders" defense that the Nuremberg Tribunal was determined to dismantle.

7.1.3. Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski



If the defendants at Nuremberg believed they could maintain a unified front of silence and denial, that illusion was spectacularly shattered by the prosecution's star insider witness: SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. As one of the highest-ranking and most ruthless commanders in the SS, he had orchestrated brutal "anti-partisan" warfare on the Eastern Front and ruthlessly crushed the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, leveling the city and massacring tens of thousands of civilians.

Yet, to save his own life from the gallows, he struck a deal with the Allied prosecutors and took the stand against his former superiors. On January 7, 1946, his devastating testimony completely destroyed the so-called "Clean Wehrmacht" myth—the defense's central argument that the regular German army fought an honorable war and had no knowledge of the SS extermination squads. Speaking with cold precision, Bach-Zelewski testified that the military's high command was fully aware of the mass murders and that the entire "anti-partisan" campaign was essentially a convenient cover for the ideological annihilation of Jews and Slavs ordered directly by Heinrich Himmler. His betrayal sent shockwaves through the defendant's dock; Hermann Göring was so enraged that he screamed "Traitor!" and "Dirty swine!" across the courtroom, while military commanders like Keitel and Jodl realized their defense had just collapsed. For the delegates in this committee, Bach-Zelewski's testimony is a masterclass in how the prosecution used the regime's own high-ranking architects to definitively prove that the conspiracy to commit Crimes Against Humanity infected the entire Nazi state apparatus, not just a rogue faction.

7.2. Defendants

7.2.1 Walther Funk



Walther Funk represented the terrifyingly mundane, bureaucratic side of the Nazi extermination machine—the man who literally turned mass murder into a banking operation. Serving as both the Minister of Economics and the President of the *Reichsbank* (the German central bank), Funk was the primary financial architect of the Third Reich's systematic economic exploitation and the ruthless plundering of occupied European nations. For the delegates of this committee, Funk's most horrific crime lies in his direct, calculated complicity with the SS through the establishment of the infamous "Max Heiliger" secret bank account. Under Funk's explicit authorization, the *Reichsbank* accepted massive, continuous deposits of stolen valuables—including thousands of wedding rings, watches, eyeglasses, and even gold teeth—that had been meticulously pried from the bodies of millions of Jewish victims murdered in the extermination camps. In the Nuremberg courtroom, however, the once-powerful banker presented himself as a weeping, pathetic figure. He aggressively attempted a defense of complete ignorance, desperately claiming that he was merely a "technical administrator" who had no idea where the tons of gold deposits were coming from, repeatedly trying to shift all blame onto Heinrich Himmler. The prosecution effortlessly demolished this facade by simply presenting the bank's own

meticulous, damning receipts. The tribunal unequivocally declared that a banker cannot turn a blind eye to the blood dripping from his vaults, finding him guilty of Crimes Against Peace, War Crimes, and Crimes Against Humanity, and sentencing him to life imprisonment in Spandau Prison.

7.2.2 Albert Speer



Initially known as "Hitler's Architect," Albert Speer rose to become the incredibly powerful Minister of Armaments and War Production. Speer was the brilliant technocrat responsible for miraculously keeping the German war machine supplied and running smoothly, even under the crushing weight of massive Allied strategic bombings. To achieve this logistical feat, he masterminded and utilized a brutal, state-wide system of forced labor, working millions of concentration camp inmates, foreign civilians, and prisoners of war to death in his

subterranean munitions factories. However, Speer stood out starkly at the trial. He adopted a highly strategic defense: he was the only major defendant to openly accept a broad, generalized moral responsibility for the regime's crimes, portraying himself as a non-political "technocrat" who was blinded by his work. Crucially, he vehemently denied having any specific, direct knowledge of the Holocaust and the extermination camps. His articulate, cooperative demeanor, his perceived remorse, and his calculated "apology" effectively saved him from the gallows. He was sentenced to 20 years in Spandau Prison, sparking decades of historical debate about how much he truly knew.

7.2.3. Joachim von Ribbentrop



Joachim von Ribbentrop was the aggressive, deeply anti-Semitic, and universally disliked Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany. He was the chief diplomatic architect who practically paved the way for World War II by signing the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (a cynical non-aggression and territory-dividing treaty with the Soviet Union) and negotiating the Axis alliances with Fascist Italy and Imperial Japan. At Nuremberg, Ribbentrop attempted to defend himself by claiming he was merely a

subordinate executing Hitler's foreign policy visions, lacking any real independent authority. The prosecution, however, proved conclusively that Ribbentrop used international diplomacy not as a tool to maintain peace, but as a deliberate weapon to deceive, provoke, and artificially justify the unprovoked military invasions of sovereign nations like Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. Stripped of his former arrogant swagger, Ribbentrop appeared a broken and pathetic figure in court. He was found guilty on all counts and became the very first defendant to be hanged.

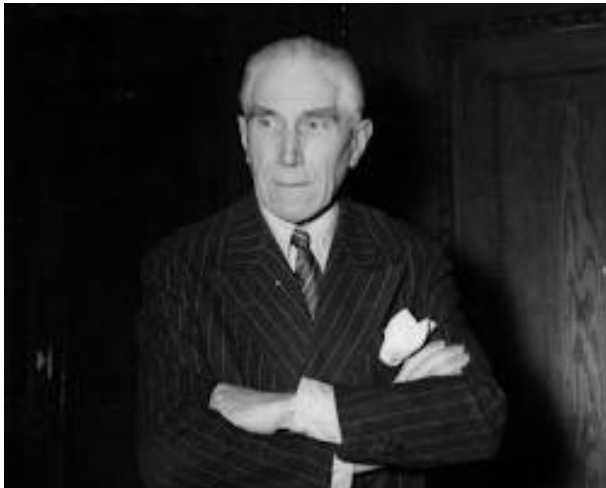
7.2.4. Alfred Jodl



As the Chief of the Operations Staff of the Armed Forces High Command (OKW), Generaloberst Alfred Jodl was the primary strategic brain behind Nazi Germany's military campaigns. Unlike the fanatical SS leaders or political demagogues, Jodl was a career military officer who drafted the operational plans for almost every aggressive invasion in Europe, from Poland to the Soviet Union. For the delegates in this committee, Jodl perfectly embodies the collision between traditional

military obedience and modern international criminal law. On the witness stand at Nuremberg, Jodl fiercely utilized the "pure soldier" defense; he maintained a rigid, professional demeanor, arguing that he was completely apolitical and merely carrying out his sworn military duty to his head of state. He desperately claimed that a soldier cannot be held criminally responsible for the political decisions that lead to war, leaning entirely on the shield of "superior orders." However, the prosecution shattered this defense by proving that Jodl did not just plan traditional battles; his signature was found on some of the most illegal and barbaric military directives of the war, including the infamous "Commissar Order" and "Commando Order," which explicitly mandated the summary execution of Soviet political officers and Allied special forces upon capture. The tribunal firmly established the precedent that military obedience never excuses participation in crimes against peace or the flagrant violation of the laws of war. Stripped of his military honor, Jodl was found guilty on all four counts and sentenced to death by hanging.

7.2.5 Franz von Papen



Franz von Papen occupies a highly unique and controversial space in the history of the Nuremberg Trials. Unlike the fanatical SS leaders or military commanders in the dock, Papen was an aristocratic, conservative politician and a former Chancellor of the Weimar Republic. His deepest historical guilt lay in his catastrophic political miscalculation: he was the key figure who persuaded President Hindenburg to appoint Adolf Hitler as Chancellor in 1933, arrogantly believing that he and the

traditional conservative elite could easily control the Nazi leader. Later serving as Vice-Chancellor and as a diplomat in Austria and Turkey, Papen was indicted at Nuremberg primarily for Conspiracy and Crimes Against Peace. On the witness stand, he presented himself as a traditional, old-school statesman who had tried to moderate the regime from the inside and prevent the outbreak of war. For the delegates in this committee, Papen's outcome is arguably the most legally significant of the entire trial. In a shocking verdict that infuriated the Soviet prosecution, the tribunal actually **acquitted** von Papen of all charges. The judges ruled that while his political actions in bringing Hitler to power were morally reprehensible and a historical disaster, they did not meet the strict legal definition of a criminal conspiracy to wage aggressive war under the London Charter. His acquittal served as the ultimate proof to the world that Nuremberg was not merely a rubber-stamp exercise in "victor's justice," but a genuine legal proceeding where evidence and strict statutory definitions reigned supreme.

7.2.6. Wilhelm Keitel



Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel served as the Chief of the Armed Forces High Command (OKW), making him officially the highest-ranking military officer in the entire Third Reich and Hitler's most loyal, unquestioning military advisor. While Alfred Jodl drafted the operational plans, Keitel was the administrative engine that translated Hitler's most barbaric ideological desires into formal, binding military orders. Among his fellow

German officers, he was infamously mocked as "Lakeitel" (a pun on the word for "lackey") due to his absolute, sycophantic subservience to the Führer. Keitel's historical significance is profound; he was the man who ultimately signed the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces in May 1945. However, at Nuremberg, his defense was a desperate, almost

pathetic reliance on the traditional Prussian military code. He argued that he was bound by an unbreakable oath of loyalty to Hitler and that a soldier cannot be expected to question or disobey the orders of his commander-in-chief, even if those orders violate international law. The prosecution completely obliterated this "superior orders" defense by presenting a mountain of evidence—specifically, documents bearing Keitel's own signature—that authorized the mass execution of striking workers, the systemic starvation of Soviet POWs, and the infamous "Night and Fog" decree, which mandated the secret disappearance of political dissidents in occupied territories. The tribunal firmly ruled that blind obedience to a criminal regime does not absolve a military commander of his personal responsibility for war crimes. Keitel was found guilty on all four counts and, despite his final, desperate plea to be executed by firing squad as a soldier, the court denied him this military honor and sentenced him to be hanged.

7.2.7. Julius Streicher



Julius Streicher represents one of the most unique and legally groundbreaking cases at the Nuremberg Trials, as he was the only defendant executed solely for what he published rather than what he physically did. As the founder and publisher of the violently anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer*, Streicher was not a military commander, a diplomat, or an architect of the death camps; he was a crude, fanatical propagandist. For the delegates in this committee, his trial is the ultimate case study on the lethal weaponization of hate

speech. For over two decades, Streicher relentlessly polluted the minds of the German public with grotesque caricatures, vicious blood libels, and incessant, explicit demands for the physical annihilation of the Jewish people. At Nuremberg, the prosecution successfully argued that while Streicher may not have built the gas chambers or operated the machinery of genocide, his decades of relentless psychological conditioning were the absolute prerequisite for the Holocaust, creating a society willing to tolerate and execute industrialized mass murder. In the courtroom, Streicher was a profoundly isolated figure, widely despised and shunned even by his fellow Nazi defendants, who found his vulgar, obsessive fanaticism repulsive. He frequently utilized his time on the stand to launch into bizarre anti-Semitic rants, remaining entirely unrepentant to the very end. The tribunal ultimately ruled that his continuous, deliberate incitement to murder constituted a Crime Against Humanity in itself. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, famously screaming "Heil Hitler!" and a hateful slur as he was dragged to the gallows.

7.2.8. Rudolf Hess



Rudolf Hess served as the Deputy Führer and was one of Hitler's earliest, most intimately involved, and fanatical followers; he even helped dictate Hitler's manifesto, *Mein Kampf*. His role in the war took a bizarre and dramatic turn in May 1941 when he secretly flew a solo mission to Scotland, allegedly attempting to negotiate a unilateral peace treaty with the British government without Hitler's authorization. He crashed, was immediately captured, and spent the remainder of the war as

a British prisoner. During the Nuremberg Trials, Hess presented a profound psychological challenge to the court. He displayed highly erratic behavior, frequently claiming severe amnesia, stating he could not remember his time in power, and appearing completely detached from the proceedings. Despite his questionable mental state and the fact that he was imprisoned in the UK during the systematic implementation of the Holocaust, his foundational role in drafting the discriminatory 1935 Nuremberg Laws and aggressively preparing the German state for a war of conquest led to his conviction for Crimes Against Peace. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at Spandau Prison.

7.2.9. Hermann Göring



As the Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe (German Air Force), the original founder of the Gestapo, and Hitler's officially designated successor, Hermann Göring was the highest-ranking and most politically powerful Nazi official on trial.

He aggressively positioned himself as the unapologetic "star" and the unofficial leader of the defendants. Göring fiercely defended

the Nazi ideology and openly clashed with the American Chief Prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson, during cross-examinations. His primary legal defense rested on the concept of national sovereignty; he argued that the actions of a sovereign state within its own borders could not be judged by foreign powers, framing the entire tribunal as an illegitimate exercise in "victor's justice." However, the prosecution shattered this defense by presenting documents

bearing his own signature, directly authorizing the expropriation of Jewish property and the early implementation of the "Final Solution." Found guilty on all four counts and sentenced to death by hanging, Göring famously cheated the executioner by biting down on a hidden cyanide capsule in his cell just hours before his scheduled execution.

8. Outcomes of the Trials

After ten grueling months, 216 court sessions, millions of transcribed words, and the unbearable psychological weight of the evidence presented, the International Military Tribunal delivered its historic verdicts on October 1, 1946. The tension in the Palace of Justice was palpable as the judges proved to the world that this was a genuine legal proceeding and not merely a mechanical, vengeful "kangaroo court." Of the 22 high-ranking defendants whose fates were decided, the tribunal handed down 12 death sentences by hanging (including Göring, Ribbentrop, Keitel, and Jodl), three sentences of life imprisonment (Hess, Funk, and Raeder), and four long-term prison sentences ranging from 10 to 20 years (including Speer and Dönitz).

Most controversially, and to the absolute fury of the Soviet delegation, the court completely acquitted three defendants (Franz von Papen, Hjalmar Schacht, and Hans Fritzsche). The judges strictly adhered to the legal definitions of the London Charter, ruling that moral complicity was not enough to convict someone of a criminal conspiracy. The executions took place in the dead of night on October 16, 1946, in the gymnasium of the Nuremberg prison. In a final, dramatic act of defiance that humiliated the Allied guards, Hermann Göring cheated the hangman by crushing a smuggled cyanide capsule in his teeth just two hours before his execution. These verdicts completely shattered the Nazi myth of invincibility, permanently decapitated the Third Reich's leadership, and closed the darkest chapter of the 20th century.

9. Significance for International Law

The true, lasting legacy of the Nuremberg Trials extends far beyond the execution of a few fascist leaders; it fundamentally rewired the absolute core of global justice by destroying the traditional concept of "Westphalian Sovereignty." For centuries before 1945, international law only governed the diplomatic and military interactions *between* sovereign states. What a government did to its own citizens within its own borders was considered legally untouchable. Nuremberg violently pierced this veil of absolute state sovereignty. By successfully prosecuting the Nazi leadership, the tribunal established the revolutionary legal precedent of *individual criminal responsibility*. It declared that "crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities," meaning politicians, generals, and bureaucrats could no longer hide behind the shield of the state.

Furthermore, Nuremberg permanently delegitimized the "superior orders" defense, ruling that a soldier's moral duty to humanity heavily outweighs their blind military obedience to a criminal government. The legal principles crystallized in this courtroom—now known as the "Nuremberg Principles"—echoed through the decades. Without the precedents set here, the international community would never have adopted the 1948 Genocide Convention (spearheaded by Polish-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ad hoc tribunals for Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the 1990s, or the Rome Statute (1998) that ultimately established the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague today.

10. Timeline of Major Historical Events

To effectively argue their cases and draft accurate resolutions, delegates must understand the exact chronological progression of the regime's descent into criminality and the Allies' legal response:

- a) **September 15, 1935:** The Nuremberg Laws are enacted, legally stripping German Jews of their citizenship and institutionalizing state-sponsored racism.
- b) **September 1, 1939:** Germany invades Poland; World War II officially begins, violating the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Treaty of Versailles.
- c) **January 20, 1942:** The Wannsee Conference takes place in Berlin, where high-ranking Nazi bureaucrats coordinate the logistical, industrial implementation of the "*Final Solution.*"
- d) **October 30, 1943:** The Moscow Declaration is signed. The Allies formally warn that Nazi criminals will be judged and punished for their atrocities.
- e) **May 8, 1945:** V-E Day. Following Hitler's suicide, Germany signed the unconditional surrender, ending the war in Europe.
- f) **August 8, 1945:** The Allied powers sign the London Charter, explicitly defining the four charges (Conspiracy, Crimes Against Peace, War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity) and establishing the IMT.
- g) **November 20, 1945:** The Nuremberg Trials officially begin.
- h) **October 1, 1946:** The tribunal delivers its final verdicts.
- i) **October 16, 1946:** The condemned Nazi leaders are executed.
- j) **December 9, 1948:** The UN General Assembly adopts the Genocide Convention, formally making genocide an international crime.

11. Key Issues for the Committee

Delegates in this committee must step away from their personal emotions and deeply analyze the following core legal controversies to draft comprehensive, legally bulletproof resolutions:

- **The *Tu Quoque* (Hypocrisy) Defense:** How does an international tribunal maintain its moral and legal legitimacy when the prosecuting nations have also committed devastating acts? (e.g., The Soviet massacre at Katyn, the Allied firebombing of Dresden, or the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).
- **The Limits of the "Superior Orders" Defense:** At what precise moment does military obedience transform into complicity in mass murder? How should a tribunal punish lower-ranking subordinates who executed brutal orders under the genuine threat of death from their own totalitarian government?
- **The *Ex Post Facto* Dilemma (Retroactive Law):** How can an international court legally justify prosecuting individuals for "Crimes Against Peace" and "Crimes Against Humanity" when these specific legal categories did not formally exist in international treaties before 1939?
- **Complicity of Non-Military Actors:** In a sprawling totalitarian state, how do we establish the legal guilt of civilians—such as industrialists (who used slave labor), bankers (who laundered stolen gold), and propagandists (who incited violence)—who never physically participated in the killing themselves?

12. Conclusion

The Nuremberg Trials were not simply the closing chapter of the most destructive military conflict in human history; they were the terrifying, agonizing, and necessary birth pangs of modern international law. As delegates of this committee, you are tasked with stepping back into this incredibly fragile, unprecedented moment in time. You are not here to merely read history; you are here to reconstruct it from the ashes of a ruined continent.

You must carefully balance the overwhelming human demand for vengeance with the cold, absolute necessity of establishing a bulletproof legal precedent based on fair trial principles. The decisions you make, the legal frameworks you construct, and the definitions you establish in this courtroom will dictate whether the world descends back into a cycle of brutal retaliation ("*might makes right*"), or finally establishes a lasting, unshakable architecture for global justice ("*the rule of law*"). The eyes of history—and the memories of millions—are firmly upon you.

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