

## Extension Activity Alfred Steer: Responsibility and Justice

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Through his visual history testimony, Dr. Alfred Steer conveys his memories of the International Military Tribunal's proceedings, his impressions of some of the defendants, and of the Chief of Counsel for the United States, Justice Robert H. Jackson. Utilizing a brief excerpt from **Justice Jackson's closing address before the IMT**, this exercise is intended to familiarize students with Jackson's oratorical style and to some of the twenty-one defendants, including several mentioned by Dr. Steer in his testimony.

At one point in his closing arguments, Justice Jackson sums up the defendants' attitudes in the following way:

**"In the testimony of each defendant, at some point there was reached the familiar blank wall: Nobody knew anything about what was going on. Time after time we have heard the chorus from the dock: 'I only heard about these things here for the first time.' These men saw no evil, spoke none, and none was uttered in their presence."**

In small groups, using the above passage, discuss the point Justice Jackson is making. After that, in your groups, complete the exercise on Page 2. Then as a closing activity, discuss the effectiveness of Jackson's tactic of using the defendants' own arguments against them to stress the absurdity of their claims.

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Below on the right, Justice Jackson goes on to describe eleven defendants based on their own dubious defense claims, though he does not name them. By printing and using the USHMM’s “**Nuremberg Defendants**” as a resource, draw lines from Justice Jackson’s eleven characterizations to defendants’ names on the left-hand side. In addition, place a letter or letters in the blank beside the defendant’s name to indicate the initial sentence handed down by the IMT: *DS* (death sentence), *A* (acquittal), *I* (imprisonment), *LI* (life imprisonment).

### 11 Court Defendants:

\_\_\_\_\_Hermann Göring

\_\_\_\_\_Wilhelm Frick

\_\_\_\_\_Rudolf Hess

\_\_\_\_\_Joachim von Ribbentrop

\_\_\_\_\_Julius Streicher

\_\_\_\_\_Hans Frank

\_\_\_\_\_Alfred Rosenberg

\_\_\_\_\_Wilhelm Keitel

\_\_\_\_\_Hjalmar Schacht

\_\_\_\_\_Ernst Kaltenbrunner

\_\_\_\_\_Walter Funk

### Justice Jackson’s Description of 11 of the Defendants in his Closing Remarks:

“A Number 2 man who knew nothing of the excesses of the Gestapo which he created, and never suspected the Jewish extermination program although he was the signer of over a score of decrees which instituted the persecutions of that race;

A Number 3 man who was merely an innocent middleman transmitting Hitler’s orders without ever reading them, like a postman or delivery boy;

A foreign minister who knew little of foreign affairs and nothing of foreign policy;

A field marshal who issued orders to the Armed Forces but had no idea of the results they would have in practice;

A security chief who was of the impression that the policing functions of his Gestapo and SD were somewhat on the order of directing traffic;

A Party philosopher who was interested in historical research and had no idea of the violence which his philosophy was inciting in the twentieth century;

A governor general of Poland who reigned but did not rule;

A Gauleiter of Franconia whose occupation was to pour forth filthy writings about the Jews, but who had no idea that anybody would read them;

A minister of interior who knew not even what went on in the interior of his own office, much less the interior of his own department, and nothing at all about the interior of Germany;

A Reichsbank president who was totally ignorant of what went in and out of the vaults of his bank;

And a plenipotentiary for the war economy who secretly marshaled the entire economy for armament, but had no idea it had anything to do with war.”