

NAZI ADMITS HE USED HUMANS IN POISON GAS TEST

French Try Two Germans for Medical Crimes

BY PAUL RESS

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

METZ, France, Dec. 16 — Two German doctors, one a yellow fever specialist who worked four years at the Rockefeller Institute in New York, went on trial today before a French military tribunal for "medical wa. crimes."

Dr. Eugen Haagen, 54, air force major who did research in yellow fever, was accused of poisoning inmates of the nazi concentration camp of Struthof-Natzweiler near Strasbourg by fatally injecting them with typhus germs.

Dr. Otto Bickenbach, 50, a my captain and biology professor, was charged with poisoning prisoners by exposing them to fatal doses of phosgene gas. If convicted, the two face death before a firing squad.

Admits Tests on Humans

Bickenbach admitted performing human guinea pig experiments in 1943 and 1944, but pleaded a change of heart since.

"In my youth I was opposed to experimenting on human beings," he said. "But in 1940 I thought of how unprotected the German people were against allied gas attacks. I read about Pasteur's and Koch's experiments on humans. I decided to experiment myself on volunteers with phosgene at Heidelberg and later at Struthof to find an antidote.

"I have thought and read a great deal about this during my five years in jail. I realize I was naive, but I have become a Christian again."

Court Refutes Tests' Value

The 150 spectators, many of them Catholic priests and Protestant ministers, shouted their protests over Bickenbach's repentance.

Judge Alexandre Dericke asserted that testimony by French, Belgian, Dutch, and Norwegian doctors indicated that Bickenbach's experiments had no medical value.

At least four persons are known to have perished by Bickenbach's phosgene experiments, the court said.

Bickenbach volunteered the information that he joined the Nazi party in 1933.

August Hirt, 54, anatomy professor; Helmuth Graese, 41; Otto Bong, 51, and Helmuth Ruhl,

former doctors at Struthof, are being tried in absentia.

British occupation authorities in Germany have refused to extradite Graese and Ruhl.

Haagen was asked whether he favored "experiments on an individual, which could do the patient no good and might kill him so long as it benefits the community."

Replying in a quavering voice, Haagen said, "Yes, yes, providing the patient is insane or doomed to die."

Tomorrow the court will travel 100 miles to Struthof to inspect the crematorium and the guinea pig laboratory, where 15,000 of 40,000 inmates died.