

RAEDER IS FREED BY ORDER OF BIG 4

Nazi Navy Chief, 79, in Poor Health—5 War Criminals Remain in Spandau

Special to The New York Times.

BONN, Germany, Sept. 26—Erich Raeder, former grand admiral and Commander in Chief of the German Navy in World War II, was released today from Spandau Prison near Berlin. He was freed by order of the United States, British, French and Soviet Governments.

Raeder was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Nuremberg war crimes tribunal in October, 1946, for his part in Germany's occupation of Norway and Denmark.

The Big Four powers, jointly administering Spandau Prison, decided to release him because of his advanced age and his state of health. He is 79 years old.

The West German Government, which some time ago appealed to the three Western powers to negotiate the release of Raeder with the Soviet Union in view of his age and poor health, today welcomed the decision as an "act of humanity."

Raeder drove out of the prison this morning in a private car. He was accompanied by his wife. They left West Berlin by air later in the day for Hanover.

Frau Raeder told reporters her husband would probably have to be hospitalized for several weeks to regain his strength.

Hitler and Raeder Quarreled

Raeder, who was born near Hamburg, in 1876, served in Germany's Imperial Navy, helped build up Hitler's naval forces and became Commander in Chief in 1935. He was promoted to grand admiral in 1939, but was relieved as Commander in Chief after a quarrel with Hitler in 1943. He was succeeded by Admiral Karl Doenitz, who was sentenced to imprisonment as a major war criminal.

Raeder's release had been demanded by German newspapers and politicians for some time. He was described as "a gentleman who never harmed anyone and whose fine character was not even doubted at the Nuremberg war crimes trial."

Raeder is the second of the seven major war criminals to leave Spandau Prison. Hitler's one-time Foreign Minister, Baron Konstantin von Neurath, who was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, was released last November. He was ill. He is 81 years old.

The remaining five war criminals in Spandau are: Admiral Doenitz, serving ten years; Rudolf Hess, Hitler's former deputy, serving a life term; Baldur von Schirach, leader of the Hitler Youth, serving twenty years; Albert Speer, Construction Minister, serving twenty years, and Walther Funk, Minister of Economics, serving a life term.



Associated Press Radiophoto

FREED FROM SPANDAU PRISON: Erich Raeder, former Grand Admiral and commander in chief of Hitler's navy, seated in his automobile yesterday after being released from the war crimes prison in British sector of West Berlin. He was freed because of age, 79, and failing health.