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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS:

The following letter from Secretary of the Army Royall was mailed to Senator Baldwin of Connecticut yesterday in response to the Senator's inquiry regarding the Ilse Koch case and similar letters were sent to others who made inquiry about the case:

September 23, 1948

Hon. Raymond E. Baldwin,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Baldwin:

I have now received from the European Command information relative to the commutation of Ilse Koch's sentence, referred to in your telegram of September 17. The succeeding six paragraphs set out the substance of the report which I have received.

Ilse Koch and thirty other defendants were tried before a U. S. Military Court at Dachau beginning April 11, 1947, charged with participating, aiding and abetting in the operation of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp and with subjecting the inmates to death, torture and mistreatment. All were convicted, and on the 14th of August, 22 death sentences, 5 life sentences (including Ilse Koch) and 4 sentences ranging from 10 to 20 years, were imposed.

On the 15th of November, the Deputy Judge Advocate for War Crimes, European Command, reviewed the cases and recommended clemency for certain of the accused. As a result of the changes in sentences, there were, after final review, 15 death sentences, 7 life sentences, and 9 sentences ranging from 3 to 20 years.

As to Ilse Koch, this Reviewing Officer found that on several occasions she reported inmates for violations of camp regulations, knowing that severe punishment would be administered; that she herself had beaten an inmate on one occasion; and that she had encouraged, aided and participated in the common design.

Contrary to popular conception, it was found there was no convincing evidence that she had selected inmates for extermination in order to secure tattooed skins or that she possessed any articles made of human skin.

This Reviewing Officer recommended that the Ilse Koch sentence be reduced to four years imprisonment on the ground that the extent of her partici-

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pation did not warrant a longer sentence. This action was reviewed on the 30th of April, 1948, by the War Crimes Board of Review, which concurred in the action of the Deputy Judge Advocate.

On the 10th of May, 1948, the Judge Advocate of the European Command also reviewed the case and approved the previous action. His recommendation was concurred in by the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Chief of Staff of the Theater on the 16th of May, 1948, and the Commanding General, European Command, approved the reduced sentence on June 8, 1948. This decision of the Theater is, of course, final. Neither under procedure for these trials nor under the accepted policies of American military and civil courts could the sentence now be increased by any authority.

While I have not personally seen the record in these cases, I am convinced that all of the convictions and sentences therein were carefully considered by the European Command and that the result represents their best judgment - - a judgment which in many other matters I have found exceedingly sound, and certainly not erring on the side of softness toward German criminals.

If you desire any or more specific information or further inquiry, I will be glad to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Kenneth C. Royall
Secretary of the Army