

OFFICE OF U. S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of LAHOUSEN, ERWIN
By: Colonel John. H. Amen

19 September 1945 P.M.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED AND SUBJECTS:

1. LAHOUSEN
 - a. Aggressive wars against Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, Denmark, Norway, the Balkans, Greece, and Russia (pp.4,13-18).
 - b. Genaris (p.4)
 - c. Concentration camps (pp.6,7,10,11)
 - d. Treatment of prisoners of war (pp.7,8)
 - e. Killing of Russian workers (p.8)
2. HIMMLER, SS, SD
 - a. Persecution of Jews (p.4)
 - b. Relation with Army (p.5)
 - c. Engineering of incident in Cattovice (pp.19-21)
 - (1) Genaris, Pickenbrock, Birkel
3. GENERAL STAFF, KEITEL, JODL
 - a. Knowledge and the responsibilities for concentration camps and murdering (pp.9,11,12,13)

CRUEL AND INHUMAN TREATMENT OF THE POPULATION OF
POLAND. PARTICULARLY THE PERSECUTION OF JEWS. AND
AGGRESSIVE WAR.

A. KILLING OF P. W. VIOLATING INTERNATIONAL LAW

The witness questioned, stated emphatically that according to his own observations and hearings, the attacks by Germany were without any doubt intentionally aggressive acts. Genaris had the same conviction. The persecution of Jews in distinction to the treatment of Russian prisoners of war by the army was handled by the S.D., Himmler's people (p.4).

Although S.S. and Himmler's organizations were integrated in the Wehrmacht, the witness excludes them as a part of the army (p.5).

Lahousen and his circle knew only in substance about the happenings in the concentration camps, namely:

- a. That people were thrown in without legal procedure,
- b. Inhuman treatment (p.6)

Regarding the treatment of prisoners and particularly Polish prisoners of war, the witness did not hear about any killings, but certainly of inhuman and undignified treatment.

Erwin Lahousen, 19 September 1945, P.M.

Lahousen knew that Jews were killed by the thousands in concentration camps, and that nobody of the whole German population has the right to hide himself behind a pretended ignorance although details may not have been known to many (p.7).

He knew also of killing by the thousands of Russian prisoners and Russians workers in the concentration camps (p.8). He said that other important representatives of the Wehrmacht must have had the same knowledge about concentration camps and the killing of prisoners. He did not want to shift the blame and responsibility of these acts and policies of cruel and inhuman treatment from the army but he wants only to point out that all the higher-ups in the army, especially Keitel and Jodl, knew about all that and could have done the same thing as he did, namely try to obstruct those orders and actions. (p.9)

About the gas chambers in the concentration camps, the witness allegedly gained knowledge near the end of it and was never sure whether it was true or exaggerated and rumours (p.10). The witness claimed not to have seen any concentration camps or any happenings therein, but nevertheless "I did not doubt any of those stories concerning the camps" (p.11). He does not doubt either the legal responsibility of the members of the Wehrmacht.

Quoting Lahousen: "Anybody who knows that something wrong is being done, sees it and does not do anything to change it if he has an opportunity to do so, is a criminal". These people with opportunities to prevent these acts never tried it, especially Keitel and Jodl (p.12 & 13).

B. AGGRESSIVE WARS

The witness considers that the attack against Austria was an act of aggression, the annexation was carried out by force. (p.13).

He states further that the action against Czechoslovakia was doubtless an act of aggressive war and agrees that the same applies regarding Poland.

Only in the case of France is there a difference inasmuch as France declared war. (p.15).

An act of aggressive war was doubtless the action against Denmark, Norway, the Balkans, Greece and Russia (p.17 & 18).

Before the Polish campaign came on, a representative of S.D., to Canaris and asked from him identification papers, weapons and equipment such as were carried by Polish soldiers. Canaris gave the order to provide them with the required things. Everybody in the circle of Lahousen, including Canaris and Pickenbrock, knew that some incident would be engineered. One day a communique of the Wehrmacht mentioned that the Poles had started hostilities and seized the broadcasting station of Cattovice.

Erwin Lehousen, 19 September, 1945, P.M.

The witness met in the Meuthausen prison camp an SS Hauptsturmfuehrer by name Birkel who was a famous mountain climber and took part in a Caucasian mountain expedition in 1926. The last time he heard of him was that Birke^l is in a prison camp in Ebensee-Gmunden (Minutes of 22 Sept. 1945 (p.6). Birkel mentioned to the witness that all the people of SD who directed that incident of Cettovice and all who executed it (the latter were taken from inhabitants of the concentration camps) were murdered to prevent any testimony about it (p. 30).