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INTERROGATION
OF THE FORMER PLENIPOTENTIARY OF GERMANY IN DENMARK,
DR. WERNER BEST, IN THE KASTELL,
(IN THE PRESENCE OF PANCKE AND BOVENSIEPEN)
COPENHAGEN, 31 AUGUST 1945.

Best, Pancke and Bovensiepen, appeared at the same time and were informed of various discrepancies of their statements, the clarification of which is desired.

The police inspector to Pancke: Is it correct that you informed Dr. Best on the 12 September 1944 that the police action would take place, you stated previously?

Pancke: It was so that Dr. Best was informed by me on 12 September 1944 of Himmler's communication. At any rate I have informed Dr. Best although the teletype said that Dr. Best was not to be informed, and then Dr. Best told me immediately that he did not want to know anything about the action, and except for the communication stating that an action would take place, Dr. Best knew neither time nor anything else.

Best: I declare, that I did not know anything. It is not correct. Otherwise, I would have drawn different conclusions according to my political course, and would have acted differently in my political position. I declare, not to have known anything.

Pancke: Unfortunately, I cannot say anything else.

The police inspector: And you, Bovensiepen, didn't you declare that Best was informed of the pending actions in advance, and that, only in one case Best's protest was disregarded?

Bovensiepen: During the second half of my stay here, I did not tell everything to Dr. Best, but during the first half, I always presented the plans for counter-terror to him.

Police inspector to Best: Logically, nothing stands in the way of your knowing the matters, although you could not prevent them, and even if you were principally against the counter-terror.

Best: It is not correct. It would/have fitted my political course and the position of the foreign office, if I had participated. I maintain my statements.

The police inspector to Bovensiepen: Is it correct, that Best had suggested "Tuborg", and that it came as a surprise to you, because you believed, that it would be against German interests?

Bovensiepen: It is correct with regard to "Tuborg". I thought, it would be against German interests because of the beer.

Best: It is not correct. In that case, I would have tried to take care of the matter differently. I cannot make any other statement.

The police inspector to Best: Do you maintain your statement and do you think that the statements of the two others are true?

Best: I maintain that these two do not tell the truth with these statements.

Bovensiepen: Does Dr. Best claim that he never knew of any action in advance, only afterwards?

The police inspector: Yes.

Bovensiepen: It would be more interesting to me to know, which actually the reasons were, to claim that Dr. Best never knew beforehand, that an action was to take place. At the time, I talked with Dr. Best and SS Lieutenant General Pancke, and one only had to ask Pancke.

The police inspector: What do you say to that, Pancke?

Pancke: Of course, conferences took place, and here I must agree with Bovensiepen, that these matters were of course not always and not frequently discussed, but anyhow they were talked over.

The police inspector to Best: Bovensiepen has also declared that you had once and for all forbidden actions against Social Democrats, and I also know this from another source, as K.B. Martinsen told me to have received reproaches from you, because he had had Lektor Ibsen, in Slagense murdered, although he was a Social Democrat.

Best: I do not know, whether Social Democrats were under discussion. But I said during general conferences about actions that plots against certain categories such as ministers, "Folketingsmand", and such people were out of question. I cannot remember whether Social Democrats were mentioned, but I mentioned categories, plots against which would entail especially detrimental effects on the population. It is correct that Martinsen informed me afterwards of the affair Ibsen. Later, he came to me at one time together with Pancke, and naturally I reprimanded him and said, that I considered it especially harmful, that he had had murdered just a Social democrat, because I was worried about the reaction of labor.

The police inspector to Best: In addition, Bovensiepen declared, that you suggested not only "Tuborg", but also other targets, which he cannot remember however.

Best: It is not true, what Bovensiepen says, that I suggested "Tuborg" and other targets.

Bovensiepen: I repeat, to have told the truth.

The police inspector to Best: I ask you again, what did you know about the Peter-Group?

Best: I repeat, that I did not know anything about the Peter-Group; it has no meaning for me at all.

The police inspector to Best: But you did know Schwerdt?

Best: I knew a Mr. Schwerdt, but did not know that he was leader of the Peter-Group. To me, he was a man from the Foreign-espionage service, Office VI.

The police inspector: Did you know that Issel was his successor?

Best: I knew Issel was Schwerdt's successor and that he was with the Foreign espionage service. As I mentioned before, I conferred with Issel about money.

The police inspector: What do you have to say to that, Bovensiepen?

Bovensiepen: There, Dr. Best errs, he knew everything, also that Schwerdt was leader of the Peter-Group and that Issel was Schwerdt's successor.

The police inspector to Bovensiepen: For what reason did Peter go away, and did you or Best try to keep him here?

Bovensiepen: Peter came to the front in the East, where he received some special mission which he was best fitted to perform. However, the Reichplenipotentiary and I have attempted repeatedly to prolong his stay here, and Best has also tried it in writing.

The police inspector: Did you see how Best tried to justify to keep Peter here?

Bovensiepen: I saw the letters but do not remember the contents of the letters exactly.

The police inspector to Best: Thus, the two others lie about you, Best? Can you give me a reason for that? The position of the two others is not improved in any way by these statements.

Best: I cannot say any more. It was not so. I maintain my statements.