

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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of von PAPEN, Franz Date: Sept 3, 1945. a. m.

By Thomas J. Dodd

Place: Nuremberg

Person implicated and subjects:

1. von PAPEN, Franz
 - a. Personal history and background (pp.3,4,5)
 - b. Position in German government (pp.3,6)
 - c. Position in German army (pp.4,5)
 - d. Internal measures for establishment of control over Germany in 1932 and 1933 (pp. 7,8,9,11,12)
 - e. Relationship with Hitler (pp.11,12,13,15,16,17)
 - f. Relationship with Nazi Party (pp.11,13,15)
 - g. Membership in Herren Clup (pp. 13,14)
 - h. Relationship with Meisner, Lammers, and Oscar von Hindenburg, relating to attempt in obtaining the Reichschancellory post for Hitler (pp.21,22)
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Papen goes into detail as to his relationship with Hindenburg the President and von Schleicher, who was chancellor for a time.

Von Papen explained to the Cabinet all of his negotiations with Hindenburg. Papen details Hindenburg's fear of a civil war. Von Schleicher's failure to split the National Socialist Party during his (Schleicher's) term as Chancellor -- von Schleicher resigned in January 1933 and Hindenburg stated the only way now was to see the biggest party come to power (10-11)

Hindenburg charged Papen to form a government with Hitler (11-12,1) Papen explains his past efforts to get Hitler into his government by offering him the post of Vice Chancellor.

VON PAPEN, 5. Sept., a. m.

Von Papen raised some question about taking the oath, saying he would not talk about anything not connected with the war itself, as he felt only responsible to God and to the German people for his activity as Chancellor of the Reich. Being told that if he refused to answer any particular questions he could make his objection as the question arose, but that he was to give his answer under oath, he was sworn in with this understanding. (1-3)

He said that his last official position with the German government was that of Ambassador to Turkey, until August 2, 1944. He attended elementary school, then the Gymnasium and then the cadet corps. As an officer, he was for three years in the War Academy, and promoted to staff officer. (4)

Retired from the army after first world war, settling down in Westphalia. Retired from active service in 1919. Was elected to Prussian Diet, after abt. 1 1/2 years of retirement. (5,6) Served as member of Prussian Diet until he became Chancellor.

Before the war, he served as military attache to the United States, approximately from January 1913 to Christmas, 1915. (5).

Was appointed Chancellor end of April, 1932, by Hindenburg and served in this capacity, possibly until December 2, 1932. Held no position until January 30, 1933, when on the President's order he formed the government of Hitler, taking himself the post of Vice Chancellor. (6) He explained that the idea behind his chancellorship in 1932 was to modify somewhat the Weimar Constitution which gave the government too little authority. Under the Weimar constitution it took weeks to form a new government. At the end of Brüning's term, the situation was very much confused and many people thought that the constitution needed reform, providing for a stronger government. The idea was to form a government of independent men not a party government. (7)

He said he had told Hitler that Hindenburg would not make him President now because he did not know him enough, but that he should collaborate with Hindenburg for a few months, until the old man would know his political ideas, and that then there would be no difficulty to make Hitler Chancellor. Papen said he gave Hitler his word of honor that he would then quit his post and turn it over to him. (11,12)

Von Papen said he met Hitler first during his chancellorship, possibly in 1932, but never before that time. He believed he met him with von Alvensleben, in the apartment of von Alvensleben. They talked about the possibility of going together, or reforming. (12) Thinks it may have been in June (1932). Conversation took place in the Berlin apartment of von Alvensleben (13). von Alvensleben probably was member of the "Herrenklub"; Alvensleben's brother was later president of that club. Von Papen gives a description of the nature of the Herren Club, mentioning the name of von Gleichen (14).

von Papen, 3. September, 1945, a. m.

Hitler replied to every offer of von Papen he would come into the government only with the "whole power" (chancellorship). Von Papen claims to have answered "NO"; that he cannot remember the date of the next meeting with Hitler but thinks it was after the first Reichstag elections. Remembers to have seen once in the Chancellory Goering and Count Helldorf who was later Police president of Berlin. Claims to have had no other talks with Hitler's associates during that time. (15)

After the second Reichstag elections which failed- Hitler was hostile. Papen claims not to have seen Hitler or any of his associates then but says he and Hitler had a conversation in von Schroeder's house, on January 6, 1933, and that some of Hitler's men were present but cannot remember who. (16) One of Hitler's men had called him up in the first days of January, asking Papen should meet Hitler, in von Schroeder's house. In that conversation, Papen claims to have repeated to Hitler the same idea as previously (comp. 11, 12) in August 1932, of Hitler entering the government as vice chancellor, etc. This conversation was grossly misrepresented by the press. Papen now believes that Schleicher had misrepresented that conversation. Later in Berlin, he learned that Schleicher had told Hindenburg that Papen had made a foul play against Hitler and that Hindenburg should not see Papen any more. (17) Yet, Hindenburg received him and was very frank about it all, saying "he believed that my conversation with Hitler had been misrepresented at the instigation of the Schleicher people." (18)

Papen is evasive about the number of times he saw Hindenburg in the first half of January; said since they were neighbours in Berlin he might have seen H. oftener but that they had no political conversations. (19) Papen claims he had no knowledge of Schleicher's negotiations with the party or of its failure. Papen repeats that he talked matters over with Guertner and von Els (comp. p. 9) thinks he may have talked about it with Meissner; too. Says he did not know Lammers until the day he was appointed by the new party. Admits he has been well acquainted with Oscar von Hindenburg, son of the President. In his dealings with the president, he says he did not need any help by Oscar von Hindenburg. (21) Papen claims he had not much difficulty with Hindenburg, therefore needing nobody's support since Hindenburg and Papen were of the same trend of thought (22)