

INTERROGATION

OF DR. BARANDON, FORMER GERMAN ENVOY OF THE
REICH-DEPUTY IN COPENHAGEN, IN THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS,
REGARDING DR. WERNER BEST,
COPENHAGEN, 1 OCTOBER 1945.

The subject states that he arrived in Copenhagen on January 7, 1942, as Diplomatic Representative; he was an advocate for the policy of the Foreign Office and not for that of Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. The Foreign Minister with his special staff stood aside and sometimes interfered in its function. The Foreign Office followed as much as possible the directive of April 9, 1940, according to which the Danish sovereignty was to be respected as much as this was militarily possible. The Danish economy should be supplied as much as possible and should send supplies in return. Denmark had a government, its Foreign Ministry was active and the Danish envoy remained in Berlin. Business negotiations were to be conducted by governmental commissions on the basis of international laws. There were no difficulties with the armed forces and there was no German police. Mr. Kannstein was responsible for the cooperation with Danish authorities, Mr. Ebner was in charge of economical affairs. Everything was conducted on an interstate basis. This time was to be followed by all means, and it was followed. The Foreign Office was satisfied and this satisfaction was expressed by State Secretary von Weizsäcker, the envoy von Grundherr as well as by business agencies, but not by the Foreign Minister. The latter followed no objective policy but acted in such way as in his opinion would please the Führer. Subject acknowledged, when questioned, that in consequence this policy could fluctuate.

Under Secretary of State, Luther advocated the policy according to which Fritz Clausen with the national socialist were to be put into power. The subject has fought this policy most vehemently, but did the same later on, while Renthe-Fink made less frantic efforts because he was somewhat indecisive. It was different under Best. When asked, whether von Ribbentrop, the Foreign Office and Luther had given instructions to the subject in regard to Fritz Clausen, he states that he received instructions only from Weizsäcker and Grundherr. He went to the Foreign Minister only when summoned. When asked, whether he received information about Ribbentrop's wishes through Weizsäcker and Grundherr, the subject answers that he had no reason to assume that Ribbentrop wanted anything else but the official policy of the Foreign Office and if he wavered it could be traced back to Hitler's eventual influence.

When the subject was asked what he had known before coming to Denmark about Renthe-Fink's attitude towards Fritz Clausen, he states that Fritz Clausen had not yet been dropped and Luther was still in the Foreign Office. The subject did not bother with Danish interior policy because he was kept busy with his own unpleasant affairs. However, he had watched Renthe-Fink's attitude which was on one hand objective, because he was clever enough to know that Fritz Clausen was not popular, on the other hand he depended on Luther and followed his policy. Renthe-Fink did everything to support Fritz Clausen if he could somehow account for it.

Questioned with regard to an eventual seizure of power, the subject declares that he never believed in it under any circumstances, neither did Grundherr nor possibly Weiszücker, while Ribbentrop did not understand a thing about it. Luther, however, wanted the seizure of power.

The subject states that a tremendous amount of money was given to the Danish National-Socialist Party and to Fritz Clausen; when asked about the amount, he answers he has no idea, because he kept out of it.

When asked whether he knew with whom Fritz Clausen conspired, the subject answers with "No". Later, after Renthe-Fink's recall and the arrival of the boisterous von Hanneken, Fritz Clausen came with a list of Ministers; the subject reported at that time to Berlin that a seizure of the government by the national socialist was completely out of question. When asked about Fritz Clausen's activities the subject declares that Fritz Clausen has submitted to him a memorandum with general phrases and proposals for a government. The subject did not comment on it and did not take the matter seriously. When asked on what basis did Fritz Clausen think to form a government, whether perhaps without approval of the parliament, the subject states that he does not know what Fritz Clausen had in mind in this respect. Asked further whether Fritz Clausen had in mind to seize the power by force or by pressure from Germany, the subject answers that, as far as he knows, neither by force nor by a "Putsch" but rather in such a way that the king was to accept the government under German pressure. Fritz Clausen must have thought: Renthe-Fink has been recalled, now, my time has come.

When asked whether Fritz Clausen was disappointed about Renthe-Fink, because the latter did not want to support him sufficiently, the subject answers that Renthe-Fink had to waver in his attitude in order to comply with Luther's wishes, but everything Renthe-Fink has done, he has done as far as possible within the limits of his personal honor. When asked in what manner could Luther exert pressure upon Renthe-Fink, the subject states that he has no close knowledge of the balance and effect of the various powers in Berlin, because at that time he was General Consul in Valparaiso and had no personal experience with the background. Luther played with the fatal controversies between Ribbentrop and Himmler. When asked whether Himmler had supported Luther, the subject replies "yes". This was where the unity of the SS became apparent. Luther has certainly pursued Himmler's policy and in any case, Himmler supported the policy to let Fritz Clausen assume power.

When the subject is asked whether he can recall the names on the list of ministers which was submitted by Fritz Clausen, he answers that in general he has forgotten the names, because he had otherwise nothing to do with that matter. However, he remembers the name of Count Schimmelmann who was slated for the post of Minister in Foreign Affairs. He must laugh when he thinks of that suggestion. When asked where this list is the subject says that he has put it with his files at that time. At the time of his departure from Denmark he did not take any documents along.

When asked about various names, the subject answers as follows:

Schedsted: As far as the subject remembers he was not mentioned.

Hartel: The subject heard his name frequently, but has not seen it on the list.

Knud Bach: Was not on the list.

C. O. Jorgensen: The subject does not know whether he was among them.

Bryld: The subject had the very worst memories of Berge Bryld, had heard the worst about him and wanted to have as little to do with him as possible.

Popp-Madsen: The subject had a bad impression of him and it would be embarrassing for him if his statements would become known to the public using his name. Asked why he has such a low opinion of Popp-Madsen, and further what he knows about him, the subject states that he has practically no knowledge of Popp-Madsen's activities except that he knew that he played a great role in the Schalburg Corps. He also hoped that he would be able to play a great role as minister of Justice. The subject had the impression that this was his ambition, but does not know whether this was really the case. His ways and manners were most repulsive to the subject. He exhibited a limitless servility to all German demands and thought that he could simply eliminate unpleasant political adversaries, while the subject was of a different opinion and would have prosecuted only criminal persons with no mercy or relaxation at anytime. The attitude and personality of Popp-Madsen were known to the subject from various meetings and conversations at social gatherings. When asked, whom Popp-Madsen had in mind as an unpleasant politician, the subject replies that he knew it at one time but had forgotten it already. When asked, what methods would have been used, the subject states that naturally nothing has been stated in this regard and he does not know what methods were contemplated. At the time in question however, German circles used all possible means and Popp-Madsen did not differ greatly from this German attitude. This was in the year 1944. When asked whether also Renthe-Fink had to do a lot with Popp-Madsen, the subject declares that he had not more to do with him than others.

The subject cannot give any concrete data about the activities of Renthe-Fink. When the subject was asked in what way Fritz Clausen was pushed up politically, the subject states that it was more a question of a true popular movement and Fritz Clausen claimed in this respect that he was ^{the} only one who was able to assemble ten thousand people.

When asked about the real motives behind the recall of Renthe Fink and about the telegram which was used as a pretext, the subject declares that the telegram as well as the recalling of General Luedke came as a complete surprise because nobody had forebodings of any evil. The text of the telegram should be common knowledge. The main thing was that his Majesty the King in his telegram to the Fuehrer had displayed an attitude which the Fuehrer was not willing to accept. As everybody knows, the king had cabled as he had done for 30 years, but Renthe-

Fink was ordered to remonstrate at once to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The subject figures that the cause for this was created in such a way that the circle which desired a different policy toward Denmark, submitted the telegram to the Fuehrer in an unfavorable moment. And it was really not difficult to make the Fuehrer have a fit at an opportune moment. In this respect, it must have been psychologically decisive that Hitler never respected and held treaties and that Denmark came in the foreground again through this incident. If, for example, one reminded Hitler in such cases of the legal basis of the occupation, he expounded that since then so and so much has happened and it was simply inconvenient for him. When in March 1942, the subject was to hold a lecture on Denmark at the Academy for German Law in Berlin, he went back to the occupation of April 9, 1940 and wanted to quote the agreements but was literally forbidden to do so, because the Fuehrer did not like it. The Fuehrer had a habit that if, for example, Denmark enjoyed good living conditions for a while, then it had to be changed again. The subject does not know how long ago such a change was projected for Denmark, but in any case the SS circles who advocated a so-called rigorous course, have deliberately planned the events.

Then Hanneken arrived, but the subject was alone for 5 weeks without any instructions. When asked whether Fritz Clausen had made a renewed attempt with a list, although there was still a Danish government in existence, the subject answers that, although he was without instructions, because Grundherr and Weiszücker could not act without the approval of the Foreign Minister and the minister did not dare to ask Hitler, he acted against the seizure of power by the Danish National Socialists. The subject knew perfectly well that such seizure of power would not work. In his decisions, the subject always kept in mind how he could get by most conveniently and prevent wrong action. According to the subject, nothing happened during the interregnum, because he prevented that Fritz Clausen would take over the power.

The subject states that Dr. Best arrived in Denmark on the 5th November 1942, whereafter he himself withdrew to his former position and Best was briefed by him. When asked what Best's instructions were when he arrived in Denmark, the subject answers, that Best had instructions and firm intention to continue the former policy and he and Best had high hopes to be able to carry out this policy through an SS Major General in contrast to Renthe-Fink. When it was mentioned to the subject that Renthe-Fink's successor would be an SS Major General, he thought anything might happen now, everything was lost anyway. After the first discussion with Best, the subject realized that he was mistaken. Not only that Best's entire attitude was that of a lawyer, but he was a very pleasant and honest man with an absolutely faultless character. Best and the subject agreed to carry on with an honest policy that is to say, with supplies for Denmark within the possible limits dictated by the war. Denmark was to be aided to keep her economy going and deliver in return food, labor, products of ship-building industry and manpower to Germany. The aim was to pull Denmark fairly well through the war on this basis. From the beginning, the subject observed that Best had been given instructions to continue the former policy, but in an improved manner.

Thus, the dreaded group which maneuvered Renthe-Fink out of office was not successful, but the Foreign Office had won. The subject describes Renthe-Fink as a man of quality, in the main more qualified than Renthe-Fink, as he was SS Major General.

In view of the circumstances something had to happen, it could not remain unchanged and a new ministry had to be created. Best himself and circles of theorists in Berlin laid the greatest emphasis on Scavanius, while socialdemocrats were always undesirable to nationalsocialists.

When the subject was asked whether Fritz Clausen had tried to approach Best with regard to forming a government he answers that Fritz Clausen has tried that, of course. Best had soon understood Fritz Clausen's nature and dropped him without any consideration for Luther and for his individual security, and did not support the Danish national socialists to any appreciable extent. He wanted to perform objective work and has done so, among other things by close cooperation with Scavenius. The first year with Scavenius passed successfully.

According to the subject, Best and his staff were very proud that they were able to carry out the elections in Spring 1943, although circle in Berlin were against it. These circles were dissatisfied with the result of the elections, because they realized that a nationalsocialist government could not be formed.

When asked when Luther was overthrown, the subject declares that he has forgotten, it may have been in April 1944, maybe earlier.

The subject describes the period after the elections of Spring 1943 until August 29 1943 as the happiest one. On the 29 th August this situation changed following the disarming of the Danish Army and the resignation of the Danish Government. When asked for the originator of this change, the subject answers that it was von Hanneken. He describes Hanneken as an ambitious unscrupulous man, who, to state it briefly, aimed at a rigorous policy which would further his own interests most of all. They had difficulties with Hanneken all the time. Worst of all was the appointments of the High Police Chief and General of the SS. When asked what Hanneken could achieve personally, the defendant answers that Hanneken laid emphasis upon strengthening his own political position through military successes. When asked, whether Hanneken may have had the idea to introduce permanent martial law, the defendant replies that, in his opinion, this may have been the case in order to snub Best. At his arrival Hanneken had, in the opinion of the subject, the full conviction that from now on he would become the boss. The formal relation between Best and Hanneken was such that they were equals, non subordinated to the other; but it turned out that Best became responsible also for the military events which had political consequences.

When asked whether the affair in Odense was the cause for the 29th August, the subject answers that Best's and Hanneken's reporting followed different methods; Hanneken's reports were in the form of daily military reports, while Best turned in political reports from time to time and everything was submitted to Hitler. Therefore, as daily reports were turned in by the army about all details, while Best did not report anything, except maybe for a short situation report every 14 days, the impression grew that Best tried to hide the facts, while the army report in accordance with the situation. Thus, in August 1943 the conviction arose that the Danish army was not reliable and therefore something had to be done again, this time by Hanneken. In this way martial law was introduced. When asked about the consequences which the resignation of Best had for the subject, he declares that his personal field of activity was scarcely affected. When Best left his office during the period of martial law, Kannstein was appointed Administrative Chief and Best had great difficulties in view of the instruction that he had the political responsibility just as before.

Upon questioning the subject states that he did not know the exact nature of negotiations about the Danish army and, when asked, whether the Danish army was to be transferred to Germany, he replies that that was not planned. Maybe it had been discussed but it was never felt that it was a serious idea. The subject declares with regard to the negotiations between BEST and HANNEKEN in Berlin that the emphasis was on military matters. It must have been obvious to the Foreign Office that conditions hitherto prevailing had to be radically changed.

According to the subject, the deportation of the Danish communists was in connection with the new situation which had been created by PANCKE and the arrival of the German police in Denmark. The subject considered this change much more important and fatal from a political point of view. When the subject is asked who had the idea to deport the communists to Germany, he answers that it had been in the air after the SS arrived here. As in other occupied countries, the deportation of communists and Jews was the mission of the SS. When asked about BEST'S attitude toward the Jews and communists, the subject states that he cannot recall it. However, BEST had very strict conceptions of the law and strongly opposed in his own philosophy such excesses throughout his entire career. BEST had done everything in order to facilitate the emigration of as many Jews as possible to Sweden and to mitigate the effect of the action.

When asked who had the idea to deport the Jews, the subject declares that this plan was in the air. As soon as the SS arrived here, everybody knew what was coming.

According to the subject, after 5 October 1943, when BEST took his office over again, a certain political stabilization had set in. However, the Danish sabotage increased constantly and BEST and the subject saw clearly how serious the situation had become. It was then that the closer cooperation between the subject and BEST began in the political field, and he endeavored to give more support to BEST.

Jointly they tried to convince the Foreign Office and the Foreign Minister that the Danes fully appreciated convictions of saboteurs by legal court procedures but they lacked any understanding for convictions without legal court procedures and convictions in the case of crimes for which innocent people were made responsible. The next months were spent with conferences in Berlin in order to push through the common idea and for this purpose the subject flew frequently from Copenhagen to Berlin. It was attempted to make this idea clear to RIBBENTROP, not directly but through the secretary of state von STEENGRACHT and the envoy von GRUNDHERR. In the first place it was requested to stop the so-called terroristic measures which were carried out without court procedure and furthermore to subordinate the SS to the Reich Deputy, because otherwise the latter would be unable to bear the political responsibility.

Upon questioning, the subject declares that he was acquainted very well with DR. MILDNER and that he knew him as a very decent, personally absolutely honest man, in as much as this is feasible in a job like his and he was by no means a criminal. The subject wants to emphasize in this respect that DR. MILDNER personally made the utmost efforts to prevent the action against the Jews, but was ordered to carry it out. When the subject is asked whether he knew what orders MILDNER received, either from Berlin or from PANCKE, he declares that he knew the general line only. The request to have persons tried by SS police courts was not granted, because Adolf HITLER insisted upon the policy to avenge terror with terror, because he expected better results from this method. Thus, the common efforts of BEST and the subject were swarted. HITLER cited Andreas HOFER and SCHLAGETER who were tried and still became martyrs. To this the subject replied that KAJ MUNK was not convicted and had not been tried and still became a martyr.

When the subject is asked whether he knew that BEST, HANNEKEN and PANCKE saw HITLER on the 30 November 1933, and received the order to start a counter-terror and whether he knew also that Pancke had received such an order from Himmler already in fall he states he did not know that but could very well imagine that.

Questioned whether he knows who initiated the murder of Kaj Munk, the subject declares that he can only assume that the Kðhere SS Poliseiführer (High SS Police Chief) was responsible for it. Questioned whether the subject believes that Pancke knew the individual cases he replies that he is inclined to assume that though it is not clear to him what kind of a job Pancke had. But he had heard of special teams from Berlin. When asked where he had heard that, the subject states in conversations with Steengracht. With regard to Bovensiepen, the subject claims to have always avoided his company. During a conference with Steengracht the subject made a statement that originally the attempt had been made to put the blame for the murders in Denmark and for the explosions on the Communists. However, it did not work any more because the Danes did not believe it, and things could always be traced back to Dagmarhus. To this he was told that only small groups were involved in this which came from Germany to Denmark and left again quickly.

As for Best's attitude towards the counter-terror the subject declares that Best avoided to discuss details with him because he did not want to involve him too much. The subject claims not to know Peter Schäffer, Issel, Waldenburg and Schwerdt and that he was never invited together with them at Best's because the latter was much too tactful and noble to do such a thing. Subject does not know how often Best negotiated with Pancke and Bovensiepen but these two did not care at all for Best and did not obey him at all. The big affairs were carried out by them, without advising Best. The subject had had to do only with the Niels Rohr-Institute. He did not know any details at first and was acquainted with them only by director Svenningsen. Best stepped in, and the subject succeeded to rescind the order for confiscation.

The subject was told that Mildner nevertheless was under the suspicion to have ordered the murder of Kaj Munk, since Bovensiepen had not yet arrived here at the time. Mildner was being replaced by Bovensiepen, just during those days. The subject declares that he has nothing to say to this, he does not know anything about it. He adds that he would regret it very much if it was so. On the other hand, he cannot imagine, of course, that the murder should have been committed without the commander of the Security Policy knowing about it. When asked whether Pancke could have known it, the subject states that he does not know, adding that he does not intend to cover up anything.

Furthermore, the subject states, that he had left at the end of November 1944, after having witnessed many terror-acts. He'd like to report now shortly on the events of the last few months. Three incidents had upset him so much that he flew to Berlin in order to report there personally.

The first case was the murder, a brutal, barbarous murder of 11 people, 11 Danes who were interned in the Shell-house or in the Danmarhus. When Best was interviewed on that in August 1944, he claimed that the murder of hostages was entirely out of the question. According to Pancke, the eleven had tried to flee from the truck and hereby were shot. Questioned as to the true circumstances of the murder of these eleven, the subject contends that they must have been murdered in a brutal and beastly manner in the cellar. The subject would not doubt that though he has no evidence of his own. He does not know how they were actually murdered but he has never doubted that it had happened in the manner stated by him. He did not report this by letter or telegram to Berlin but flew there personally. Questioned whether he did not investigate the case before taking off for Berlin, the subject declares that nothing had been submitted to him. Incidentally, he did not fly to Berlin in order to report on the three incidents but he has taken the report along as a basis for his request not to remain any longer in Denmark under no circumstances. The subject had given a copy of the report to Best, which he had made in Berlin.

The second incident referred to the general strike, provoked with the aid of the armed forces in July 1944 which eventually ended relatively well because Best, through his agents, and Duckwitz, had stepped in very actively. The general strike passed almost without bloodshed. When the anniversary of the 29th August approached leaflets and inciting posters were distributed shortly before that date on Pancke's initiative, in order to provoke a new general strike. Pancke, Himmler and the armed forces would have welcomed such a strike, particularly Hanneken who fancied to provoke the resistance-movement this way out in the open and finish it off so that nothing would happen in case of an invasion, when the armed forces would be busy otherwise.

The third case was that of the arrest of the Danish police which took place without Dr. Best's or the subject's knowledge (the subject being the deputy for Best in the absence of the latter). The subject supposedly told the German Foreign Office that he would desert to Berlin if he was not recalled. His position before the Danish Foreign Office had become untenable since he had had to admit there that he hadn't known of this matter beforehand. The police-action took place on 19 September, just when Best was absent. To an inquiry by telephone, from the special train of the Foreign Minister, as to what was going on in Denmark, the subject had replied in a matter of fact manner though in very sharp terms that the methods applied were contrary to the policy of the Foreign Office. Hereby, he made it very plain that he would not carry on any longer under no circumstances but wished to be recalled. This conversation which was tapped led to Pancke and Bovensiepen's request to initiate the prosecution of the subject on the basis of high treason and to the recall of the subject.

Again referring to Best, the subject wants to remark that their common struggle brought Best and him close together, even though no exchange of opinion took place. They have always protested together in Berlin against the terror-acts, reprisal murders, strike provocation, and the arrest of the police. In personal letters to the Secretary of the State von Steengracht, Best had requested that Pancke be subordinated to him, or that he be recalled. In any case, Best tried to make the authorities realize that these attacks endangered him and his collaborators politically and physically. Indeed, Best acted against the terror regime with disregard to his position and his life. Finally, the subject wishes to point out that the longer he worked together with Best, the more energetic they have both battled against the terror -- a struggle that was hopeless for both of them. Best did everything in his power to salvage, to help and to preserve whatever could possibly be preserved.

Questioned as to what the aim was of the arrest of the police, the subject claims that this was the work of the SS and of Pancke since the Danish police would constitute a danger in the case of an invasion. In this connection, the subject wants to point out that distinction should be made between the Party, National Socialism and the SS which is in a class for itself. The subject learned about the spirit of the SS and especially everything that had to do with terror and also concentration camps, only here in Denmark. According to him, the SS was ready for any kind of a terror act. According to an agreement, the

members of the police were to be treated as PWs. To the question brought forward by the Danish Foreign Office - by what law the members of the police had been arrested against whom no legal proceedings had been initiated, the subject would have liked to answer: By no law since these are the methods of the SS and of the tyranny. But he had to remain silent. Questioned whether the arrest of the police was intended to provoke the resistance -movement, in the open the subject states that that certainly must have also been the idea, because he remembers now what he had told Director Svenningsson before, namely that Hanneken had sent a telegram of about the following wording to Best and Pancke: "Since the arrest of the Police did not have the desired result, namely to provoke the resistance-movement, "Monsun" should be introduced at the earliest opportunity". For the code-word "Monsun" the subject gives the same explanation as Pancke. The measure Monsun meant to encircle a town completely and to shut off gas-power, water, and similar supplies thus compelling the town to bow to the wishes of the armed forces.

Asked for information about Danes who collaborated with the Germans in a manner undesirable for the Danes, the subject states that he knows the Bryld brothers. They were known as dishonest lawyers. In 1942 the subject was taken by surprise by Meissner with an invitation to Barge Bryld. He followed this invitation and met there Fritz Clausen in this way. The next day, Duckwitz, explained to him in what company he had been, and that Bryld was a very questionable and ill-fancied person.

Asked about Reitzel-Nielsen, the subject claims to have not known him personally -- only from the files as he was to be supported by the Germans in getting a job which he wanted -- and which he also got.

When questioned the subject denies to know Arildskov. He claims to know nothing at all about the Corps Schalberg. The composition of the corps was being changed constantly. At last, the corps was being considered on the one hand to be a battalion, pool for Danish SS war volunteers - and on the other hand - a so-called political organization. The subject cannot tell to what an extent the corps might have been involved in committing the various acts. He merely knows that in the beginning the population of Copenhagen blamed the corps Schalberg for sabotage and murder; this was in most cases entirely unjustified as the Germans tried to put the blame for many things on the "Schalburtage" (sabotage by the Schalburg Corps). The subject knows vaguely about the Sommer-Corps, and he learned only here through the newspapers about the Hipo (Auxiliary Police).

Questioned on Best's collaboration with Heydrich, and informed that Best wasn't so enthusiastic anymore about this collaboration with Heydrich, the subject claims not even to have known that Best had been Heydrich's closest collaborator. However, it is known to him that Best organized the German police under Himmler, and that he was chief of the administration in France. The subject does not know any more details of Best's career.

The subject declares again that in his opinion Best is a most honest man and that he'd give his right arm for him. As an example for Best's behavior the subject cites on incidence when Berlin had again expressed the wish to requisition Danish workers to work as forced laborers on fortifications, and Best had answered by wire: "If I am to go on a man-hunt, I must have a soldier armed with a rifle behind every worker." Told that one could not advance in the party without subscribing to its general policy, the subject declares that from the beginning the party-line was not constant and that during the war the evil powers gained more and more control of the party.

As for the expenditures on the part of the agencies of the Deputy, the subject declares that he was informed about them only very generally because he did not want to know any details.

Questioned about the attitude of Meissner, the subject states that Meissner as a confidant of Luther had a great influence on Renthe-Fink. Best dropped Meissner as soon as possible, as he supported Fritz Clausen and the Danish National Socialist Party.