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

INTERROGATION DIVISION

Interrogation of Von Papen, Franz

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19 September 1945, A.M. Nuremberg

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED AND SUBJECTS

1. Von Papen
 - a. His relations with Hindenburg and Schleicher. (pp 2,4,13-15,18-19, 25-31, 32-33).
 - b. First discussion with Hitler regarding Hitler government. (15-17)
 - c. His position as Vice Chancellor (p 3)
 - d. Persecution of Jews and churches. (p 3-4)
 - e. His position as ambassador of Austria. (pp 9-13, 39-40)
 - (1) Relations with Seyss-Inquart. (pp 40-42)
 - f. Volksgericht (p 13)
 - g. Relation with Nazi Party (pp 12, 20-22, 32,35,38,39)
 - h. Relation to German and Prussian government (pre Hitler) (pp 21-24)
2. Hitler
 - a. Edgar Jung (pp 5-6)
3. Himmler & Gestapo
 - a. Purge of June 30, 1934 (pp 5-6)
 - b. Plan to kill PAPEN (p 10)
4. Schacht
 - a. In favor to build a Nazi Government (p 20)
5. Hugenberg
 - a. Financing of Nazi Movement (pp 18-19)

INITIATION OF NAZI GOVERNMENT

Von Papen, referring to earlier interrogation, maintains he did not persuade Hindenburg to accept Hitler prior to the time when Hindenburg separated himself from Schleicher. Claims he had nothing against Schleicher, did nothing to remove him from his post nor Bruening from his post (p2).

POSITION IN NAZI GOVERNMENT

Says his political creed was manifest, since he made hundreds of speeches; he had hoped to do good work as vice chancellor but Hitler was never absent, there was no deputy work to do; he had no department as vice chancellor. (3) Herr von Blomberg, the War Minister, according to Papen was, "already so much enveloped into the arms of Hitler that he opposed me (Papen)".

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Says he was opposed to the non-fulfillment of the Concordat, which Hitler treated as scrap of paper; he was opposed also to the persecution of the churches and of the Jews. Gave his resignation to Hitler for the first time after the incident of his speech at Marburg, the publication of which Goebbels had prohibited (p.3,4). Hindenburg at that time was not in Berlin, had gone to East Prussia. Hindenburg was at that time kept closely guarded, one could not approach him (p.4). VonPapen tells about Edgar Jung, a young and clever journalist, who prepared his speeches and who was killed in the purge of June 30, 1934. Denies having talked to anyone about Jung having written his Marburg speech. Holds Himmler and the Gestapo chiefly responsible for the killing of Jung and of von Bose, Papen's secretary.. Says he was unable to do anything about it because of his own arrest early morning June 30 (p. 5 - 6).

ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA

Describes how Goering prevented his being killed in the June 30 blood purge (p.6 - 8) but believes there was no connection between that protective custody and his subsequent appointment as ambassador to Austria; that Hitler could not have foreseen the assassination of Dollfuss which occurred six weeks later and that he, Papen, might become useful in Austria (p.9). Believes it was Himmler and his people who meant to kill him (p.10). Does not think that Schuschnigg's reluctance to accept him as ambassador was because of his past. Claims he - Papen - wanted to save the Austrian situation (p.11). Says he went to Austria as minister, not as ambassador; was made ambassador later, for the treaty of July 11, 1936. After the occupation of Austria he received the Party Golden Cross (p.12).

Denies he had anything to do with the instituting of special courts (Volksgerichte) (p.13); describes again his meeting with Hitler in von Schroeder's house, January 6, 1934, Claims meeting was a complete surprise (p.13). Says he informed Schleicher by letter immediately after the meeting. Thinks importance of the meeting was exaggerated later. Said he did not mean to harm Schleicher (p.13 - 14). Describes another meeting with Hitler and, perhaps, Goering, in von Ribbentrop's house in Dahlem, where they discussed possibility of a government with Hitler (p.15 - 17). Denies that any party officers ever gave him credit for bringing Hitler to power.

Thinks he talked to Hugenberg after being told by Hindenburg to form a new government; supposes that Hugenberg aided Hitler financially; all he remembers of this discussion is whether new elections were to be held or not (p.18 - 19). Says that Schacht visited him in July or August 1932, and in the presence of Mrs. von Papen, said to him, "give your place to Hitler. He alone can save Germany." (p.20).

RELATION TO GERMAN AND PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE HITLER

Admits having commuted death sentences against some Nazi SA men in Upper Silesia, in October 1932, in agreement with Schleicher, in order to

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prevent situation from becoming more acute; admits other steps to get the Nazi party at his side (p.20 - 21). One of these steps was the removal of the Prussian government, a Socialist government (Braun-Severing) and appointing Bracht as deputy Prussian prime minister (p.21). Denies he deposed those people because of their opposition to Nazis; says it was because Schleicher told him of secret information that the Social Democrats were making a deal with the Communists (p.22). This material was shown to Hindenburg, and in consequence, Bracht, a Center party man, was named Reich Commissar, on July 20, 1932 approximately (p.23). Admits that Supreme Court in Leipzig subsequently held this was an illegal act, but says it was legal because Hindenburg had right to sign emergency decree (p.23). Maintains this step was not directed against the democratic forces but was caused by fact that the Reich had nothing to say in interior administration of Prussia, that f. i. Chancellory of Reich, Papen's home was guarded by Prussian police who might have placed him under arrest, if the Socialists together with the Communists had decided to act on this manner (p.24).

Gives circumstances of his resignation as Chancellor, November 1932; both the Center party and the Nazis were dissatisfied with Papen, his government could not form a majority, therefore Schleicher suggested Papen should better resign. Describes Schleicher's move in sending his intimate friend, Blank, Secretary of Chancellory to Paris to prepare Schleicher's own chancellorship. Claims he was unaware of this, when Schleicher and he went to see Hindenburg for that purpose on December 2, 1932, (p.25 - 29). Admits that from that date on he had trouble with Schleicher (p.29 - 30). Denies he undermined Schleicher's position; or that he considered Schleicher guilty of being Agrarian Bolshevist, of doing anything to overthrow social order in Germany (p.30 - 31). Admits having decided to go along with Nazis at that time because Schleicher failed to accomplish split-up of Nazi party. Says he never knew Mr. Strasser, knew only the three or four top men (p.32). Suggests that Meissner may have had a hand in undermining Schleicher with Hindenburg (p.32 - 33). Admits that Meissner and Oskar von Hindenburg, the president's son, wanted a rapprochement with the Nazis, but Papen denies having tried to influence either Meissner or Oscar Hindenburg (p.34). Suggests that Oscar von Hindenburg should be questioned about it. Reiterates he was convinced the Nazi party should be taken into the government (p.35). Discussion of Hindenburg's loss of confidence in Schleicher; Papen denies he passed on rumor about planned putsch to Hindenburg. Suggest that von Blomberg, appointed war minister by Hindenburg, might have told Hindenburg about the rumor and Schleicher (p.36 - 37). Repeats that Hindenburg's confidence in Schleicher must first have been shaken on December 3, 1932, when Schleicher told him about possible civil war (p.37). Explains that Schleicher charged him, Papen, with betrayal but that he had felt innocent (p.37 - 38).

He claims he never accepted the fundamental principles of the Nazis (p.38) including Fuehrer principle and Nuremberg laws. Refers to his speeches in which he fought Hitler's Lebensraum policy, even at the time when he was ambassador to Turkey (p.39).

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Admits knowledge of the Tav incident in Austria. Refers to his so-called agreement with Hitler, his conditions for accepting the post in Austria; is evasive about answering what he did on learning that he, the German ambassador was to be killed to provide a pretext for Austria's occupation (p.39 - 40).

Papen originally sponsored Seyss-Inquart but later was disappointed in him. Claims he cut Seyss-Inquart after seeing what he did in occupation of Austria (p. 40 - 42).