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

INTERROGATION DIVISION

Interrogation of Von Papen, Franz  
By: Mr. Thomas Dodd

19 September 1945 PM Nurnberg

PERSONS IMPLICATED AND SUBJECTS:

1. Von PAPPEN

- a. Knowledge of persecution of Jews and churches in Germany. (pp 3-4)
- b. His relation with Seyss-Inquart. (pp 1-2, 3-5, 36-42)  
(1) Dr. Dury Reiner and Leopold (pp 35-36)
- c. His plans about Austria (pp 1-2, 3-5, 15-16)
- d. Rearmament (pp 18-19, 19-25)
- e. Ambassador in Turkey (pp 23-25, 33-34)
- f. Initiation of Nazi Government (pp 26-28, 30-31)
- g. Relation with Hitler (pp 27, 28, 30, 31)
- h. Invasion of Poland (31-32)
- i. Relation with Russia (32-33)

2. SEYSS-INQUART

- a. Policy after Anschluss (pp 1-2)

3. HITLER

- a. Meeting with Schuschnigg (pp 2-3, 8-10)
- b. Versailles Treaty (pp 6-7)
- c. March into Austria (pp 10-12, 14)
- d. Responsibility for war (16-17)

ANNEXATION OF AUSTRIA

Von Papen repeats reasons why he sponsored Seyss-Inquart, but says that Inquart's whole policy after the Anschluss seemed wrong to him: due to his treatment of the churches, of the Jews. Always had told Hitler, he should give Austria character of a federal state. The day before Papen's departure, he arranged interview between Tennitzer and Hitler, hoped for an arrangement which did not materialize. (1-2)

Was not present at interview between Hitler and Schuschnigg in Berchtesgaden, which lasted whole day and night: believes the main point of the discussions was the religious situation in Austria, but denies having suggested this point himself. (2-3) Papen admits knowledge of the excesses in Germany towards the churches and churchmen (3-4). Papen tells of an incident, how he always tried to straighten out matters, particularly religious and racial ones. Admits he knew what was going on in Germany in that respect and often discussed things with Schuschnigg. Papen believed that all this was the outcome of a revolutionary wave and could be stopped in time. (3-5) Papen states that he felt all "the Jews had been cleared (from Germany)" Believed it could be done in evolutionary way, -the Anschluss-, perhaps in 1940, or later.

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Papen claims he believed that Hitler's whole aim was to liberate Germany from Versailles treaty, and that afterwards Hitler would give again certain liberty to Germans, that he could not go any further (6-7). Describes his surprise on being told by Lammers over the telephone that he was dismissed; that same night he discussed this with his friends of the Embassy, his family, Ketteler was present, Ribbentrop, too. Wrote a note telling Schuschnigg of his dismissal, then went to Berchtesgaden to see Hitler, told him Schuschnigg wanted to see Hitler. (8-9)

Hitler asked him to go back to Vienna, tell Schuschnigg he would be glad to see him. Papen did, succeeded. Had dreamed he could put this over, says he might have been a great man today if things had gone his way, for which he worked for four years (9-10)

Says he did everything to prevent Hitler to march into Austria: that Schuschnigg's decision to deliver a plebiscite came much later. (10-11) Says idea for forceful entry of Austria came up eight days after the Berchtesgaden meeting. Describes one of the many occasions in those four years when Hitler wanted to march in and how he, Papen, managed to change H.'s mind then. (12-14) Thought it possible that things would be different in Austria after Anschluss had been accomplished, because he could not imagine Hitler would treat his native country the same way as he had Germany. (15-16)

Papen says he could not see any definite policy on Hitler's part, but that he had hoped for the best.

#### REARMING OF GERMANY

Admits he believed that Hitler would get Germany into "the hell of a second war" (16-17). Papen is evasive about answering why he preferred Seyss-Inquart to Schuschnigg, to act as go-between (36-42).

After some bickering admits he may have spoken about necessity of a certain rearming of Germany after returning from Lausanne in 1932 (18-19) but that Germany began to rearm, perhaps, in 1935. (19-21) Gradually admits that rearmament must have started in 1932, or 1933, to relieve unemployment. Says he never considered rearmament a cause for a new war, especially when hearing August 1939 that Ribbentrop was going to Moscow to conclude pact with Russians. He believed this was a sure way to prevent a war. (22)

Argues he realized extent of rearmament program when he was in Austria. He felt that the solution of all these problems required preparation by military force. Thinks that military power can be used for peaceful means, too (23).

#### AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY

Between his dismissal from his post in Austria in February 1938 and April 1939, the time he was appointed ambassador to Turkey, Papen says he was retired. At that time, Ribbentrop was foreign minister; he suggested the post in Turkey. Papen says he rejected it. (23-24) On Holy Friday, 1939,

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Ribbentrop again offered to him the post of ambassador to Turkey, explaining the grave situation in the Balkans created by Mussolini's troops entering Albania. So, for the sake of saving the peace, Papen claims to have accepted the ambassadorship. He made the condition that he might go home again after having accomplished the preservation of peace. (25)

#### INITIATION OF NAZI GOVERNMENT

Papen claims he felt responsible for having initiated the Nazi government and that this is the reason why he had to go on. (26)

#### HITLER AND PAPEN

Papen states as his present opinion of Hitler, that Hitler was the "greatest crook I have ever seen in my life." (27)

He arrived at this opinion, after knowing the facts under which Hitler started the war. Some facts he claims to have learned in prison, reading Henderson's book. (27-28) Says he made up his mind in 1939, when Hitler started to go to war. Claims he did not think very much of Hitler afterwards. After July 20, 1944, he was compelled to send Hitler a telegram from Ankara, reaffirming his loyalty, the same as everybody else, otherwise his family would not be alive today (28) Felt convinced that he was again on the death roll. (29) Says he no longer believed in Germany's leaders after war started but as an old soldier had to go on, to get Germany out of the mess again (30-31)

Papen admits that all acts violating international law are crimes (31).

#### POLAND AND RUSSIA

On the invasion of Poland, he believed treaty with Russia would save the peace. Claims he had not much to do with preparing the arrangements for the pact (32). Denies that he and the Russian ambassador ever took boat trips, calls it a "story". (32-33) Says he failed in his mission to keep Turkey out of international encirclement; had nothing to do with the intelligence system in the Near East but as ambassador he received reports about it. (33-34)

Papen admits talks with Dr. Dury, medical director, member of Austrian party, in Russia, who may have been close associate of Seyss-Inquart. (35) Gives information about other associates of Seyss-Inquart, as i.e. Reiner, Gauleiter Leopold (35-36)