

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS BRANCH
BIOGRAPHICAL REPORT

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in Report

Name: POENSGEN, Ernst

Region: J la, 17a

Nationality: German

Occupation: 67, 68,
251, 252

Region: Düsseldorf, Falkenstrasse 11

Political
Affiliation: 13

Major Positions:

Wehrwirtschaftsführer

Member of Spoor's Advisory Council on
Armaments (Rüstungsrat)

Member of the Advisory Board (Beirat)

and head of chief section I of the

National Group Industry (Reichsgruppe
Industrie), Berlin

Head of the Economic Group Iron Producing
Industry (Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisenschaffende
Industrie), Berlin (1934-1942) and of its
regional Group North West (Bezirksgruppe
Nordwest), Düsseldorf.

Member of the Advisory Board (Beirat) of the
National Economic Chamber (Reichswirtschafts-
kammer), Berlin

Director General of the German Steel Trust
(Generaldirektor der Vereinigten Stahlwerke AG)

Member of the Executive Committee of the Reich
Association Iron (Präsidium der Reichsvereinigung
Eisen) since 1942)

Honorary Chairman of the Eisen und Stahlwerk Gemein-
schaft (ESGE)

Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors (Stellvertre-
tender Vorstand des Aufsichtsrats) of the Steel Trust
subsidiaries, including

August Thyssen Hütte AG, Duisburg-Essen
Ruhrstahl AG, Mitten

Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG, Essen

Gelsenberg-Benzin AG, Gelsenkirchen

Member of the Board of Directors (Aufsichtsrat) of
Kali-Chemie AG., Berlin

Birth Date and Place: 19 September 1871, Düsseldorf

Religion: Protestant

Family History: His family came from the Rhine and was connected with the iron indus-
try in the Schleiden valley. Before World War II, ten members of the family
held a total of 57 directorate and managerial positions.

Education and Work History: Ernst Poensgen attended Gymnasium in Düsseldorf, and
studied engineering at the University of Strasbourg and at the Technische Hoch-
schule in Berlin. Subsequently, he studied mining at the Bergakademie (mining
academy) in Berlin. He worked for one year at the Friedenshütte in Upper Silesia,
and then became plant engineer at the Düsseldorf Röhren und Eisenwalzwerke.
In 1904 he became procurist, in 1905 member of the Board of Directors of this
company, and when the latter was merged in 1910 with the Phoenix AG., Poensgen
was elected a member on the Directorate of the new corporation.

Education and Work History, cont'd:

During World War I he served as First Lieutenant in the German Army and was for some time connected with the German Civil Administration in Brussels. In 1916 he was recalled from active service and became deputy to the President of the Phoenix Werke in Hörde, Westphalia. In 1926 Phoenix was merged with several companies into Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG (Steel Trust) and Poensgen was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Managing Board (Stellvertretender Vorsitzender des Vorstandes). In 1935 he became President of the Steel Trust.

At the time of its formation, the Steel Trust (Vereinigte Stahlwerke AG) was said to account for one third to two fifths of total German heavy industrial capacity. Poensgen was Deputy Chairman of the major subsidiaries of its corporations:

Gelsenkirchener Bergwerks AG., Essen, (the largest German Steel producer),
August Thyssen Hütte AG., Duisburg (the second biggest unit in Vereinigte Stahlwerke),
Deutsche Rohrenwerke AG., Düsseldorf,
Mittenwerke Siegerland AG., Siegen
Dortmund Hoerder Hüttenverein AG., Dortmund
Gelsenberg-Benzin AG., Gelsenkirchen.

When in 1942, the Reichsvereinigung Eisen (RVE) (Reich Association Iron) was created by the Nazis as a super cartel organization to impose centralized control on German industry, Poensgen was appointed member of its Executive Committee (Präsidium) and of its general directorate. The Reichsvereinigung Eisen was in scope the most inclusive of all Reichsvereinigungen, controlling nearly all phases of the steel industry from the mining of ore to the whole-sale dealings in finished products. Its functions include rationalization and increase of production, procurement and allocation of raw materials, market regulation, etc.

In addition, Poensgen was appointed Honorary Chairman of the Eisen und Stahlwerk Gemeinschaft (ESGE), a cartel subordinated to the Reichsvereinigung Eisen and exercising all functions of the RVE in the control of steel and rolling mills.

Apart from his interests in the metal industries, Poensgen was a member of the Board of Directors (Aufsichtsrat) of the Kali Chemie AG., Berlin, and of its most important subsidiary, the Salzbergwerk Neu-Stassfurt, Berlin. Kali-Chemie AG., a large producer in the field of potash, chlorides, ammonia and sulphur, had acquired several former French mines in Alsace-Lorraine.

As the scope of his industrial interests expanded, Poensgen acquired a number of key positions in government agencies controlling the German economy. In 1934 he became head of the Economic Group Iron Producing Industry (Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisenschaffende Industrie) in Berlin, as well as of its regional Group North West (Bezirksgruppe Nordwest), holding both positions until 1942. In 1935 Poensgen was appointed member of the section for general economy and social policies and of the cartel section of the National Group Industry.

Poensgen also served as member of the Advisory Board (Beirat) of the National Economic Chamber (Reichswirtschaftskammer) which coordinates the activities of the National Groups and of the Gau Economic Chambers; He is a member of the Executive Committee of the German Group of the International Chamber of Commerce (Präsidium der Deutschen Gruppe der Internationalen Handelskammer)

In 1942, Poensgen was appointed delegate for industry in Speer's Advisory Council

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Education and Work History, cont'd:

on armaments (Rüstungsrat). He held the title of Lehrwirtschaftsführer, granted keymen in the Nazi economy who are in excellent standing with the Nazi party. He was also a member of the Committee for German Cartel Law in the German Academy of Law at Berlin.

On his 70th birthday in 1941, the Adlerschild (Eagle Shield) was bestowed on him by Hitler.

Summary:

As head of the German Steel Trust (Verenigte Stahlwerke), Poensgen was one of the key figures in the German iron and steel industry. As head of the Wirtschaftsgruppe Eisen- und Stahlindustrie, as adviser to the National Group Industry, as member of the Executive Committee of the Reichsvereinigung Eisen and Honorary Chairman of the Eisen und Stahlwerk Gemeinschaft Poensgen exercised great influence on German industrial policies under the Nazi regime and contributed substantially to the German war effort.

Sources: Deutsches Führerlexikon, 1934/35
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Völkischer Beobachter, 19 December 1942
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23 April 1945

This record is a summary of such intelligence (from one or more sources as indicated) as was available at the time of preparation. It may consequently be subject to amendment by additional or more recent intelligence. Index numbers and letters are solely for indexing statements in the report.

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