

pw

16.14
Contd

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

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of: LAHOUSEN

By: Col. John H. Amen, 15 September 1945, p.m. Nuremberg.

1. LAHOUSEN

- a. Major Bechler's statement re army opposition against orders about prisoners of war (pp. 1,2,3,4)
- b. Responsibility of army for prisoners of war (pp.6-7,10)
- c. Treatment of prisoners of war
 - (1) Witnesses named: Cols. Pickenbrock and Bentivigny, Admiral Buerkner, Colonel - - - - , predecessor of General Graevnitz (Chief of Prisoner of War Section in Reinecke's Office) (p.10).
 - (2) Executions and mistreatment of war prisoners (pp.6-8)
 - (3) Canarias' diary (p.9)

2. SS and SD

- a. Relation to the army (pp.5,10)
- b. Knowledge of Keitel and Jodl of activities of SS and SD (pp.11-12)

BECHLER REPORT

A statement of Major Bechler, adjutant in Hitler's headquarters, was read (p.3) to Lahousen. These orders were rescinded in the Spring of 1942, not because the Germans recognized their brutality, but because they realized the stupidity of wasting manpower and slave work. (p.4) The Nazi term "hard" (p.5) equal to "brutal". It was also increasing the Russian will for resistance.

Bechler's statement in re Army opposition to this order and their failure to carry it out was read and Lahousen stated that it was true that Army opposed it. (pp.3-4) States SS and SD and the police organizations had a high ranking officer with each Army Group. These officers kept a record of all executions and know all the executions by memory. He points out that the execution of Jews does not come under heading: "Prisoners of War", but under the heading: "Treatment to be Accorded to the Enemy Civilian Populations". He attempts to exclude Army from this subject but states that "as far as the prisoner of war situation goes, the Army was responsible".

The Bechler report points out that a Russian woman soldier was taken as a prisoner and the Fuehrer ordered her shot. Had no personal knowledge of the incident but did not doubt correctness and authenticity of the report. (pp.6-7) Report indicates that prisoners of war were

16.14

Lahousen, 15 September 1945, p.m. Nuremberg.

branded and Lahousen states that this is absolutely correct and he can substantiate his statement. (p.7) Lahousen names Colonels Pickenbrock and Bentivigny as being able to give fuller information (p.7) Colonel Bentivigny was Chief of CIC Section - and still alive. (pp.7,8) Executions were now to be held in secret. (p.8) Guards at camps were going around camps with whips and thick sticks. (p.8) Mueller was the right hand man of Himmler. (8) The entry about this conference was made in Canaris' diary by Lahousen. (p.9) He also made other entries. (p.9) Admiral Buerkner could confirm these things. (p.9) There is a Colonel who was the predecessor of General Greevinitz as Chief of Prisoner of War Section in Reinacke's office, who could give you data. (p.10)

Lahousen recalls much of this data. He says because "this was the first time that the Wehrmacht was held responsible for things like that." In the case of Poland all this had been the responsibility of SS and the SD. This was an intentional effort by Himmler to draw the Wehrmacht into this and to establish its responsibility. (p.10) Keitel knew of all these discussions and the existence of the orders and all other aspects connected with them. (p.11) Keitel was just a "yes" man and that Jodl must take the blame as he was the more intelligent of the two. (pp.11-12).