

OFFICE OF US CHIEF OF COUNSEL
APO 403, US ARMY
INTERROGATION DIVISION

Nurnberg, Germany.
30 October, 1945.

Brief of
Interrogation of Josef BUEHLER

by

Lt Colonel Thomas S. Hinkel.

29 October 1945 (TM)

BUEHLER was State Secretary of Governor General Poland from 1939 to 1945 (he did not receive the title of State Secretary until 1940). He had been employed in various capacities in the German Government from 1933 on, always under Frank and never in connection with any of Frank's party activities.

As State Secretary of Governor General Poland, Buehler handled all matters for Frank except those concerned with the police, the Party, and the military. Police matters were handled by Krueger until 1943 and then by Koppe. Krueger's title was Higher SS and Police Leader until 1942 when he became State Secretary for Police.

The principal matters handled by Buehler were finance, interior administration, agriculture and nourishment, economy, labor, forestry, propaganda, and public education, education and science, justice, health service, roads, post, railroads and construction services. In addition, there were departments concerned with operations, legislation and space and settlement.

Buehler stated that from the beginning relations between the police and the Governor General were tense. The police received their instructions from Berlin and then afterwards Frank was consulted. The orders received from Berlin were obeyed over those received from Frank, although where there was no Berlin order extant, the police were supposed to obey Frank's orders. It happened, however, that on occasions, relations were so tense that no orders of Frank's would be obeyed; during other periods, relations were better and cooperation was also better. Frank had no power to relieve Krueger or Koppe, even though the original order establishing the Governor Generalship stated that Frank had control over the police - this did not work out in fact.

In 1942, Krueger was made State Secretary for Police and his powers were specifically listed. He was made subordinate to Himmler but was supposed to inform Frank of important political matters. It was further provided in establishing Krueger's duties that Frank had to approve certain matters; this, however, was often not done as the police would take action without asking Frank's approval and without informing him. Buehler stated he did not believe that the police would issue an order stating that Frank had approved it when in fact he either had not approved or knew anything about it. This discussion arose in connection with Document L-37.

Buehler stated that on three occasions, he handled complains made by Frank to Hitler regarding excesses on the part of the police. These complaints were with reference to shootings, arrests, and disobedience of orders.

Buehler stated that he had never heard of Maidanak until 1944 when it was captured by the Russians. However, he stated that he had been informed in 1933 by the Governor of Lublin that a concentration camp was being erected in the vicinity of Lublin by the SS and this concentration camp was a danger to the health of the community. Frank thereafter called in the SS leader in Lublin, Globochnek, and reprimanded him for building this camp without Frank's consent. An agreement was thereby made that no construction would be done without Frank's consent but apparently this instruction was disregarded as this camp was completed.

Buehler stated that he knew large numbers of people were sent into Governor General Poland from other areas but that he didn't know that all of these people were Jews or where they were sent. He believed that the Jews had been sent into the ghettos which had been established by the police early in 1940. The ghettos were under the supervision of the SS, although the Governor General was charged with the administration thereof with respect to food, sanitation, medical measures, etc.

Buehler stated that Frank's purpose in collecting Polish art was to "safeguard" it from the Police. He further stated that he had heard that a valuable painting had been given to Frank personally but that Frank had later returned it.

With reference to the labor recruited in Governor General Poland for the Reich, Duchler stated that he understood that approximately 1,300,000 laborers had been sent. He insisted that voluntary recruitment was the policy of the Governor Generalship and it was his opinion that over 1 million of those recruited had volunteered for the assignment. He admitted that the recruitment was carried out under the general direction of the Labor Service of the Governor Generalship and that local administrative officers had been utilized to obtain the labor necessary to meet the quotas established for the Governor Generalship.

Buehler admitted that the food rations in Governor General Poland were distributed as follows: a full ration to the Germans, a subsistence ration to the Poles and the Jews received even less than the Poles. His jurisdiction for the differentiation between the German and Pole rations was that the Poles could purchase on the black market, although he admitted that there was a law which made it illegal either to patronize or to sell on the black markets.

Buehler stated that he had heard, with reference to the increase in the sickness rate in Governor General Poland, that typhus was present in the ghettos and also in areas where it had previously existed. He denied that he had any knowledge of any report being given by the official medical officer of an increase in the sickness rate due to malnutrition.

Buehler stated that all secondary (high) schools had been closed by the police as also had been the universities and colleges. Efforts were made by Frank to re-open these schools but Bormann was opposed and these efforts were unsuccessful.