

## Pieter Menten (1899-1987)



Salesman, art collector, war criminal

Trained at a commercial school

1923: merchant in Danzig (Gdansk); later in Lwów (Lemberg), pending criminal prosecution (bankruptcy offences and fraud)

1934: buys forest and manor house in Sopot (Galicia) from Isaak Pistyner

1940: German occupation uses him as trustee and liquidator of many Jewish companies (art dealers, antiquarian bookshops etc.); unpaid member of the SS security service (SD)

1941: Voluntarily enlists in Einsatzkommando (EKzbV). Involved in the Massacre of Lwów Professors (Lemberger Professoren-mord) and in several mass murders of Jews in Galicia.

1942: Arrested by SS in Krakow for bribery and self dealing. The trial is suppressed due to the involvement of leading SS men.

1945: Arrested as a Nazi collaborator, released from prison for lack of evidence.

1976: In *De Telegraaf*, introduced as an art lover and victim of National Socialism, he announces a large auction at Sotheby's. Haviv Kanaan, a nephew of Isaak Pistyner and journalist for the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, writes an investigative article about him. The Dutch journalist, Hans Knoop interviews witnesses and does field research in Podhorodce.

Knoop submits the results to the judiciary; strict secrecy is agreed upon due to the flight risk. On the eve of his planned arrest (15.11.1976), Menten and his wife flee to Switzerland. Later deportation to the Netherlands under the condition of non-extradition to Poland

1977: Trial before the Amsterdam Special Court. Menten denies everything and posits himself as a victim of the KGB and a Jewish conspiracy. After several rounds of testimony, he changes his strategy and claims that in 1952 he was granted immunity by the authorities. Verdict: 15 years for the mass shooting in Podhorodce.

1978: Revision: annulment of the verdict – grounds: the alleged 1952 promise of immunity.

1979-80: acquittal overturned. Final verdict: ten years in prison and a fine of 100,000 guilders

1985: Release from prison

Sources: Schenk, *Der Lemberger Professoren-mord*; Bajohr, *Parvenüs und Profiteure*; Pohl, *Ostgalizien*; mehrere Wikipedia-Artikel; Holocaust-research Project H.E.A.R.T.; Knoop, *The Menten affair*