

Lohse, Hinrich

(1896--1964)

German politician who served as the Reich Commissioner for the *Ostland* (the Baltic and Belorussian areas) from 1941 to 1944. A member of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies from 1928 and the *Reichstag* from 1932, Lohse was promoted to the Prussian State Council in 1933 and elected president of the province of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1934 he became an officer in the Nazi Storm Troopers (SA).

As Reich Commissioner of the *Ostland*, he was responsible for the total extermination of the Jews in those areas. He directed his underlings to only give ghetto inmates the most miniscule of food rations---just enough to keep them alive until the "final solution" could officially get underway. After the mass executions in the Vilna Ghetto and other places, Lohse questioned whether all Jews should be exterminated, including those who could be useful to the German economy (such as skilled workers in armaments factories, etc.). However, when he was instructed that all Jews should be killed without exception, he cooperated.

Lohse was arrested in 1945 and sentenced to 10 years of hard labor in 1948. He was released in 1951 due to health problems.