

ZS-0710-1

Interrogation of Fritz Gissibl

23 Jan. 48

By Mr. John Lewis

Institut f. Zeitgeschichte München ARCHIV 1948/56
--

Q What is your full name ?

A Gissibl, Fritz.

Q You are aware of the fact that you are still under oath ?

A Yes, sir.

Q When you came back to Germany in 1936, did you visit Bohle ?

A Yes.

Q What is your report to him ?

A I told him that the German citizens were all taken out of the Friends of the New Germany -- of the organization Friends of the New Germany.

Q How long did the interview last at that time ?

A Oh, he was only there once.

Q Yes. How many minutes or how many hours did it last -- this interview ?

A Oh, about a quarter of an hour, 20 minutes.

Q What did Bohle say to you ?

A Well, he said that it was right that I had done that and that he was willing to assist me to get a job in Germany.

Q Did you bring him a written report ?

A No.

Q And, as a result of his saying he would assist you to get a job in Germany, what happened? Did he get you a job in Germany ?

A No, he didn't. About four weeks later I got a job in Stuttgart, where my wife and my children were.

Q How did you get that job ?

A A man by the name Klein was holding that job and he changed his position. Because the job was open, it was offered to me.

Q Yes, but how did you know about that ?

A Mr. Grothe got a telephone call, --

Q That is the same Mr. Grothe who was in the AO ?

A Yes, that is him. -- received a telephone call and was told that there was a job open; if I was interested I should come to Stuttgart and apply for the position.

Q And when you went you Stuttgart ---

A When I went to Stuttgart ---

Q -- you applied to him ?

A I went to Mr. Friedrich Schmidt. He was Deputy Gauleiter in Wuerttemberg, and he asked me who I was and what I have been doing so far. I told him in a few sentences my life's history and he said that I could start working about the 15th of April ---

Q And what kind of job ---

A --- 1936. I was working in the Press Department as a lecturer. It was my duty to read all publications that were printed in that State and to see that they keep up to the restrictions given daily by the Press Department of the Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin.

Q So you were working for the Press Department of the Gau Wuerttemberg ?

A Yes, it was a position -- there was under the --- Well, it was the Wuerttemberg Office of the Ministry of Propaganda.

Q Well, but you say yhe Deputy Gauleiter was the head of the department ?

A Yes, he was, at the same time.

Q So this was the machinery of the Gau Wuerttemberg ?

A No. Well, in one way, yes. The Ministry of Propaganda had an office in each Gau, yes.

Q Yes.

A And the man who was in charge of that office was a Gau Propaganda ---  
He was a man who was responsible for the propaganda in that district and he  
at the same time held the position of the representative of the Ministry  
of Propaganda in his State, or Gau, as we used to say.

Q But you were on the payroll of the State ?

A Yes, I was on the payroll of the State.

Q Not on GOEBBEL's payroll ?

A Yes, I was.

Q Were you on Goebbel's payroll ?

A Yes.

Q And you mentioned that while you were in Stuttgart you also handled  
matters for the AO ?

A Yes.

Q Tell us about those matters you handled for the AO.

A At yearly meetings of the German Citizens Abroad -- they were held in  
Stuttgart for the first time in the year 1937, and it was my business as  
representative of the AO in Stuttgart to take care of everything in connec-  
tion with that meeting. It was a big meeting of Germans from all over the  
world.

Q And at those meetings, you say, all the German citizens came from all  
over the world ?

A German citizens from all over the world were guests and visitors at  
that meeting.

Q Did they ever have ethnical Germans come to those meetings ?

A I beg your pardon.

Q Did they ever have ethnical Germans come to those meetings ?

A No. Of course, if there were some in Stuttgart and they wanted to  
visit public meetings that were held, they could go there.

Q So that at those annual meetings of the AO, in the audience there

could have been Volksdeutsche ?

A In the open meetings, yes.

Q Now, who gave you instruction as to what to do about these meetings ?

A Mr. Grothe.

Q Mr. Grothe.

A He was in charge of the organization.

Q I see, and ---

A I was his assistant.

Q You were his assistant for that purpose ?

A Yes.

Q And you wore the Party uniform ?

A Yes, I wore the Party uniform.

Q And the AO emblem on it ?

A Yes.

Q And at that time you were still a Private in the ranks ? You had no office ?

A Yes.

Q You also, I believe, told us that the DAI ---

A Yes.

Q --- of the Ausland Institution was there in Stuttgart ?

A Was in Stuttgart, yes.

Q And I believe you told us that you were a member of their Board of Directors?

A Yes.

Q And you held another honorary position with it, didn't you ?

A Yes.

Q What was that -- your position you mentioned ---

A In the City Council of Stuttgart ?

Q In the City Council of Stuttgart.

A Yes.

Q But that had nothing to do with the DAI -- that honorable position in the City of Stuttgart ?

A No.

Q You speak of the Major of Stuttgart Stroelin ?

A He was the major of Stuttgart and the head of the Ausland Institution at the same time.

Q And because he knew you he gave you an honorable job in the City ?

A Yes.

Q Did you have any duties to perform for the City of Stuttgart ?

A Well, almost nothing. I would say. Just if anything came up that interested the city in connection with a meeting of the Auslandsdeutsche, then I was the one who took care of it.

Q And wouldn't you say that that is why you were made an honorable member of the City Council -- because of your AO connection ?

A Yes.

Q Now, the DAI was on friendly terms with the AO ?

A Yes, I would say that.

Q And I believe that you told me that if the AO had some requests to make to the DAI, it would be Bohle in Berlin who would ask for things from the head of the DAI ?

A That is possible that it has been done that way.

Q Would it ever be that Grothe would ask for something of the DAI ?

A Not in connection with the Institute.

Q Now, tell us what you did for the DAI.

A What I did for the DAI. In my position as employee for the Ministry

of Propaganda I discussed all things that were of interest for the Institute with the men there.

Q Did it have also a viewpoint of yours with respect to the AO ?

A No.

Q About how many meetings of the DAI would you say you attended ?

A Of the Executive Board ?

Q Yes.

A None.

Q How many public meetings would you say you attended ?

A Well, once a month or so.

Q And at those meetings, who was present ? Were all members of the general public allowed at those meetings ?

A No.

Q Who was at those meetings ?

A No, in the open meetings there were more or less lectures, but who was interested in them could go there, but there were mostly invited guests there. People interested in certain questions were there as guests.

Q Now, the DAI also had other functions besides being libraries, didn't it ?

A Yes, it had publications and distributed publications of interest for the German Abroad. I don't mean the German citizens, but I mean Germans in general. German descended people, yes ?

Q They worked more with the people of German descent, didn't they ?

A Yes.

Q As a matter of fact - - -

A Volksdeutsche.

Q As a matter of fact, these Volksdeutsche, when they came back from

- foreign countries, would go to Stuttgart, wouldn't they ?
- A Well, I wouldn't say all of them, but those were interested and know about the Institute.
- Q Well, I mean in this respect -- if they were coming to be repatriated to the Reich, ---
- A Yes.
- Q --- from abroad, wouldn't they all go to Stuttgart ?
- A No.
- Q Volksdeutsche ?
- A No, they --- for repatriation they applied for --- You mean for renewing their German citizenship or for becoming a German ?
- Q That's right.
- A Well, they didn't go through the Institute; they went through the Police departments, just like you went through in the States, in the Department of labor or Minister of Interior had a department for repatriation and naturalization.
- Q Wasn't the DAI the central organ for the connection between the homeland and German men abroad ?
- A In a certain respect, yes.
- Q In what respect would you say ?
- A Because there was no other institute that -- of that type in Germany that had such connections with German all over the world that the DAI did.
- Q And the DAI was tied up with the Nazi Party ?
- A No, it was no auxiliary of the Party.
- Q But it had connections with the Party ?
- A Well, just like anything in Germany, as far as that goes, but no special tie or connection. It worked all by itself. It had no Party superior

and it was financed by other institutes -- institutions- rather; not institutes; institutions.

Q Well, did you know that Dr. Steinacher was called the Reich Fuehrer of the VDA ?

A Well, he didn't have that title, Reichs Fuehrer of the VDA.

Q He didn't have that title ?

A No.

Q Did you know him ?

A He was in charge of the VDA. I know him by name; I didn't know him personally.

Q Wasn't he a member also of the DAI ?

A I don't know. I don't think so. Of course, I don't know for sure.

Q You don't know ?

A No, I don't know. He was not in charge of the VDA any more when I returned to Germany. I think that in the meantime the VOMI was formed and I think they took over the chairmanship of the Board of Directors of the VDA.

Q When you came back to Germany, you had with you a roster of the members of the Friends of New Germany ?

A You mean a list of members ? No.

Q Didn't you hand the list over to the Institute ?

A No, sir.

Q How did your Institute have the list of your members in the United States ?

A I don't think that they had a list of the members. I believe they had a list of the Headquarters of the different locals, and that list has been published in the publications of the Friends of New Germany.

Q How about the AO ? How did they get that list -- the membership list ?

- A I don't think they had it. They surely didn't get it out of me. I am positive that they were not interested in that list; there were too many American citizens in it.
- Q Didn't they ever ask you for a list of members ?
- A No, they never did.
- Q What part did you play in the training courses that they had in Stuttgart for the members of the AO ? They had what they call the Schulungslager.
- A In Stuttgart ?
- Q Did you ever hear of that ?
- A Not in Stuttgart.
- Q Well, where did they have it ?
- A I think they had a school in Berlin somewhere and in Hamburg they had one. Spanknoebel was there for a while.
- Q What part did you play in that Schulungslager ?
- A I didn't play any part. I never was there. I never even saw the school.
- Q Did you know that the DAI determined the course of studies in those schools ?
- A No. You mean to say that the DAI sent men to be schooled there ?
- Q They sent the subjects -- the different they had to be taught there --- But if you know nothing about that.
- A No, I don't. This is the first time I hear of it.
- Q Do you know what the purpose of the DAI was ?
- A To keep connections with the Germans abroad.
- Q And in keeping those connections to prevent the assimilation of the Germans abroad ?
- A No, I don't believe that was it, because they had years before Hitler

come to power in Germany we had connections with Germans abroad.

Q Yes, the DAI was there before Hitler.

A Yes, and they never asked anybody whether he was a German citizen or not, whether they had connections with it ---

Q Yes. Maybe you don't understand me. The whole purpose of the DAI -- that was the organization was there for -- to keep in touch with and teach Germans abroad so they would become anything else besides German citizens, even before Hitler.

A No, I think you are mistaken. The idea was to keep those people of German decent interested in Germany as a land of their fathers.

Q Yes, well that is stating it the other way around. But in keeping alive their interest in the fatherland it implied that they shouldn't become interested in the other countries ?

A Oh, no.

Q After all, when you were in the organization Friends of New Germany, isn't that what you were trying to do -- keep the Germans solid in America ?

A But not to keep them from becoming American citizens.

Q But not to help them.

A And no to influence them with regard -- not to interfere with the laws.

Q We know that, is a matter we can't deal with.

A Well, as you know, that is a matter we can't deal with.

Q Well, do you mean to say you don't even know that Kuhn had camps and they taught at those camps for children the "Heil Hitler"? You mean you didn't even know that ?

A Well, I didn't say that.

Q Well, wouldn't you say that is the way to preserve blood for Germany ?

A Well ---

Q That was, then, the purpose ?

A I believe it was still --- That wasn't to keep from loyalty in the country they were living in -- supposing, when they were citizens of America.

Q That they were teaching the other nationalities, for instance, to be loyal to Mussolini and still be good American citizens -- is that the thing that you want to talk about ? For instance, The Italians in America that were teaching Americans to be loyal to Mussolini -- to you mean to say that ---

A Not to Mussolini --- But in their own country they did that.

Q Well, what do you think Kuhn did with his Bund there -- that he was indoctrinating people to be loyal to their own country when he said that they owe allegiance to the Fuehrer ?

A If they did, it is not my own fault.

Q Let me show you something that flies in the face of everything you have been saying today. Does this look familiar to you ? You can look through for a few pages.

A Yes.

Q Does it look familiar to you ?

A Yes. Not exactly that, but something like that.

Q The text of it looks familiar to you. What does it closely resemble ?

A We had something like that in the Friends of New Germany.

Q You know what you are looking at now ?

A The program of the

Q Its constitution and by-laws ?

A Yes.

Q You had something similar to that in the Friends of New Germany ?

A Similar, but not exactly.

Q This was an improvement ?

A Yes. I should say it was.

Q Of course. Kuntze said he got that from you.

A That is what ?

Q You were just looking at a list that contains the names of the members.

A It was.

Q But you say that when Kuntze said he got that list from you that he was wrong when he says that ?

A That the same thing as the Friends -- I would say he was wrong.

Q You would say that he was wrong. Do you remember now some of the things you said in here that you have just read ?

A In there ?

Q That ?

(Interrogator read excerpt from Book)

Q That that I have just read. Do you remember ?

A About the organizational plan and all that ?

Q The set-up of the organization -- the plan is very similar to what ?

A Well, I should say to any national organization.

Q More specifically to the German National Organization.

A Similar to the NSDAP.

Q Yes.

A That is what I mean to say.

Q Yes, as a matter of fact, you could look at it further and study it, but I believe you will find it is actually the set-up of the Nazi Gau in Germany.

A Well, as a matter of organization, yes.

Q That 's right. You wouldn't say, for instance, that Kuntze wrote up

- this thing by himself? Would you say that?
- A Probably he copied it.
- Q But you wouldn't say he thought it up? It wasn't an original idea with Kuntze -- this extensive set-up of organization? You will see it provides there for uniforms.
- A I haven't seen it, but --
- Q Well, for that matter, I think your Friends of New Germany also had certain provisions ---
- A Oh, yes, we did.
- Q You had certain protective guards at the meetings?
- A To take care of the people at the meetings, yes.
- Q You had certain oaths?
- A No, not oaths.
- Q Your meetings would open and close a certain way?
- A Yes, we had that.
- Q Would you use the Hitler salute?
- A Yes.
- Q Did you, when you entered the new organization Friends of New Germany, did you think of those things yourself?
- A Most of them yes.
- Q All original with you?
- A Yes, we continued up to a little branch, and from a local we became a bigger organization, and it was necessary.
- Q But all these different provisions that constituted the plans of the Nazi Party in Germany were thought up by you and Spanknoebel without any reference to Germany?
- A No. At that time it was not necessary. We organized the Teutonia

organization.

Q But the Friends of New Germany came into existence in July 1937 ?

A July 1933, yes.

Q And then you got this bi-laws and constitution up ?

A Yes.

Q And there you had those various agencies ?

A Yes, we drew it up and agreed on them.

Q You called yourself a Bund and your different Chapters were organized and called Ortsgruppen?

A Ortsgruppen, yes.

Q Districts ?

A Yes, districts.

Q And you patterned yourselves after the German way of setting up an organization ?

A Well, in some ways, yes.

Q That was natural. You were German.

A Yes.

Q But how do you account for the strange similarity of things if you say you didn't get your ideas from Germany ? The coincidence is so strong.

A Well, we certainly brought with us some ideas of organizations from Germany and we found it necessary for our organization when it became so much bigger.

Q But when you first came from Germany, when you had the same Weimar organization in Germany, you didn't have ?

A Oh, yes.

Q You mean Weimar provided for a ---

A In almost every detail, It had different locals and names for local leader and jobs and positions and from State and District councils with all their different organizations, plans and positions.

Q You say all Parties had ?

A All Parties, yes.

Q The Social Democrats had such a social structure ?

A Oh, yes, Kuntze's Social Democrats. It wasn't strictly the Social Democratic Party which was ---

Q Well, so do Americans have organizations with progress and plans, but these were different.

A Well, as far as organizing things, Germans are known for that.

Q I know, but to have a very similar thing happen in 1923 and again to take place in 1933 is a very strange coincidence, because this organization was different from what Germany had.

A It wasn't so strange because a lot of things have been copied from what was in Germany, and the National Labor Party ---

Q Look at Kuntze's organization. Would you say that was copied from something ?

A Well, we do copy from other organizations.

Q But it certainly wouldn't be copied from American organizations.

A Not this, no.

Q Now, it would be copied from the German laws ?

A Yes.

Q Would you tell me that the \_\_\_\_\_ had such advisor ?  
to

A Not/such extremists.

Q Tell me what you mean by "extremes."

- A It is the details and using practically one and the same names -- not German; they used Americans' names.
- Q That wasn't coincident to Fritz Kuntze's program ?
- A He copied it.
- Q Now, where did he copy it from ?
- A I would say he copied it from the National Socialist Labor Party ?
- Q That's right. We were misunderstanding each other. I have said that before. I thought you were saying the Social Democrats never had such a thing to copy from.
- A No, but I want to say that that is true about every social organization in Germany, has certain fundamental plans, and they have it now, in fact, and are using very many of the same names they had before when Hitler was in power.
- Q All right, suppose we grant that now.
- A Yes.
- Q You would say that this was a copy of a political organization constitution and by-laws ?
- A yes.
- Q And so, if it was, the German-American Bund was a political organization ?
- A Yes.
- Q Now, what would you say the Friends in New Germany was ? Was that a political organization ?
- A Well, well to certain extent, yes. The only difference was ---
- Q Where was the difference between the Bund of Kuhn and the Bund that you were the leader of ?
- A The Friends of New Germany had the idea of assisting Germany to be understood in America, to help Germany in economic way.
- Q That is no different. Kuhn had no different purpose.

A Well, Kuhn, I believe, had a different one for America, or, in America. That, of course, I don't know.

Q You don't know his political program ?

A No, not as far as American is concerned.

Q Would it help your memory if I told you that in 1937 in Stuttgart ---

A Yes.

Q --- you met with peopled named Schwinn, Kappel, and Kunze. Does it help your memory ?

A Yes.

Q Do you remember whether you had such a meeting with them in a restaurant ?

A Well, we met there, yes, in a restaurant.

Q And as that meeting, do you remember what those people were representing ?

A Yes, the German-American Bund.

Q That's right. And why did they come to Germany in 1937 ?

A They visited Germany ?

Q At whose request ?

A That, I don't know. On their own, I believe.

Q At their own request ?

A Their own wish and own request.

Q Ant at whose request did they come to Stuttgart ?

A Their own wishes, request; I don't know.

Q Well, how was it that you met with them ?

A I asked them to come if they are in Germany, I ask them to come. I heard they were in Munich; I got a letter from someone they were there and I asked them to come to Stuttgart.

Q As a matter of fact, you got mail from them before the came saying

they were expecting a trip to Germany.

A No, not before. Not from America. I don't think so.

Q You didn't get it from any source ?

A I think I got news from Munich that they were in Munich and they wanted to visit Stuttgart. That is the way I believe it was.

Q Who in Munich would tell you about that ? Why should they tell you about it ?

A Well, because they knew that I was in America and I was interested in them/<sup>when</sup>the come as old friends ---

Q As Party members ?

A They were not Party members.

Q Any others than those three ?

A Neither Kunze, Schwinn, or Kappe were Party members, as far as I know.

Q But you knew definitely what they represented ?

A Oh, yes.

Q They were leaders of the German-American Bund, weren't they ?

A Yes.

Q And what did they discuss with you at that meeting ?

A Well, they discussed with me --- Well, they talked about the Bund and its organization over there, and then they discussed with me as a most important questions the fact that they didn't agree with the German regulation that German citizens should not be allowed to be members of the Bund or to form an auxiliary of the Bund.

Q Did you make a report to anybody about that meeting ?

A No, sir.

Q This was just a social meeting ?

A No, sir, it was an exception here.

- Q There were other people there ?
- A Yes. They showed a film there of some of the meetings of the Bund.
- Q And they were showing you the fine work they were doing for you ?
- A Well, we talked about it, yes.
- Q Did they come to you to get funds ?
- A Not that. I can't --- Not to me anyway.
- Q Why did they go to Munich ?
- A I think Kuhn was from Munich. He had his own people there.
- Q Kuhn. Kuhn wasn't with them. It was Kunze.
- A He wasn't.
- Q Why did they go there ? Why did they visit the people at the Braunhaus and ---
- A That I don't know, if they visited the Party and whom they visited there. That I don't know.
- Q Didn't they tell you they were carrying on the organization that you started in America ?
- A Yes, they did, sure. In their way.
- Q Hmm, Hmm. And these were all good friends of yours just paying you a visit ?
- A Yes.
- Q The only significance of that trip abroad ?
- A That I don't know.
- Q Would you guess as to why they came to Germany ?
- A Well, I suppose they were anxious to meet certain people in Germany.
- Q What kind of people do you think they were anxious to meet ?
- A Well, for instance, the Headquarters of the VDA in Berlin.

- Q Why were you interested in seeing those people ?
- A Well, because the VDA was an organization that was keeping contact with Germans Abroad for many decades already.
- Q To get literature. They were to get literature from the VDA and come to see people working in VDA ?
- A Yes.
- Q That is a good reason. But why should these three citizens come to Germany in 1937 besides that reason ?
- A Well, there were very many visitors who went to Germany each year. It was natural for these people to come; each one was born in Germany.
- Q But these weren't such visitors. These weren't the American tourists. These were American citizens who were leading the Bund in America.
- A Yes.
- Q And they would have to get a German visa to come to Germany, wouldn't they ?
- A Yes, all of them; every visitor did.
- Q And to get a German visa in 1937 you had to show something -- some good reasons for going to Germany ?
- A I don't know about that. Germany had very many visitors.
- Q Yes, but Germany could tell certain visitors that they didn't want them to visit Germany. I mean the Consulate could stop certain people from coming across.
- A That is possible. I believe that any other country could do the same thing.
- Q This Bund was being encouraged by Germany to do its work, wasn't it ?
- A I imagine.
- Q This Bund even had German officials speak at their meetings in

America ?

A As guests, I believe.

Q Up to a certain time you knew that ? You were being informed about that, weren't you ?

A No, I wasn't being informed about it, no.

Q You never heard about what was taking place in America after you left ?

A Except what I was told by visitors, is all.

Q Did you ever hear from your brother ?

A No.

Q Would your brother ever write to you ?

A No.

Q Didn't Peter ever write to you after you came back to Germany ?

A No.

Q Did you ever write to Peter ?

A No.

Q Well, you were a very good family man.

A Yes.

Q Well, you left two brothers in America. Didn't you write to them ?

A No. Yes, I might have written when I first got here that I arrived, but I didn't keep any conversation with either letters or any other way with anybody in the United States from the time that I arrived until now.

Q You never gave us your membership in the AO, did you ?

A What did you mean ?

Q From the time you became a member of the AO you never gave it up.  
You were never expelled from the AO ?

A I was never expelled, no.

Q You never gave it up.

A I lost it automatically when I quit paying dues in 19 --

Q That is your version.

A No, that is correct, according to the laws of the Party --

Q Well, we disagree on that and we are not going to go into it. But, nevertheless, when you came back to Germany until the end of the war you were considered in the AO ?

A No, I was considered to be in AO from 1937 when I got that job in Stuttgart representing the AO in the City up till 1939, when I left Stuttgart.

Q Well, how in 1939 did you know that you were no longer AO ?

A Well, I was automatically out of the AO because I couldn't hold that position any more; I was not in Stuttgart any more, and I was only of value for the City, for the AO in the City, as long as I was there.

Q Well, did you continue using a uniform until the end of the war ?

A No, I used my political uniform again when I became a Kreisleiter, in 1943, but meanwhile I was -- I had permission to wear the uniform of the SS, where I held an honorary rank.

Q How high a rank did you have in the SS ?

A Obersturmbannfuhrer.

Q How many times did you see Bohle when you returned to Germany ? You told us about one meeting.

A I met him every time he was in Stuttgart.

Q Did he come to Stuttgart often ?

A Not very often, maybe three or four times a year; not more.

Q And when he came to Stuttgart those times, did Grothe come with him ?

A Mostly, yes.

Q Why was Grothe interested in Stuttgart, if he was the leader of the American section in the AO ?

- A It was not only that. He was the organizer of the meeting of the Germans Abroad everywhere.
- Q You would say that was his only interest in Stuttgart ?
- A As Stuttgart had the name of "City of the Germans Abroad" it had many visitors.
- Q And that included all Germans Abroad even if they were Volksdeutsche ?
- A Yes.
- Q And so the AO had a special interest in Stuttgart ?
- A Had a special interest in Stuttgart, yes.
- Q And when Bohle came to visit Stuttgart and you met him ---
- A Yes.
- Q --- what was discussed between you and him ?
- A Organisation matters, plans for the meetings, plans for cultural program during that convention and financial matters in connection with that yearly meeting.
- Q But you did not get any pay from the AO ?
- A No.
- Q What was your salary as a member of the Propaganda Ministry in Stuttgart ?
- A When I first started in Stuttgart it was around 300 marks a month.
- Q And when you finished ?
- A Around 500 marks a month.
- Q Did you any additional income from any other sources ?
- A No, sir.
- Q Did Bohle ever discuss with you the American situation when he came to Stuttgart ?
- A No.

Q Did Grothe ?

A No.

Q Did anybody ?

A We spoke about America but not to -- in a way that we would discuss political problems in America.

Q Yes. In discussing it did you discuss the American situation with reference to what a Bund was being investigated for ? Did it ever come up for discussion ?

A Not as a problem. We might have spoken of it, that Kuhn made such and such a mistake. It is possible that we heard of it, but it wasn't a purpose of the meeting.

Q Yes, I know, but it was a problem. The Bund in America was a problem ?

A It certainly was a problem.

Q And did you ever hold conversations with Grothe about the Bund and its problem ?

A Well, in connection with the presence of Bohle, yes. They were in the same line of thought. As a rule, they were very critical about Kuhn, his work and his behavior in America and the trouble he was making. In other words, they didn't agree with him.

Q Did you see Kuhn when he came from America in 1936 ?

A I saw Kuhn when he returned from America in 1936. He came to Stuttgart. He was up to my office and we sat there and he told me about the Bund and he said that his intention to have the German citizens in the Bund or an auxiliary of the Bund were not approved by his critics.

Q Meaning who ? By critics.

A Well, for instance, Bohle, and representative of the Friends of New Germany.

- Q He told you he visited Bohle again, trying to get German citizens in his organization ?
- A I don't know whether he visited Bohle, but he was with Bohle. Before when he was in Stuttgart he was with Bohle.
- Q Well, did he tell you that in any conversation that he was trying to get Bohle to change his program in America?
- A No, but when he found out that I took the same viewpoint -- we were even quarreling about that question -- and he didn't leave on very friendly terms on account of that.
- Q You know that Kuhn also saw Hitler when he was in Berlin ?
- A In 1936 during the Olympics.
- Q Did Kuhn say he spoke to Hitler about this problem ?
- A No.
- Q Why was it so impossible for you and Kuhn to try to get German citizens working in the organization ?
- A For me ?
- Q Yes. Well, you said in the Friends of New Germany you didn't want to see them fall out.
- A When I first began we had them in it.
- Q Well, ---
- A And then some became American citizens and then the organization was mixed between German and American citizens.
- Q But when the decision was made you didn't want who were German citizens dropped from the organization ?
- A No.
- Q Well, that was the decision that was taken up in 1935 in Berlin ?

- A I wanted to know why this order was given. Well, I didn't like it, that's right.
- Q And Kuhn was of the same mind in 1936, that he still didn't like that order and he still would rather have the organization working with German citizens ?
- A But the difference was that Kuhn's organization interfered with politics and the Friends in New Germany didn't.
- Q How was it interfering ?
- A Well, he said that it was a political organization and called himself an American political organizer, actively running in politics.
- Q They weren't running for office ?
- A Well, I suppose they were too small to run for an office. Maybe if it was strong enough, he would have done it.
- Q What were they interested in American politics ? What were they trying to do ?
- A What were they trying to do ?
- Q They had a purpose. What were they aiming at in the American Government ?
- A Well, to have friendly connections with Germany, with with Germany on friendly friendly terms.
- Q Well, the countries were on friendly terms.
- A Well, to a certain extent, yes, but not entirely.
- Q In which respects weren't they on friendly terms ?
- A Well, take for instance the propaganda against Germany that was in American newspapers.
- Q Well, I mean --- That is nothing more than of setting what propaganda that there was in German papers about America.
- A I don 't think that there was as much criticism in the German newspapers

about American as there was criticism in the American newspapers about Germany, as far as I know.

Q Well, you were handling propaganda. Now, you ought to know.

A Yes.

Q And it seems to me that there is something missing when you say that we had more propaganda against Germany than Germany had against the United States. Wouldn't you say it was at least equal?

A No, until the war broke out, then yes before that, no.

Q You draw the line then in 1941?

A I did what?

Q You draw the line then in 1941?

A I wouldn't say exactly in 1941, but when the war broke out in 1939 and the criticisms of the American Government and its institutions, that the acts of the presses -- publications that were made by the Press and other publications, during the war a lot of criticism was in the German Press, but before that I believe it was much less written about America in Germany than it was written about Germany in America in the newspapers. That is my opinion, of course.

Q Well, take your opinion. Would you say that the propaganda that America was putting in her papers was quite a bit caused by the activities of Kuhn?

A Well, that is possible, yes.

Q You know that in 1936, or first in 1927 the Bund was being investigated by Congress?

A Yes. I was always surprised that during my time -- that is, during the time I was in the States and was in charge of the Friends of New Germany,

there was not, although I never had such a difficulty as Kuhn did.

Q Did Kuhn ever write to you when you came back to Germany ?

A No.

Q Did you ever write to Kuhn ?

A No.

Q How did you know that the Bund was doing in America after you left ?

A From the stories that were told by former members of the Bund that returned.  
. And I didn't keep contact with the Bund because I didn't want to interfere with their business.

Q Did anyone tell you not to interfere in their business ?

A Nobody told me but I thought it was correct to do so. And I believe it was wise for me to keep out of it. In fact, I couldn't have helped them anyway, even if I wanted to.

Q In 1939 when the war broke out, who was instrumental in keeping you out of the Army ?

A What do you mean ?

Q Who saved you from going into the fighting forces ?

A Nobody did. I applied --- I voluntarily applied to become a soldier.

Q Why didn't they take you ?

A But they didn't take me because I didn't have any training and they wanted only trained men, and their quota was filled, and they needed trained men.

Q Only because of your lack of training they didn't take you ?

A Well, it must have been one reason because they had enough soldiers who volunteered when war broke out.

Q Well, there came a time when they needed men. Why didn't you go in

then ?

A Well, it wasn't up to me then any more.

Q Who was it up to ?

A Up to the Gauleiter in the district I was working in.

Q You mean he thought you too indispensable in the job you were doing to go into the Army ?

A Yes.

Q When you were working with the Einwarderzentrale in Litzmannstadt ?

A When I was working with them ?

Q That's right.

A I haven't been working with the Einwarderzentrale.

Q What was your job in Litzmannstadt ?

A I was working with the Ministry of Propaganda Office in Litzmannstadt and I took care of Germans that were kept in camps and brought from a number of countries in Eastern Europe.

Q All right. Do you know that in certain camps the AO had their representatives for people, Germans that came from other countries ?

A Yes.

Q In that particular camp where you were, were you the only AO man there ?

A I was there as an AO man in Litzmannstadt.

Q Were there other AO men there ?

A Not in Litzmannstadt, no. And besides, there were about 40 camps in Litzmannstadt.

Q Have you ever visited any of the AO camps ?

A No. There was no AO camps.

- Q No AO --- I think you misunderstand. I am referring to AO camps which were set up to receive Germans who were living abroad and came back to Germany.
- A Yes. I have never been in one of these camps and I have never had anything to do with any these camps. I have had no connection by letter or anything else.
- Q Do you know people who came back from the United States after 1939 who went through those camps ?
- A No. I know people that came back but I don't know whether they went through camps and what camps they went through.
- Q Did you know that Skorzeny had access to draft people into that action sanctioned by the AO ?
- A I have heard of it but after the capitulation.
- Q What did you hear about it ?
- A Well, in one of the camps we spoke it -- in one of the internment camps, that is, after the capitulation. No, I didn't know that.
- Q Did you ever know what the tasks of jurisdiction of the AO were ?
- A As far as what is concerned ?
- Q As far as their work abroad was concerned, what were their tasks ? What were they going to do abroad ?
- A In America ?
- Q Yes.
- A Well, to keep the members of the Party together, inform them about the happenings in Germany, and give them orders as to their behavior. Besides that, we were to see that the Germans behave themselves and obey the laws of the countries in which they lived.
- Q Let me read you something on the foreign organization of the NSDAP.
- "The foreign organization has the task of sending the German citizens who live abroad or are engaged in navigation for the National Socialistic view

of the world and of keeping alive in every single German abroad the principle of the National Community." Wouldn't you say that that is what the Friends of New Germany were trying to do ?

A No. Not to such an extent, no.

Q And would you say that that is what the German-American Bund was trying to do ?

A I imagine to some extent, yes. Even the Friends of New Germany, to some extent. But the Friends of New Germany would have -- over half of the members that were not of German descent.

Q For the same purpose ?

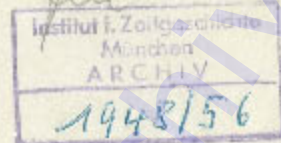
A Yes.

Q That was the purpose, wasn't it, that the German organization abroad who worked under the Party -- to keep alive a German community in these foreign countries ?

A Well, to keep the Germans together solely, and ---

Q That's right, as a community.

A Well, sir, I don't know what the idea "community" how far it goes.



INTERROGATION OF FRITZ GESSIEL (resumed) 23 January 1948

Q You became the leader of the Friends of New Germany towards the end of 1933 ?

A Yes.

Q And that is when you moved to the New York headquarters ?

A Yes.

Q And when you took over that office you had eight to ten people in that office ?

A Yes.

Q And you don't know how much the weekly salaries amounted to for these people ?

A No, I don't know that any more.

Q Where did you bank your money ?

A I don't know where.

Q But you did have a bank account ?

A Yes.

Q Was it a checking account ?

A Yes, a checking account.

Q What did you do with that organization ? What work were they doing ?

A Well, we were the headquarters of about thirty locals that existed in different parts of the United States.

Q And what was the program for the organization ?

A The program of the organization was to tell the American public the truth about Germany, and later on to fight the Jewish boycott against German products.

Q How did you go about telling the American public the truth about Germany ?

- A Through a number of publications that we had in New York in the Deutsche Zeitung and in Chicago, Weckruf and through meetings that we held in different locals.
- Q Was there any other medium you used ?
- A Yes, we sold German newspapers, illustrated papers, books and magazines.
- Q Pamphlets ?
- A No, we printed those ourselves. I am talking about things we got from Germany.
- Q And these illustrated books you got from Germany were coming from whom in Germany ?
- A They were bought in Munich by the Franz Desch Verlag, that was the central headquarters for the Eher Verlag, that is a publication office, that is where it was bought.
- Q That was the official Nazi Party publication office ?
- A Yes.
- Q And when you say you bought this material you mean you sent them checks in payment ?
- A We sent them checks in payment or money orders.
- Q The money orders or checks you sent were they made out to the Nazi Party ?
- A They were made out to the publications office.
- Q But how much in dollars did you spend for that material, say a month or year, roughly figuring ?
- A I don't know the exact number -- the exact amount but it changed from time to time because we got more members in our organization and sold more of these publications.
- Q Well, pick out any specific time you remember.
- A Well, I don't think it was more than two or three hundred dollars we spent on these publications in Germany.

- Q What material did you get from Germany that you didn't pay for ?
- A I didn't get any material we didn't pay for.
- Q You never received material from DAI ?
- A No.
- Q Never received material from the propaganda ministry in Germany ?
- A No.
- Q And these answers of "No" cover the years 1933 to 1935 ?
- A Yes.
- Q How did you ever get any material in America that was free ?
- A Yes.
- Q Where did you get that material from ?
- A From the German railroad information office; from the German consulate.
- Q Did you get any from the German chamber of commerce ?
- A No. From German steamship lines.
- Q From German steamship lines ? Which one ? The North German Lloyd, Hamburg-American ?
- A Well, they were the same they were united, both lines.
- Q From who in the consulate did you get material ?
- A Well, from the cultural department there.
- Q Who was the man then in charge ?
- A I think Gienanth.
- Q Did you know what affiliations this man Gienanth had in Germany ?
- A I understood he was a representative of the ministry of propaganda in the United States for New York.
- Q Did you know he was also attached to the Washington Embassy ?
- A Yes, he told me that.
- Q Didn't you know he was the Gestapo chief for America ?

A No.

Q It never came to your attention ?

A No.

Q Did you ever ask Gienanth the shadow somebody ?

A No, sir.

Q Did you ever get anything from the Embassy in Washington ?

A No. I was only at the German Embassy once in my life. That was May 1st, 1934.

Q Did Fritz Kuhn work with you in the organization, Friends of New Germany ?

A Yes, he was in charge of the Middle West with headquarters in Chicago, but he lived in Detroit.

Q When did he become a member ?

A It must have been in 1933. He was at first the local leader in Detroit and later on in charge of the Middle West.

Q Did you ever send a list of your membership to someone in Germany ?

A No.

Q Did anyone in Germany ever ask you for a list of your membership ?

A No, sir.

Q When did Fritz Kuhn become an officer of your organization ?

A In 1933.

Q Your relationship with Fritz Kuhn was a friendly one ?

A Yes, sir.

Q Wasn't your organization trying to reach Germans in America ?

A What do you mean ?

Q Wasn't your organization trying to reach the German elements in America ?

- A Yes, that's right.
- Q And when you told us you were arranging meetings and sending literature, it was to German elements, was it not ?
- A It was to the Reich citizens of German descent, yes, that's right.
- Q And your membership never exceeded a thousand people, you say ?
- A No, I didn't say that. At that time we spoke of the membership yesterday, the membership was about twelve to fifteen hundred, when I got to New York.
- Q What was the highest membership you ever had ?
- A Well, we had fifty-six locals and I think it was between twelve and fifteen thousand but we have had a great many more sympathizers.
- Q And among your membership would say forty percent were German citizens ?
- A No, not in 1935 any more. In the beginning yes, but not later on. I think the membership was about sixty percent American citizens and forty percent Germans.
- Q While you were head of the organization did you ever receive letters or regulations from the AO ?
- A No. The only information from the AO I got was that Party members were not allowed to show any political activity in the United States. This was in the latter part of 1933 and the next time we got an order was -- it was practically an order -- was in the latter part of 1935, that German citizens were not allowed to be members of the Friends of New Germany. That was the order I got.
- Q The second order, when was that you got it ?
- A That was in October 1935.
- Q How did you get that order ?

- A As I told you yesterday the German consul, German Doctor Jaeger told some members of the Chicago local, amongst them my brother Peter Geseibl that German citizens had to leave the Friends of New Germany. That is how I got this information.
- Q Your brother Peter Geseibl, was he an official of the Chicago local ?
- A Not at that time any more but he was pretty well known because he was for a great many years in Chicago and a member for many years.
- Q Was your brother a member of the Nazi Party ?
- A Not, I think he was a member before 1933.
- Q Did he ever give up his membership ?
- A Well, he was supposed to give it up when he became an American citizen.
- Q Do you know that the fact that a German became an American citizen didn't preclude that he remain a German citizen ?
- A No, I didn't know that. You mean to say an American citizen could at the same time stay German citizen as far as the German authorities are concerned ?
- Q Yes.
- A No, I didn't know that.
- Q Do you know that Bolle was born in Britain ?
- A Yes.
- Q You know that Bolle until 1937 was still considered a German citizen ?  
Do you know that the German law says a man can have actual citizenship in one country, and still be considered a German citizen ?
- A No, I didn't know that but still I know that such became my boy born in Chicago is according to American law an American citizen and because his father and mother were German citizens he is at the same time a German citizen.

- Q Until he reaches twenty-one when he can take either one or the other.
- A Well, I just talk about that because I know it - it is in my family.
- Q Well, I am just trying to see how much you knew about German law because you dealt with German citizens.
- A I never heard of that.
- Q Now when you heard that German citizens must leave your organization what did you do ?
- A I went to Germany.
- Q Did you tell anyone in Germany that you were going to go ?
- A No.
- Q Just took a surprise trip ?
- A Yes.
- Q And when you came to Germany, you went where ?
- A To Berlin.
- Q And where did you go in Berlin ?
- A I lived in a hotel and called up the AO and I was told there will be a meeting within a few days where this question will be discussed.
- Q And who told you this in the AO ?
- A Grothe.
- Q And who was Mr. Grothe ?
- A Mr. Grothe was in charge of the American department of the AO.
- Q And did he at the same time tell you who was going to be at that meeting ?
- A No.
- Q And so a few days later you went to a meeting in the AO ?

A Yes.

Q And at that meeting who presided ?

A Mr. Grothe.

Q And did you see anyone there you knew ?

A Mr. Menzing.

Q And who was Mr. Menzing ?

A Mr. Menzing was the representative of the German labor front in America.

Q And what was his position in America ?

A He was employed by the North German Lloyd, if that is what you mean. Do you mean his political position ?

Q He was employed by the North German Lloyd and also what were the other positions he had ?

A As I said before he was in charge of the German labor front in America .

Q But was he attached to the consulate in New York ?

A I don't think so.

Q When you went to see Mr. Menzing in New York where did you go to see him ?  
At the German consulate ?

A No.

Q Where was the office of the German consulate ?

A He was with the North German Lloyd.

Q But it was on the same floor as the German consulate ?

A I think it was.

Q At that meeting in Berlin did you find out that Menzing had any other title ?

A Well, I was under the impression that he had the title of gauleiter

Boble to take care of the German citizens that were members of the Deutsche Arbeits front.

Q And of course of the Party ?

A No, not at the same time.

Q Well, wasn't he the representative of the NSDAP in the United States at the same time ?

A In 1935, no.

Q Didn't he take care of the interests of the NSDAP in the States ?

A No, I don't think in 1935 any more. It was before.

Q He held the job before Traeger ?

A Yes, Mr. Traeger was the leader of the NSDAP in the New York area.

Q Did Traeger have the same job as Menzing had ?

A No, Menzing had to take care of all German citizens that were members of the German labor front in the whole United States and Traeger did not.

Q Well, Traeger just took care of the part which Menzing was concerned with as far as the NSDAP in New York was concerned ?

A Yes.

Q You paid your Party dues in New York, didn't you ?

A I didn't pay any party dues in New York since 1933 when the order was given that Party members were not allowed to work in the Friends of New Germany.

Q Were you then disqualified from the Party ?

A Automatically I was disqualified.

Q How were you notified ?

A I wasn't notified, I knew it. If you don't pay membership dues you are not a Party member.

Q But until the very end - your Party membership dates back to 1925.

Or was it 1936 ?

A No, to 1926.

Q And it doesn't state you were expelled from the Party ?

A No. I had to apply again in 1936 when I returned.

Q But you retained your number ?

A I retained my number, yes.

Q Who did you pay your Party dues to in New York before 1933 ?

A I think to Engelberg Roell,

Q And he had what job in the New York consuls office ?

A He didn't have a job in the New York consul's office.

Q Where did he have a job ?

A He was with me in the Bund.

Q I thought you said this Bund wasn't supposed to have any Party members in it ?

A That was before that order was given.

Q How did you know he was supposed to collect Party fees ?

A That was known. He was the treasurer of the New York local of the NSDAP. That existed since 1928 or 1929. There was a local up to 1933.

Q Who was the leader of the local ?

A I know Roell was the treasurer but I can't remember the name of the leader.

Q Now you say that after 1933 you were not a member of the Party any more. You didn't pay your dues and you didn't become a member of the Party again until you applied in Germany in 1936. Why did you go to Germany 1936 ?

A In 1936. I went to Germany in 1935 because I wanted to see the order

given by Reich Minister Hess forbidding German citizens to be members of the Friends of New Germany.

Q But you were not longer a member of the Party - why did you go there ?

A Because I was a German citizens

Q You know that every German citizen in America during 1935 couldn't go back to America if he wanted to ?

A What not ?

Q I can tell you - but all I am trying to find out is why you, not longer a member of the Party were so interested in the Party regulations, interested enough to take a trip to straighten out something.

A It wasn't the Party doing there that was a law by the German government.

Q You know that Hess was a German leader - he was on the Party side of the government - not the state.

A That doesn't make any difference. He was a minister of the government, a member of the cabinet.

Q It makes a difference to people like you. He was your Chief.

A As a German citizen, yes.

Q As a Party member, not a German citizen.

A Not in the situation, that existed then. This law was not only applicable to German citizens who were Party members. It applied to all German citizens and it shows his authority went over that, as a member of the German cabinet he gave this order that German citizens had to resign their membership from the organization Friends of New Germany in America.

Q Do you mean to tell us that in 1935 you didn't know that Hess was a leader of the National Socialist Party in Germany ?

A I didn't say that.

Q You say he was not ?

A No, not that either. I know he was and still he was a member of the German cabinet.

Q We know that the first order that came to your attention in 1933 was the Party members should withdraw from your organization ?

A Yes, that came from Bolle.

Q And you know that Bolle was working under Hess ?

A Everyone was working under Hess because he was gauleiter of the Party.

Q In the Party sphere of Germany Hess was the leader. It was Hess who appointed Bolle as gau leader of the AO ?

A I think it was Adolf Hitler because I am pretty sure Hess couldn't appoint anyone.

Q We will put it this way. Adolf Hitler was the fuehrer of the Party and the man who was his deputy in charge of Party affairs was who ?

A It was Hess.

Q And wasn't Bolle one of Hess' right hand men in Party affairs ?

A Yes.

Q How you came to this Berlin meeting as just an ordinary German citizen, that is what you want us to understand ?

A Yes.

Q And at the meeting you spoke about your objections to an order given by Hess. What did you say ?

A I said I didn't think such a law would have been necessary.

Q And who answered your argument ?

A Mr. Mensing.

Q What did he say ?

A He said that he approved of such a law and after I had seen that I couldn't change anything on the situation. I was told that the German citizens must leave the Friends the Friends of New Germany by December 1st, 1935. Mr. Menzing doubted that I would be able to do that. He was afraid that some of the members would refuse to obey this order and he wanted the official German representative in the United States, the Embassy and consulate to publish a notice in the American press which declared that the German citizens are forbidden to be members of the Friends of New Germany. I said that I opposed such a plan and that I am willing to fulfill this order at the set date, that is December 31st, 1935. There was a discussion between me and Menzing but the whole meeting ended with my promise that I would withdraw all members that are German citizens. That is about all that was discussed in that meeting.

Q Did you discuss the formation of another organization to take the place of the Friends of New Germany ?

A No, I did the following thing. I said I would try when I returned to the United States to have a Steuben Society of Americans take over the American citizens that were members of the Friends of New Germany and when I did return I asked the German consul to talk with Mr. Theodor Hoffmann who was in charge of the Steuben Society and asked him what he thought of such a plan. Mr. Hoffmann refused and I went to Chicago and called a meeting of all locals of the Middle West and told them that it was the order of the German government for all German citizens to resign from membership and that I would leave it up to that meeting to decide what they will do with the rest of the members. I at the same time asked Mr. Kuhn to offer himself as a candidate

if they should continue the organization. Mr. Kuhn agreed and received a vote of confidence from the representatives of the locals of the district Middle West. After that I returned to New York and called a meeting there and the representatives of the locals in the eastern district agreed to the decision of the Chicago meeting and elected Mr. Kuhn as my successor. By the end of the year 1935 I had left the Friends of New Germany and in March 1936 I returned to Germany.

Q And you say all that took in the short time between November and December 1935, these meetings, discussions, regulations, all on a democratic basis ?

A Yes.

Q You said nothing was said in Berlin what should be done before your return ?

A Yes.

Q Wasn't this discussed in Berlin ?

A No.

Q Didn't they say why they didn't want German citizens ?

A Yes.

Q Why ?

A As far as I understand it was the wish of the American State Department that German citizens should keep out of politics.

Q Why are you anxious to put them into the Steuben society ?

A Because I thought then these men would have an opportunity to continue an interest with America.

Q But the Steuben Society was composed of American citizens, not Reich citizens ?

A What I wanted was the American citizens who were formerly members of

the Friends of New Germany.

Q We misunderstood you. We thought you wanted the German citizens to join the Steuben Society. Why did you have to talk to Hoffmann -- the Steuben Society will accept any German ?

A Well, I don't think so. In all these years there were quarrels and discussions. The Steuben Society did not agree with things that were done with the Friends of New Germany and as national chairman of the Steuben Society of America he was an old German-American.

Q Didn't you and Kuhn organize the German-America Bund as successor of the Friends of New Germany ?

A No, sir. Not I and Kuhn, Kuhn did it alone. I left Kuhn the organization with all German citizens and I resigned as leader from membership.

Q In favor of Kuhn, and you just changed the name ?

A No, that was in an election in Chicago and in New York.

Q Was the election initiated by you ?

A That is possible. When I left the organization I thought it was my duty to state what person I thought should take charge of the rest if they continued.

Q Was the Steuben Society or Fritz Kuhn suggested at this meeting in Berlin ?

A No, I got the idea of the Steuben Society on the way back.

Q How about Fritz Kuhn ?

A He wasn't discussed at all. He wasn't even known.

Q What did the Germans in Berlin think would happen to the Friends of New Germany ?

A The representatives of the foreign office seemed to be under the

impression on the organization would fall apart.

Q And were not interested in having another organization of the same views only with Americans in it ?

A I didn't think so. The relations were no good between me and the German representatives of the German foreign office in America.

Q When was the German Bund organized ?

A 1936.

Q What month ?

A I don't know. The Party had a national convention but I don't know the date. It was in 1936 I believe it was after I left the United States.

Q You said they had a national convention in 1936 and formed the organization ?

A Yes.

Q You are talking about the Buffalo convention ?

A I don't know where the convention was.

Q You left America in March 1936 ?

A Yes.

Q Why did you leave America ?

A Because I wanted to return to Germany, back to my old folks. There was no use instaying in America. I wouldn't have gotten a job, no newspaper would take me in my trade.

Q With all the friends you had in America you couldn't get a job ?

A Not in my trade.

Q What about the AD ?

A The AD couldn't give me a job, they couldn't pay me.

Q You don't care who pays you ?

- A I should say I do.
- Q The German government would have paid you, they paid Traeger.
- A Nobody made me an offer, they even said if I wanted to return to Germany, to go back. That was the reason I didn't become an American citizen. I promised my folks to return to Germany.
- Q Are you folks still alive ?
- A No, not any more.
- Q With alle thise thousands of people you knew in America, you couldn't get a job at your trade ?
- A I don't think any newspaper in America would take me after being so active.
- Q What about the German newspaper ?
- A The situation was if you were known as a supporter of Hitler's Germany it was very hard.
- Q I sn't it a fact when you were in Berlin you decided you were going to America to wind up this organization ? It wasn't because you were not able to get a job ?
- A No.
- Q But wasn't it discussed at this Berlin meeting and didn't they tell you when you came back you would got a job in Stuttgart, a job wasn't troubling you ? I am trying to see why you want back to Germany ?
- A I went back in the first place because I wanted to return to Germany and keep my promise and in the second place I was sure I couldn't get a job in my trade.
- Q Why didn't you stay in Germany ? You were there in November 1932 ?
- A Because I wanted to take the German citizens out of the Friends of

New Germany.

Q Why couldn't that have been done from Berlin ?

A Well, I was in charge of the organization, I was their leader for all these years.

Q What difference did it make - now you are through the organization so Kuhn could take over as leader ?

A That was done after that.

Q Why did you have to go back ?

A I did go back to arrange that all citizens be taken out of the Friends of New Germany.

Q Why did you have to do that ?

A Because I felt it was my duty. All these men I had been in charge of all these years. I find that natural. This organization paid for the trip to clear up that situation which existed.

Q When you were in Germany in 1933 you saw your mother and father. Wasn't that redeeming your promise ?

A No, because I promised to return entirely.

Q Well, if the Friends of New Germany wouldn't have folded up you wouldn't have stayed ?

A No.

Q I am getting at the facts that took place. This was all a Party transaction?

A No.

Q You mean again in 1936 you came back to Germany without the Party knowing anything about it?

A What do you mean ?

Q Like you did in 1935 - you didn't tell them in advance ?

- A I took a trip in the interests of the organization. I was in charge -- I was sent by the organization and I returned again with the result of my trip and the result was to take out the German citizens from the locals of the organization.
- Q Well, if you didn't return the organization would go smath and they would be out of it anyway ?
- A That is possible. I felt it my duty.
- Q You felt it your duty not only to your friends in America, you had a double duty didn't you ? Didn't you have a duty to your country ? Didn't that come first ?
- A Accordings to that I would have to stay in America.
- Q According to the orders of your government, that is my opinion. That is more to the facts. You know in 1935 if the German government wanted a German to go to Japan he went to Japan.
- A Well, maybe.
- Q Why do you say "maybe"?
- A Well, I do say maybe. Nobody gave me such orders.
- Q Would a man like you with the experience you had with the Nazi Party -- because when they sent you to Lodz you went, didn't you ?
- A When they sent me to Lodz I went of my own free will.
- Q And when they sent you to Kohnin ?
- A It was an offer that was made to me by the gauleiter of the gau. I could have said no and I did say yes.
- MR. LEWIS: I want you to think this over. We are going to take this up again and we are treading on dangerous ground because what I am asking you any Hitler Youth could answer; as to what policy was in the Third Reich.
- I want you to think it over. At 2:00 o'clock we will resume the examination.

25-0946-51

erd. Gold. v

25.1.48

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

1948/56

WIDERSPÄTTLICHE ERKLÄRUNG

Ich, Fritz GISSIBL, schwöre, sage aus und erkläre:

- 1.) Ich bin am 9. März 1903 in Nuernberg (Deutschland) geboren.  
 Vom Jahre 1905-13 besuchte ich die Volksschule und von 1913-19 die Realschule in Nuernberg. Von 1919-21 war ich Praktikant auf dem Staatsgut in Weiherstephan und anschliessend zwei Semester auf der Hochschule fuer Landwirtschaft und Brauerei in Weiherstephan. Im Jahre 1923 studierte ich zwei Semester Landwirtschaft an der Universitaet Hamburg.  
 Im Jahre 1923 wanderte ich nach Amerika aus. Nach kurzem Aufenthalt in Grand Rapides Mich. ging ich nach Chicago und arbeitete bis 1931, als Zeitungsdrucker bei der "Chicago Daily News", anschliessend bei verschiedenen anderen amerikanischen Zeitungen in Chicago. Im Herbst 1913 ging ich nach New York, arbeitete kurz beim Norddeutschen Lloyd und ab November 1933 hauptsaechlich beim Bund "Freunde des neuen Deutschland".
- 2.) Seit 1926 bin ich Mitglied der NSDAP mit der No. 45200. Ferner gehoerte ich seit 1937 der SS an, wo ich den Dienstrang eines Obersturmbannfuhrers ehrenhalber bis zum Schluss innehatte. Mein hoechster Dienstrang in der Partei war Kreisleiter. Ab 1936 bin ich im Besitze des goldenen Ehrenzeichens der NSDAP und des Kriegsverdienstkreuzes I. Klasse.
- 3.) Nachdem ich von 1933-35 Fuehrer des Bundes "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" in den Vereinigten Staaten sowie seit 1932 Mitglied der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP bis 1939 war, bin ich in der Lage, folgende Erklarung abzugeben:

Im Jahre 1924 gruendete ich, zusammen mit einigen deutschen Herren, in Chicago die Organisation "Teutonia", deutscher, nationaler Gesinnung. Der organisatorische Aufbau war sehnlich dem der NSDAP. Ich war der Leiter dieser Organisation, die sich ueber Chicago, Detroit und

Cincinnati erstreckte. Zusammen mit anderen, aehnlich gearteten Organisationen bildeten die Gruppen der "Teutonia" im Jahre 1933 die Organisation "Freunde des neuen Deutschland". Es waren vertreten Gruppen aus Los Angeles, San Franzisko, New York, Newark N.J. Die Fuehrung des Bundes "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" uebernahm Heinz SPANKNOEBEL, Detroit, der im November 1933 die Vereinigten Staaten fluchtartig verliess, worauf ich die Fuehrung der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" hauptsaechlich uebernahm und nach New York uebersiedelte.

Der Zweck dieser Organisation war u.a., Reichsdeutsche und amerikanische Staatsangehoerige in eine Organisation zusammenzufassen, die den Angriffen, die auf das nationalsozialistische Deutschland gerichtet wurden, begegnete, um den juedischen Boykott deutscher Waren zu bekaempfen. Die Mitglieder stimmten im wesentlichen mit dem Ideengut der nationalsozialistischen Idee ueberein.

Wir erhielten regelmaessig Propaganda-Material, das wir direkt durch den Verlag Franz EHER Nachf., Muenchen, kaeuflich erworben haben. Dies war der offizielle Verlag der NSDAP. Ferner erhoelten wir Material durch die Reichsbahn-Zentrale fuer den deutschen Reiseverkauf in New York (The German Information Office), das deutsche Konsulat und die deutschen Schiffahrtslinien. Das Material des deutschen Konsulats in New York bekamen wir durch die Kultur-Abteilung. Wir bekamen ebenfalls Material durch Herrn GIENANTH, der der Vertreter des Propaganda-Ministeriums in den Vereinigten Staaten (New York) war. Ich weiss, dass Herr GIENANTH auch der deutschen Botschaft angehoerte.

Wir hatten, Ende 1935, 56 Ortsgruppen und ca. 12-15000 Mitglieder und eine viel grossere Anzahl von Anhaengern. Die Mitgliedszahl bestand aus ca. 60 % amerikanischen Buergern und 40 % Reichsdeutschen. Ich bin ueberzeugt davon, dass der Bund in seiner Taetigkeit durch Deutschland ermutigt wurde.

Die Organisation funktionierte einwandfrei bis zum Jahre 1935. Im Herbst

1935 wurde ich als Leiter der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" durch die Botschaft verstaendigt, dass Reichsdeutsche den Bund sofort als Mitglied verlassen muessen. Um mich ueber diesen Erlass des Reichsminister HESS zu informieren, fuhr ich im November 1935 auf Kosten der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" nach Berlin. Dort nahm ich an einer Besprechung teil, deren Vorsitz Herr Willi GROTHE fuhrte. Herr GROTHE war der Leiter der Amerika-Abteilung der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP. Bei dieser Besprechung waren anwesend Vertreter des Auswaertigen Amtes, des Bueros von Reichsminister HESS, des Propaganda-Ministeriums und der AO, ferner Kapitaaen MENZING Leiter der Deutschen Arbeitsfront in den Vereinigten Staaten und Vertrauensmann der AO. Bei der Besprechung wurde mir befohlen, dafuer zu sorgen, dass bis zum 31. Dezember 1935 saemtliche Reichsdeutsche aus den "Freunden des neuen Deutschland" entfernt seien. Der Grund dieses Befehls war das Verbot fuer die politische Betaeetigung der Reichsdeutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten, das auf Wunsch des Auswaertigen Amtes der Vereinigten Staaten (State Department) erfolgt ist. Nach dieser Sitzung besuchte ich den Leiter der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP, Gauleiter BOHLE. BOHLE war zu dieser Zeit die rechte Hand Rudolf HESS" in Auslands Parteiangelegenheiten. Bei der Unterredung betonte ich, dass ich fuer das Verbot kein Verstaendnis habe, aber trotzdem den Befehl fuer die Entfernung der Reichsdeutschen aus dem Bund zum festgesetzten Termin Folge leistete. Nach diesen Besprechungen kehrte ich wieder nach den Vereinigten Staaten zurueck, um die mir anbefohlenen Auftraege durchzufuehren. Nach meiner Rueckkehr nach New York sprach ich mit dem deutschen Generalkonsul, Dr. BORCHERS? und bat ihn, mit dem Praesidenten der STEUBEN-Gesellschaft, Theodor HOFFMANN, zu sprechen mit dem Ziel, die Amerikanischen Staatsangehoerigen der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" der STEUBEN-Gesellschaft als Mitglieder zuzufuehren. Herr HOFFMANN lehnte eine Unterredung in dieser Frage mit mir ab. Meine Absicht war, die amerikanischen Staatsangehoerigen der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" einer nationalen-amerikanischen Organisation, wie es die STEUBEN-Gesellschaft war, zuzufuehren. Nach dem Scheitern dieser Versuche ging ich nach Chicago.

Ich rief in Chicago eine Sitzung der Vertreter saemntlicher Ortsgruppen des 5 2

Mittelwestens und des Westens ein und teilte mit, dass die Reichsregierung den Reichsdeutschen das Verbot einer weiteren Betätigung im Bund "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" auferlegte. Die Versammlung fasste den Beschluss, nach dem Ausscheiden der Reichsdeutschen eine neue Organisation zu gründen. Fritz KUHN, dem ich vorgeschlagen habe, die Gesellschaft zu übernehmen, erhielt von der Versammlung das Vertrauen ausgesprochen. Nach dieser Sitzung begab ich mich nach New York, wo ich die Vertreter sämtlicher Ortsgruppen des Bezirkes Ost zusammenrief und ihnen Mitteilung machte von den Anordnungen der Reichsregierung und den Beschlüssen der Chicago Tagung. Sie nahmen die Anweisung der Reichsregierung zur Kenntnis und sprachen Fritz KUHN ihr Vertrauen aus. Bis zum 31. Dezember 1935 war die von der Reichsregierung angeordnete Aktion beendet. Vom Tage meines Ausscheidens ab habe ich keinerlei Einfluss mehr auf die Entwicklung der Dinge, insbesondere die Gründung des amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbundes, genommen.

Im Februar 1936 kehrte ich nach Deutschland zurück. Nach meiner Rückkehr besuchte ich den Gauleiter BOHLE und erstattete ihm Bericht ueber die Durchfuhrung der mir im November erteilten Anweisungen. Bei dieser Unterredung versicherte mir BOHLE, mir bei der Erlangung seiner Anstellung behilflich zu sein. Im April 1936 erhielt ich eine Anstellung in der Stuttgarter Dienststelle des Reichsministeriums fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda. Im Jahre 1937 wurde ich zum Verbindungsreferenten der Auslandsorganisation in der Stadt der Auslandsdeutschen (Stuttgart) ernannt. Ich hatte dabei die organisatorische Vorbereitung und Durchfuhrung der Reichstagungen der Auslandsdeutschen zu erledigen und staendig mit der Stadt und den zustaeudigen Behoerden des Gaues Wuerttemberg die Verbindung aufrecht zu erhalten. Gleichzeitig wurde ich vom Praesidenten des Deutschen Auslandsinstitutes, Oberbuergermeister Dr. STROELING in dem Verwaltungsausschuss des Deutschen Auslandsinstitutes berufen, und zwar in meiner Eigenschaft als Referent fuer Auslandsfragen in der Dienststelle des Propaganda-Ministeriums. Durch meine Verbindung zur Leitung der Auslandsorganisation wurde ich ferner zum Beirat fuer auslandsdeutsche Angelegenheiten in der Stadtverwaltung Stuttgart ernannt. Das Deutsche Auslandsinstitut war die zentrale Sammel- und Forschungsstelle ueber alle das Deutsche Ausland

betreffende Fragen. Es hielt staendig Verbindung mit einer grossen Anzahl Reichs- und Volksdeutscher im Ausland aufrecht und versandte Zeitschriften, Zeitungen und Buecher an dieselben. In gewissem Sinn war das Deutsche Auslandsinstitut die zentrale Verbindungsstelle zwischen Deutschland und dem Deutschtum draussen.

1936 kam Fritz KUHN nach seinem Besuch bei dem Fuehrer und BOHLE nach Stuttgart und besuchte mich. Fritz KUHN und ich waren befreundet. Wir unterhielten uns u.a. auch ueber den Bund, und dabei stellte sich heraus, dass wir bezueglich der Reichsdeutschen in USA geteilter Meinung waren, da ich den Standpunkt der Reichsregierung vertrat, demzufolge den Reichsdeutschen die politische Betaetigung in USA verboten war. KUHN sprach von der Absicht, eine befreundete Nebenorganisation von Reichsdeutschen zu gruenden. Wir sind uns in dieser Frage nicht einig geworden.

Ich hatte des oeffteren Besuch von Bundesmitgliedern, die mich von meiner Zeit in Amerika her kannten. Sie erzaelten mir von ihrer Taetigkeit im amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbund und dass die Organisation, die einet durch mich begonnen wurde, weiterhin taetig sei. Im Jahre 1937 besuchte mich die Herren Hermann , Wilhelm KUNZE und andere, in Stuttgart und erzaelten mir von der Taetigkeit des amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbundes und zeigten einen Film, der von den Ortsgruppen bei Veranstaltungen aufgenommen war.

Anfang 1940 uebernahm ich die propagandistische und kulturelle Betreuung der Umsiedler, die in der Umgebung von Litzmannstadt in den Lagern der volkdeutschen Mittelstelle untergebracht waren. Ich tat dies in meiner Eigenschaft als Angestellter des Propaganda-Ministeriums, das in Litzmannstadt zu diesem Zweck eine Dienststelle unterhielt. Im August 1943 wurde ich mit der kommunistischen Leitung des Kreises Konin, Wartheland (besetztes Polen) beauftragt, die ich bis zur Raevung im Januar 1945 innehatte.

Ich habe obige Erklärung, bestehend aus 5 (fuenf) Seiten, in deutscher Sprache gelesen und erkläre, dass es nach meinem besten Wissen und Gewissen die volle Wahrheit ist. Ich hatte Gelegenheit, Aenderungen und Berichtigungen in obiger Erklärung vorzunehmen. Diese Erklärung habe ich freiwillig gemacht, ohne jedwedes Versprechen auf Belohnung, und ich war keinerlei Drohungen oder Zwang ausgesetzt.

Nuernberg, Deutschland, den 25. Januar 1948

...gez.: Fritz Giseibl.....  
(Unterschrift)

Before me, Fred RODELL, U.S. Civilian, Identification No. AGC-D 432575, Interrogator, Evidence Division, Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, appeared Fritz GISEIBL, to me known, who in my presence signed the foregoing statement (Eidesstattliche Erklärung) consisting of 5 (five) pages in the German language and swore that the same was true on the 25th day of January 1948 in Nuremberg, Germany.

gez.: Fred Rodell  
.....

28-0340-58

eid. total v. 28.7.48

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

Interrogation-# 2605Dr. KEMMERER  
Ministerien-Division

Vernehmung des Fritz GISEL

am 28. Januar 1948 von 1400 - 1500 Uhr

durch: Dr. Fred RUDOLPH

Stenographin: Volitrent UNSELD

1. F. Wie ist Ihr voller Name?

A. GISEL, Fritz

2. F. Sind Sie sich bewusst, dass Sie noch unter Eid stehen?

A. Jauchl.

3. F. Ich habe hier die Eidesstattliche Erklärung, die wir gestern zusammen diktieren. Lesen Sie sie sich durch und nehmen Sie Änderungen vor, falls Sie dies fuer nötig halten.

(Fritz GISEL nimmt einige Änderungen an der ihm vorgelegten Erklärung vor.)

Ich muss Sie noch auf diese Erklärung verpflichten. Wollen Sie bitte aufstehen, erheben Sie Ihre rechte Hand und wiederholen Sie:

"Ich schwöre bei Gott dem Allmächtigen und Allwissenden, dass die Angaben, die ich in der Eidesstattlichen Erklärung vom 28. Januar 1948 gemacht habe, nach meinem besten Wissen und Gewissen der vollen Wahrheit entsprechen."

(Fritz GISEL wiederholt den Eid.)

FRÜHJÄHRIGE ERKLÄRUNG

Ich, Fritz KRISSEL, schwöre, sage aus und erkläre:

1.) Ich bin am 9. März 1903 in Muerberg (Deutschland) geboren.

Von Jahre 1909-13 besuchte ich die Volksschule und von 1913-19 die Realschule in Muerberg. Von 1919-22 war ich Praktikant auf dem Obstgut in Weihenstephan und anschließend zwei Semester auf der Hochschule für Landwirtschaft und Brauerei in Weihenstephan. Im Jahre 1923 studierte ich zwei Semester Landwirtschaft an der Universität Jena.

Im Jahre 1923 wanderte ich nach Amerika aus. Nach kurzem Aufenthalt in Grand Rapids Mich. ging ich nach Chicago und arbeitete bis 1931 als Zeitungsdrucker bei der "Chicago Daily News", anschließend bei verschiedenen anderen amerikanischen Zeitungen in Chicago. Im Herbst 1933 ging ich nach New York, arbeitete kurz beim Norddeutschen Lloyd und ab November 1933 hauptsächlich beim Bund "Freunde des neuen Deutschland".

2.) Seit 1926 bin ich Mitglied der NSDAP mit der No. 45200. Ferner gehörte ich seit 1937 der SA an, wo ich den Dienstrang eines Obersturmbannführers erreichte bis zum Schluss innehatte. Mein höchster Dienstrang in der Partei war Kreisleiter. Ab 1936 bin ich im Besitze des goldenen Ehrenzeichens der NSDAP und des Kriegsverdienstkreuzes I. Klasse.

3.) Nachdem ich von 1933-35 Führer des Bundes "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" in den Vereinigten Staaten sowie seit 1932 Mitglied der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP bis 1939 war, bin ich in der 10ge. folgende Erklärung abgegeben:

Im Jahre 1924 gründete ich, zusammen mit einigen deutschen Herren, in Chicago die Organisation "Teutonia", deutscher, nationaler Gesinnung. Der organisatorische Aufbau war ähnlich dem der NSDAP. Ich war der

Fritz Kriessl

00058

leiter dieser Organisation, die sich über Chicago, Detroit und Cincinnati erstreckte. Zusammen mit anderen, ebenfalls gestützten Organisationen bildeten die Gruppen der "Teutonic" im Jahre 1933 die Organisation "Freunde des neuen Deutschland". Es waren vertreten Gruppen aus Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Newark N.J. Die Führung des Bundes "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" übernahm Heinz SPANGLER, Detroit, der im November 1933 die Vereinigten Staaten fluchtartig verließ, worauf ich die Führung der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" hauptsächlich übernahm und nach New York übernahm.

Der Zweck dieser Organisation war u.a., Reichsdeutsche und amerikanische Staatsangehörige in eine Organisation zusammenzufassen, die den Angriffen, die auf das nationalsozialistische Deutschland gerichtet wurden, begegnete, um den jüdischen Boykott deutscher Waren zu bekämpfen. Die Mitglieder stimmten im wesentlichen mit dem Programm der nationalsozialistischen Idee überein.

Wir erhielten regelmäßig Propaganda-Material, das wir direkt durch den Verlag Franz ESKA Kauf., Menschen, beschaffen konnten. Dies war der offizielle Verlag der NSDAP. Ferner erhielten wir Material durch die Bahnhofs-Kontrolle für den deutschen Reiseverkehr in New York (The German Information Office), das Deutsche Konsulat und die Deutschen Schiffsfahrtslinien. Das Material des Deutschen Konsulates in New York bekamen wir durch die Kultur-Abteilung. Wir bekamen ebenfalls Material durch Herrn GILBERT, der der Vertreter des Propaganda-Ministeriums in den Vereinigten Staaten (New York) war. Ich weiß, dass Herr GILBERT auch der Deutschen Botschaft angehörte.

Wir hatten, Ende 1935, 56 Ortsgruppen und ca. 12-15000 Mitglieder und eine viel größere Anzahl von Abonnenten. Die Mitgliederzahl bestand aus ca. 60 % amerikanischen Bürgern und 40 % Reichsdeutschen. Ich bin überzeugt davon, dass der Bund in seiner Tätigkeit durch Deutschland unterstützt wurde.

Die Organisation funktionierte einwandfrei bis zum Jahre 1935. Im Herbst

Frühling 1936 00059

1935 wurde ich als Leiter der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" durch die Reichsregierung, sowie Reichsdeutsche den Ruf erhielt als Mitglied verbannen zu lassen. Im Hinblick auf diesen Erlaß des Reichsministers ERB zu informieren, fuhr ich im November 1935 auf dem "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" nach Berlin. Dort nahm ich an einer Besprechung teil, deren Vorsitz Herr Willi GROSCH führte. Herr GROSCH war der Leiter der Auslands-Abteilung der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP. Bei dieser Besprechung waren ebenfalls Vertreter des Auswärtigen Amtes, des Bureau von Reichsminister ERB, des Propaganda-Ministeriums und der AA, ferner Kapitän KUNZE, der Leiter der Deutschen Arbeitsfront in den Vereinigten Staaten und Vertretungs-mann der AA. Bei der Besprechung wurde mir befohlen, dafür zu sorgen, dass bis zum 31. Dezember 1935 sämtliche Reichsdeutsche aus den "Freunden des neuen Deutschland" entfernt seien. Der Grund dieses Befehls war das Verbot für die politische Betätigung der Reichsdeutschen in den Vereinigten Staaten, das auf Wunsch des Auswärtigen Amtes der Vereinigten Staaten (State Department) erfolgt ist. Nach dieser Sitzung besuchte ich den Leiter der Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP, Heidegger KUNZE, KUNZE war zu dieser Zeit die rechte Hand Rudolf HILF in <sup>genau</sup> Parteiführungsangelegenheiten. Bei der Unterredung betonte ich, dass ich für das Verbot kein Verständnis habe, aber trotzdem das Befehl für die Entfernung der Reichsdeutschen aus dem Land zum festgesetzten Termin Folge leisten. Nach diesen Besprechungen kehrte ich wieder nach den Vereinigten Staaten zurück, um die mir anbefohlenen Aufträge durchzuführen. Nach meiner Rückkehr nach New York sprach ich mit dem deutschen Generalkonsul, Dr. HARTMANN, um bei ihm, mit dem Präsidenten der STEINER-Gesellschaft, Theodor HOFFMANN, zu sprechen mit dem Ziel, die amerikanischen Staatsangehörigen der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" der STEINER-Gesellschaft als Mitglieder anzuführen. Herr HOFFMANN lehnte eine Unterredung in dieser Frage mit mir ab. Meine Absicht war, die amerikanischen Staatsangehörigen der "Freunde des neuen Deutschland" einer nationalen amerikanischen Organisation, wie es die STEINER-Gesellschaft war, anzuführen. Nach dem Scheitern dieses Vorhabens ging ich nach Chicago.

Ich rief in Chicago eine Sitzung der Vertreter sämtlicher Ortsgruppen des

Fritz Kesseler

Mittelwestens und des Ostens ein und teilte mit, dass die Reichsregierung den Reichsdeutschen das Verbot einer weiteren Betätigung in Form 'Freunde des neuen Deutschlands' auferlegte. Die Versammlung fasste den Beschluss, nach dem Ausscheiden der Reichsdeutschen eine neue Organisation zu gründen. Fritz HORN, den ich vorgeschlagen habe, die Geschäfte zu übernehmen, erhielt von der Versammlung das Vertrauen ausgesprochen. Nach dieser Sitzung begab ich mich nach New York, wo ich die Vertreter sämtlicher Ortsgruppen des Bezirks Ost zusammenrief und ihnen Mitteilung machte von den Anordnungen der Reichsregierung und den Beschlüssen der Chicagoer Tagung. Sie nahmen die Anweisung der Reichsregierung zur Kenntnis und sprachen Fritz HORN ihr Vertrauen aus. Bis zum 31. Dezember 1935 war die von der Reichsregierung angeordnete Aktion beendet. Von Tage meines Ausscheidens ab habe ich keinerlei Einfluss mehr auf die Entwicklung der Dinge, insbesondere die Gründung des amerikanischen-deutschen Volksbundes, genommen.

Im Februar 1936 kehrte ich nach Deutschland zurück. Nach meiner Rückkehr besuchte ich den Gelehrter HORN und erstattete ihm Bericht über die Durchführung der mir im November erteilten Anweisungen. Bei dieser Unterredung versicherte mir HORN, mir bei der Erlangung einer Anstellung behilflich zu sein. Im April 1936 erhielt ich eine Anstellung in der Stuttgarter Dienststelle des Reichsministeriums für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda. Im Jahre 1937 wurde ich zum Verbindungsreferenten der Auslandsorganisation in der Stadt der Auslandsdeutschen (Stuttgart) ernannt. Ich hatte dabei die organisatorische Vorbereitung und Durchführung der Reichstagen der Auslandsdeutschen zu erledigen und ständig mit der Stadt und den zuständigen Behörden des Gauern Eberhardberg die Verbindung aufrecht zu erhalten. Gleichzeitig wurde ich vom Präsidenten des Deutschen Auslandsinstitutes, Oberbürgermeister Dr. <sup>DE</sup> SCHLITZ, in den Verwaltungsausschuss des Deutschen Auslandsinstitutes berufen, und zwar in meiner Eigenschaft als Referent für Auslandsfragen in der Dienststelle des Propaganda-Ministeriums. Durch meine Verbindung zur Leitung der Auslandsorganisation wurde ich ferner zum Beirat für auslandsdeutsche Angelegenheiten in der Stadtverwaltung Stuttgart ernannt. Das Deutsche Auslandsinstitut war die zentrale Sammel- und Forschungsstelle über alle das Deutsche im Ausland

Fritz HORN 00061

betreffende Fragen. Es hielt ständige Verbindung mit einer grossen Anzahl Reichs- und Volkdeutscher im Ausland aufrecht und versandte Zeitschriften, Zeitungen und Bücher an dieselben. In gewissen Hinsicht war das Deutsche Ausland-Institut die zentrale Verbindungsstelle zwischen Deutschland und den Deutschen im Ausland.

1936 kam Fritz KISS nach seinem Besuch bei dem Führer und SAHA nach Stuttgart und besuchte mich. Fritz KISS und ich waren befreundet. Wir unterhielten uns u.a. auch über den Bund, und dabei stellte sich heraus, dass wir bezüglich der Reichsdeutschen in USA geteilter Meinung waren, da ich den Standpunkt der Reichsregierung vertrat, dasszufolge den Reichsdeutschen die politische Betätigung in USA verboten war. KISS sprach von der Absicht, eine befreundete Nebenorganisation von Reichsdeutschen zu gründen. Wir sind uns in dieser Frage nicht einig geworden.

Ich hatte den öfteren Besuch von Bundesmitgliedern, die mich von seiner Zeit in Amerika her kannten. Sie erzählten mir von ihrer Tätigkeit im amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbund und dass die Organisation, die einst durch mich begonnen wurde, weiterhin tätig sei. Im Jahre 1937 besuchten mich die Herren Hermann SCHWENK, Wilhelm KISS und andere in Stuttgart und erzählten mir von der Tätigkeit des amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbundes und zeigten einen Film, der von den Ortgruppen bei Veranstaltungen aufgenommen war. ~~Es ist meine Meinung, dass die Tätigkeit des amerikanisch-deutschen Volksbundes ganz allgemein von Deutschland gefördert wurde.~~

Anfang 1943 übernahm ich die propagandistische und kulturelle Betreuung der Gesiedler, die in der Umgebung von Litzenstadt in den Lagern der Volkdeutschen Mittelstelle untergebracht waren. Ich tat dies in meiner Eigenschaft als Angestellter des Propaganda-Ministeriums, das in Litzenstadt zu diesem Zweck eine Dienststelle unterhielt. Im August 1943 wurde ich mit der kommissarischen Leitung des Braunes Heines, Barthelend (bestimmter Name) beauftragt, die ich bis zur Abreise im Januar 1945 innehatte.

Fritz Kissel 00062

Ich habe obige Erklärung, bestehend aus 5 (fünf) Seiten, in deutscher Sprache, gelesen und erkläre, dass es nach meinem besten Wissen und Gewissen die volle Wahrheit ist. Ich hatte Gelegenheit, Änderungen und Berichtigungen in obiger Erklärung vorzunehmen. Diese Erklärung habe ich freiwillig gemacht, ohne jegliches Versprechen auf Belohnung, und ich war keinerlei Drohungen oder Zwang ausgesetzt.

Euerberg, Deutschland, den 25. Januar 1945

*Fritz Bissell*

.....  
(Unterschrift)

Before me, Fred ROEHL, US Civilian, Identification No. AGO-D 432576, Interrogator, Evidence Division, Office of Chief of Counsel for War Crimes, appeared Fritz BISSILL, to me known, who in my presence signed the foregoing statement (Wahrheitsvolle Erklärung) consisting of 5 (five) pages in the German language and swore that the same was true on the 25th day of January 1945 in Euerberg, Germany.

*Fred Roehl*

.....  
Fred ROEHL

ES-0740-6

Interrog. v.

10.3.48

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv

Interrogation-# 2635-aInstitut f. Zeitgeschichte  
München  
ARCHIV

1948/56

Vernehmung des Fritz GESIBEL

am 10. Februar 1948 von 1400 - 1530 Uhr

durch: Mr. John LEWIS

Stenographin: Waltraut UNSELD

1. F. Wie ist Ihr voller Name?

A. Fritz GESIBEL.

2. F. Sind Sie sich bewusst, dass Sie noch unter Eid stehen?

A. Jawohl.

3. F. Was war Ihre Arbeit als Kreisleiter in Polen?

A. Im August 1943 habe ich den Kreis Konin/Wertheland übernommen und habe dort die Betreuung der deutschen Bevölkerung unter mir gehabt.

4. F. Wer war Ihr Chef?

A. Gauleiter Arthur GEISLER.

5. F. Er war Ihr direkter Vorgesetzter?

A. Ja.

6. F. Was war Ihre genaue Aufgabe?

A. Meine Aufgabe war, alle Angelegenheiten, die die deutsche Bevölkerung betrafen, zu überwachen und in der Durchführung der fuer die Deutschen angeordneten Massnahmen behilflich zu sein.

7. F. Was waren das fuer Massnahmen?

A. Das gesamte Arbeitsgebiet der Landwirtschaft, des Handels und der Industrie zu beobachten und darauf zu sorgen, dass die Massnahmen auch durchgeführt wurden. Dazu gehörte auch die soziale Betreuung der Bevölkerung durch die Einrichtung der NSV, und Kindergärten mussten überwacht bzw. eingerichtet werden.

8. F. Was haben Sie in den einzelnen Gebieten, wie z.B. Landwirt-

8. Ich hatte im einzelnen die Aufgabe, Anweisungen, die an die Landwirtschaft ergingen, vom Standpunkt der Partei aus zu überwachen und im Falle von Meinungsverschiedenheiten und Schwierigkeiten zu helfen, diese zu überwinden, ebenso auf anderen Gebieten der Wirtschaft und des Handels. Insbesondere aber war es meine Aufgabe, die ordnungsgemäße Durchführung der Anordnungen, die die deutsche Bevölkerung betrafen, vom Standpunkt der Partei aus zu überprüfen und dafür zu sorgen, dass der rieslich-mittleren Bevölkerung die aus grösseren Teil aus Volkdeutschen aus Umsiedlergebieten bestand, die entsprechende Hilfe zuteil wurde.
9. F. Haben Sie diesen Leuten Land gegeben?
- A. Nein; die Durchführung der Landübergabe war bereits erfolgt, bevor ich nach Konin kam, so dass von meiner Seite aus nichts mehr unternommen werden brauchte.
10. F. Was war Ihre Aufgabe in Litzmannstadt?
- A. Ich war vom Januar 1939 bis August 1943 in Litzmannstadt in der Dienststelle des Reichsministeriums fuer Volksaufkieserung und Propaganda. Ich habe dort einen Sonderauftrag durchgefuehrt, und zwar die kulturelle und politische Betreuung der aus den verschiedenen Laendern Osteuropas kommenden deutschen Umsiedler. In Litzmannstadt befanden sich ungefaehr 40 Umsiedlerlager mit einer Fassungsvermoegegen von 35-40 000 Umsiedlern.
11. F. Was war Ihr Dienstgrad im Propaganda-Ministerium?
- A. Referent des Reichpropaganda-Amtes in Posen.
12. F. Mit wem von der Volkdeutschen Mittelstelle arbeiteten Sie?
- A. Mit dem Leiter des Einsatzstabes der Volkdeutschen Mittelstelle. Der erste hiess Ludwig DOPPLER, der naechste Karl FREYER, und der letzte hiess Gustl HANDEL.
13. F. Was war Ihr SS-Dienstgrad?
- A. SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer.
14. F. Wann sind Sie der SS beigetreten?

- A. Beigetreten garnicht. Ich bin 1937 ehrenhalber in die SS aufgenommen worden, auf Vorschlag von Gauleiter BORK.
15. F. War das Ihr hoechster Dienstgrad?
- A. Das war der hoechste.
16. F. Von Litmannstadt aus wurden Sie dann versetzt als Kreisleiter der Partei nach Konin.
- A. Ja.
17. F. Wie halfen Sie den Vertretern der Voni in ihrer Arbeit?
- A. Ich hatte durch das Propaganda-Ministerium den Auftrag, die kulturelle Betreuung der Umsiedler durchzufuehren. Zu diesem Zweck wurden Veranstaltungen durchgefuehrt wie Theater, Konzerte, Vortraege, Filme; Spielsachen, Buecher und Druck-sachen wurden fuer die Kinder ausgegeben.
18. F. Ihre Arbeit beschraenkte sich auf Volkdeutsche?
- A. Auf ungesiedelte Volkdeutsche.
19. F. Was war das Programm der Voni in Zusammenhang mit Ihrer Arbeit?
- A. Die Voni hat die mit Transporten kommenden Umsiedler in La-gen untergebracht, mit Kleidungsstuecken versorgt und ver-pflegt. Ich hatte die gesamte geistige Betreuung dieser Um-siedler unter mir. Die Finanzierung wurde von Propaganda-Ministerium durchgefuehrt.
20. F. Welche Propaganda und auf welchem Gebiet uebten Sie dort aus?
- A. Das Ziel meiner propagandistischen Taetigkeit war, durch Ein-satz von Rednern und Verteilung von Lektuere die Leute mit den Verhaeltnissen in Deutschland vertraut zu machen und ihnen die Notwendigkeiten, die der Krieg mit sich brachte, vor Augen zu fuehren - im ganzen gesehen, ihnen Verstaend-nis fuer die Verhaeltnisse und das nationalsozialistische Deutschland zu vermitteln.- Die Umsiedler wurden aus ver-schiedenen Laendern, Wolhynien, Galizien, Bessarabien, aus dem Huchenland und aus Kroatien, nach Litmannstadt ge-bracht und dort von der Volkdeutschen Mittelstelle ueber-nommen. Die Volkdeutsche Mittelstelle brachte diese Leute

in Lagern unter und behielt sie so lange, bis sie von einer anderen Dienststelle abgerufen wurden, um in den verschiedensten Teilen des Reiches und der neu gewonnenen Gebiete angesiedelt zu werden.

21. F. Hatte die AG Vertreter in Litzmannstadt?

A. Die AG hatte keinen Vertreter in Litzmannstadt.

22. F. Haben Sie je persönliche Briefe von BOWLE erhalten?

A. Ja wohl, ich habe während meiner Tätigkeit als Verbindungs-Referent der AG in Stuttgart Briefe von Gauleiter BOWLE erhalten, aber nicht während meiner Tätigkeit in USA.