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INTERROGATION SUMMARY NO. 666

Interrogation of : Hermann ESSER, Staatssekretär  
Interrogated by : Mr. Fehl, 6 December 1946, Nuremberg  
Division & Att'y : Ministries - Mr. Dickinson  
Compiled by : CIM

PERSONS MENTIONED

DIETRICH, Dr. Otto	- Reichs Press Chief (pp.9-16)
GUTERER, Leopold,	- SS-Friedenführer, Under Secretary in Propaganda Ministry (pp.13,16)
HEILIGENBRUNNER, Otto Ritter von	- Manager under Esser (p.17)
Dr. MAHLO	- Ministerialdirigent, Manager Tourists Div., Propaganda Ministry (p.17)
Dr. HESSEL, August.	- Ministerialrat, Manager of Reichsgruppe Tourist Traffic (p.17)
<u>AMANN, Max</u>	- SS-Obergruppenführer, Reichsleiter for the Press, Head of Eher Publishing Co. (p.26)

SUMMARY

Subject was born in 1900; he attended the "Gymnasium" until 1917. In 1918 he volunteered for the Army and participated in World War I. In 1919 subject went to Munich where he studied German philology, and in 1920/21 he became active in politics. He was on friendly terms with HITLER and became a member of the NSDAP as early as 1920. In 1926 he became an employee of the Eher Publishing Co. As a Nazi he was active in Bavarian municipal representation (Landtagsabgeordneter), and as a member of the Munich town council (stadtrat). From 1933 until 1935 he was Bavarian Min-

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ister of Economics. First he had been Chief of the Bavarian State Chancellery; in 1934 he claims to have clashed with HITLER, and resigned as State Minister in 1935, supposedly retiring from political life. In 1936 he accepted the presidency of the Reich Tourist Traffic Association (Reichsfremdenverkehrverband), which, he says was a non-political activity. Until the end he was Head of the "Touristenverband" and President of the "Fremdenverkehrverband" (Tourist Traffic).

After 1935 subject did not participate in politics, he did not visit the Party Congress in Nuremberg, and only because of the pressure of friends did he accept the position as Head of the Tourist Traffic Association. Subject states that during the war there was increased travel activity, due particularly to the overcrowding of health resorts, as a result of evacuation and increased number of convalescents. There was actually more work to be done in tourist traffic during the war, particularly in 1940/41/42, than during peacetime. All the resorts were filled. Subject says that travel abroad was handled by the travel and tourist offices of foreign countries. "Strength through Joy" (Kraft durch Freude) was the only organization outside scope of subject's activities.

Subject knows nothing about tourists working as espionage agents, but says that anybody can declare himself a tourist. The Economic Research Department, the Foreign Office, and the Armed Forces handled such matters.

Subject states that he has never been in Lisbon to negotiate for the transportation of disabled German veterans to the Azores or to any other island and knows nothing about the disabled veterans who went to Portugal in the fall of 1942. Such matters were handled by The Main Office of the Reich Railroad (Reichsbahnzentrale) for German tourist traffic. Subject states emphatically that this organization of the German railroad was not subordinate to him. For years subject had tried, without success, to get this organization under his control.

Even in 1934, subject had not yet seen the real picture but he noticed certain events, in particular, HITLER'S relation towards his friends ROHM and STRASSER, which made him change his attitude.

In 1934/35, subject had noticed with misgivings that HITLER seemed to deviate from his original thoughts and that his whole demeanor seemed to change. According to subject, the original party program had shown certain restraints and moderation in many respects. On the Jewish question the party program of 1920 differed greatly from that of the years of 1939 and 1940, and thereafter. In 1920 there was only the question of stopping the influx from the East; it was principally an economic affair. Subject believes that in 1938 the persecution of the Jews became

inhuman. Subject has witnesses to prove that he condemned as unjust the events of November 1938. He states that he had considered the aryanization and confiscation measures against the Jews in 1938 an abhorrence and had made statements to that effect, he had particularly objected to the acts of incendiarism and violence and had declared them to be shameful. He admits that it was dangerous to speak against these measures. In 1938, according to subject, it was no longer possible to do anything about it. All power was in the hands of the SS and no one could oppose them. Subject had no further cause to criticize the party program, because no other events of that kind were known at the time.

Subject states that DIETRICH as Reich Press Chief made daily reports to HITLER on the news of the day. In former days, subject believes that the Press Chief had wielded some influence. HITLER read a lot of newspapers himself, but there is no doubt that the Press Chief could inject certain tendencies into his reports. Subject states that the National-Socialist Correspondence (NSK) was an official party publication.

It was generally known that SUENDERLINN was DIETRICH'S right hand. DIETRICH'S fame required him to try to direct things but subject doubts whether he was successful in his endeavors, as it was known that GOEBBELS corrected and influenced his decisions. HITLER was very particular in matters concerning the press; he himself read the corrections of his speeches, and checked to see that his instructions to the press were executed.

Concerning Leopold GUTTERER, subject states that he was for some time Ministerialdirigent in the State Ministry. He was also Under-Secretary in the Propaganda Ministry, Ministerialrat, and Ministerialpraesident. Subject knew him in those years. GUTTERER was GOEBBELS'S deputy. GOEBBELS changed his Under-Secretaries quickly and often. As Under-Secretary, GUTTERER worked in an executive capacity and, as Ministerialsekretar, in an administrative capacity.

Subject states that he was on bad terms with STREICHER after 1926, because of STREICHER'S attempts to meddle in the economic policy without regard to Government directives. He also found STREICHER'S Jewish program too radical even in 1933. He opposed the Nuremberg laws, and did not participate in the decision of the Reichstag in Nuremberg in 1935.

Subject says that it was possible for him to lead such a retired life because he could accomplish his work in connection with tourist traffic from any isolated spot which had a telephone. He came to Berlin every two or three months for about two days. His manager was Otto RITTER von HELLIGENBRUNNER. Dr. MARLO was his manager in the Tourist Division of the Propaganda Ministry and

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Dr. HESSEL in the Reich Group Tourist Traffic.

Subject wrote his book "Die Juedische Weltpest" (The Jewish World Plague) in 1927 and the book was republished in 1939. He was asked to write a preface but the preface had actually been written by a certain Otto JURINECK who died 2 years ago. He had formerly collaborated with subject, and had asked him for a job. Subject had compiled the book in 1927, urged by the Eher Publishing Co. and by ROSENBERG, who had provided him with the material. The material for this book, his first and last work, written 20 years ago, subject had compiled from various other books. As explanation for the republication of this work, subject says that the Eher Co. always reprinted its publications. The new edition was prepared by JURINECK, and consequently, was also approved by subject but he knew nothing about any details which were written in it, as he had not seen the book again. Like many other books published by the Eher Co., it was revised according to the opinion of the publisher. Subject had originally received instructions to compose a booklet from material which had been given to him. At the time subject finished the work he was 26 years old.

Subject states that only after the end of the war had he heard for the first time that Jews had been gassed. Whoever ordered this, according to him, was a criminal; the idea could have originated only in a criminal brain. Subject says that the influence of a book is considerably less than that of a periodical. The purpose of a book is also quite different from that of a magazine. A book can be subjected to serious criticism and facts can be verified, whereas anything can be put into a magazine or pamphlet without being examined too closely.

Subject states again that the Jewish question was already in 1935 one of the reasons why he differed with HITLER. Subject says that he can prove through many witnesses, priests, foreigners, Jews, etc., among them Prof. DIETHELM in Switzerland, that, in later years his opinion of Nazism was quite different from that which he had held at the beginning when he was only 27 years old. Therefore, according to him, he protected several people and thus, made his opinions known, more and more.

Subject denies that his book caused a sensation when it was published in 1939. He says that AMANN would know more about the circumstances of the reprint. The Eher Co. was in a position to publish new editions without the author's knowledge. Subject says that the influence of his own book, which he considers negligible cannot be compared with STREICHER'S collaboration in the liquidation of the Jews. According to subject, the danger lies in the publication of a magazine with a circulation of half a million. Again

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subject states, giving as witnesses the wife and son of JURINECK, that not he but JURINECK wrote the new edition of the book. Subject did not derive any profit or advantage from this book. Although he received 1,000 Marks for it, and this amount he gave to JURINECK. JURINECK did not publish the book under his own name, because he was no Party member. He was an indigent journalist like many other people employed by subject. JURINECK had tried repeatedly to write articles under subject's name. He had collaborated with subject in 1927. He had been editor of a paper in Munich and subject had occasionally asked him for his advice. JURINECK had assisted in the compilation of the book. He had probably asked subject whether he could not credit the book in 1939. Subject had no reason to deny such a request. Subject states that the edition of 1939 is quite different from that of 1927, which contained much less.

Subject says that the fact that he was no SA or SS leader is proof enough that he had changed his attitude since 1934/35. He declares that he can prove that, during the last years of the war, he was under the constant surveillance of the Gestapo, and in March 1945 he was supposed to be arrested on account of unreliability, by GISSLER, G. ULBRIE of Munich and Reichs Defens Minister, on instructions from BORMANN. Subject fled, and returned to his home only after the entry of the American troops.

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