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THE GERMAN-AMERICAN BUND:
FIFTH COLUMN OR
DEUTSCHTUM?

THESIS

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Although the German-American Bund received extensive press coverage during its existence and monographs of American politics in the 1930's refer to the Bund's activities, there has been no thorough examination of the charge that the Bund was a fifth column organization responsible to German authorities. This six-chapter study traces the Bund's history with an emphasis on determining the motivation of Bundists and the nature of the relationship between the Bund and the Third Reich.

The conclusions are twofold. First, the Third Reich repeatedly discouraged the Bundists and attempted to dissociate itself from the Bund. Second, the Bund's commitment to Deutschtum through its endeavors to assist the German nation and the Third Reich contributed to American hatred of National Socialism.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The destruction of the viable diplomatic relationship between Germany and the United States, laboriously constructed after World War I to a point of mutual satisfaction, was one of the signal events of the 1930's.¹ Although the failure of President Wilson's Fourteen Points and America's role in the Versailles peace treaty had embittered many Germans, United States relief for Germany's hungry population enhanced American prestige.² In 1932, Consul General Otto Vollbehr reported that the United States was "not only the best friend, but actually the only friend which the Reich has in international society."³

¹Gerhard L. Weinberg, The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-36 (Chicago and London, 1970), p. 133.

²Joachim von Ribbentrop, The Ribbentrop Memoirs, translated by Oliver Watson from the German Zwischen London und Moskau (London, 1954), p. 104.

³Arnold A. Offner, American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), pp. 8-9.

Hitlerian Germany's militarism, anti-Jewish policies, discriminatory trade and foreign exchange practices, and general hostility to democracy were significant in the destruction of good relations.⁴ But it was the possible German relapse into barbarism that had the greatest effect on Americans.⁵ Reports from American and foreign correspondents about anti-democratic excesses in the Third Reich convinced many Americans that Germany was becoming an outlaw state. These reports gained credence from the fulminations of certain pro-German groups in the United States, notably the German-American Bund,⁶ a nation-wide organization whose major strength lay in the New York metropolitan area. The Bund leaders hoped to counteract the growing antipathy to Germany by presenting a pro-German viewpoint, particularly through their newspaper, Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter.⁷

⁴Saul Friedländer, Prelude to Downfall: Hitler and the United States, 1939-1941 (New York, 1967), p. 7.

⁵Weinberg, The Foreign Policy, p. 157.

⁶"Bund" is defined as league or federation.

⁷The Bund weekly had various names throughout its lifetime, beginning with Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter, changing to Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter and The Free American on September 29, 1938, and changing again on December 14, 1939, to The Free American and Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter.

The Bundists exacerbated anti-German feeling, however, and instead of alleviating hatred for those things German, or, more specifically, National Socialist in nature, became the focal point and example on American soil of the anti-Semitic, militaristic movement which was an anathema to many Americans, especially Americans in the New York area.⁸

Their activities seemed to indicate there was a genuine German danger. One of the foremost authorities on German-American relations during the 1930's, Joachim Remak of Stanford University, surmised it would be "hard to exaggerate the harm which the Bund did to German-American relations during the 1930's." Remak concluded that these imitators of Hitler made even "the wildest of stories about the Nazi menace . . . plausible" and their "clumsy efforts to make proselytes had unwittingly helped to alert America to the Nazi danger."⁹

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the American Legion, American Jews, and all those who disliked Germany or the Third Reich, used the Bund as a model of Nazi Germany and denounced the Bundists for fifth column activities, treason,

⁸Offner, American Appeasement, p. 85.

⁹Joachim Remak, "'Friends of the New Germany': The Bund and German-American Relations," Journal of Modern History, XXIX (March, 1957), 38, 41.

violence, anti-Semitism, and anti-democratic practices. Roosevelt's anti-German bias was often displayed in consultations with his aides.¹⁰ He repeatedly warned Americans about fifth columnists, propagandists, dupes of foreign governments, and their use of prejudice, lies and half-truths.¹¹ Long before the United States and Germany were at war, Roosevelt frequently aired his conviction that the fifth columnists were already at work in the United States, preparing the way for an invasion by foreign troops. Calling them slackers and trouble makers, he urged patriotic example and the use of "the sovereignty of Government to

¹⁰ John Morton Blum, From the Morgenthau Diaries (Boston, 1959), p. 151. Henry Morgenthau, Jr., "The Morgenthau Diaries III--How FDR Fought the Axis," Colliers, CXX (October 11, 1947), 72.

¹¹ Addresses and Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to the Congress, January 4, 1939, 77th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Document No. 188, Development of United States Foreign Policy (Washington, 1942), p. 33. (Hereafter cited as Addresses and Messages with description of speech, date, and page number.) Addresses and Messages, Address before a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives, May 16, 1940, p. 57. Records of the National Socialist German Labor Party (NSDAP), National Archives Microcopy No. T-81, Roll 506, (Washington, 1956), frame 5269396, quoting from the Frankfurter Zeitung, June 30, 1940. (Hereafter cited as T-81, with appropriate roll and frame number.)

save Government" as a means of foiling their plans. He accused the Axis Powers of subsidizing attempts to create "confusion and disunion and moral disintegration from within" the United States. Americans who advocated neutrality were charged by Roosevelt with assisting the Nazis and aiding the agents of dictators. The President asked that Americans resist not only the foreign enemies, but also those Americans who continued to advocate neutrality.¹²

Hitler felt that the combination of anti-Jewish sentiment and the large number of Americans of German descent would eventually enable him to gain widespread sympathy for National Socialism in the United States. He was of the opinion there would "be no new Wilson" to encourage and build anti-German sentiment.¹³ Hitler's estimate was faulty in every respect. The Jews proved more adept than Hitler in propagandizing in America; most German-Americans were not pro-Hitler; and most importantly, Franklin Roosevelt proved quite capable of aiding Germany's enemies.

¹²Addresses and Messages, Annual Message to the Congress, January 6, 1941, pp. 83-85. In the same speech Roosevelt called for "the preservation of civil liberties for all." Ibid., p. 86. Addresses and Messages, Address at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, Washington, D.C., March 15, 1941, pp. 92-95. Addresses and Messages, Fireside Chat on National Security and the Common Cause, Washington, D.C., December 29, p. 76.

¹³Hermann Rauschning, The Voice of Destruction (New York, 1940), pp. 71-72.

Roosevelt compared the "agents of Nazi-ism" with the devil and cautioned against their efforts to create doubt about the wisdom of United States foreign policy. Propagandists, defeatists, and dupes were wrongly questioning the program of aiding the allies, Roosevelt charged. The President accused Hitler of planning to conquer the world and of using American Quislings, Bundists, and fifth columnists to ensure his eventual subjugation of the United States. He called the Bundists a group devoted to bigotry and racial and religious intolerance, a tool of Axis propaganda to subvert the United States from within.¹⁴ William Bullitt, the United States Ambassador to France from 1936 to 1940, told Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering that if German-Americans

¹⁴Addresses and Messages, Radio Address in Celebration of Jackson Day, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, April 1, 1941, p. 99. Addresses and Messages, Address before the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, the White House, May 27, 1941, pp. 102-03, 107. T-81, Roll 503, Frame 5302030, quotes the Krakauer Zeitung of September 28-29, 1941, in which John Cudahy, the former ambassador to Poland, Ireland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, criticized the United States State Department for not publishing the fact that Hitler considered a military invasion of the United States impossible. Cudahy felt the executive branch of the United States government was pushing an uninformed public towards war with the help of a war-determined minority without the concurrence of the United States Congress. T-81, Roll 533, frame 5302085, quotes the La Petit Dauphinois of September 19, 1941, in which it was revealed President Roosevelt had asked the Pope for a declaration of a just or holy war ("des gerechten Kriegen") against National Socialism. The Pope gave a negative reply.

assisted Hitler in invading the United States, there were enough trees in the United States on which to hang the six million German-speaking Americans.¹⁵

Roosevelt regretted that civil liberties, which Hitler would discard, allowed the Bundists and fifth columnists to spread anti-Ally propaganda. It was no coincidence, related Roosevelt, that the pro-neutral faction used many of the same arguments against aiding the Allies that the German Propaganda Ministry endorsed, for many of these people were willing members of the fifth column. Roosevelt stated in September, 1941, that Hitler and his fifth columnists had already attempted to take control of Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, and Colombia, and that the United States' turn would certainly come soon. On October 27, 1941, Roosevelt reported to the American people about the alleged attack on the destroyer Kearny. He declared America had been attacked by Germany. Roosevelt then revealed his famous secret map, which purported to show the German government's plans for a Nazi-controlled Latin America, and another document which supposedly established German intentions

¹⁵Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals, XXXVII, Nuernberg, October 1946-April 1949, (Washington, 1952), 599-600.

of abolishing all established religions and creating a Nazi religion.¹⁶ So anxious was Roosevelt to have proof for any German plan of aggression against America that he requested British authorities to question Rudolf Hess after his flight to Scotland on May 11, 1941, about Hitler's plans for the conquest of the Western Hemisphere. Despite Hess's statements that Hitler had no such plans and was only concerned with Europe, Roosevelt and members of his administration continued to invoke the spectre of a German invasion of the Americas.¹⁷

Roosevelt was intent on portraying the Bund as a German-controlled organization. In his radio address accusing Germany of wantonly attacking the United States destroyer Greer, the President focused attention on "Hitler's advance guards" in the United States, linking Germany's submarine efforts against Britain in the North Atlantic to part of a master plan to invade and control the Western

¹⁶Addresses and Messages, Address before the Governing Board of the Pan American Union, the White House, May 27, 1941, pp. 102-03, 107. Addresses and Messages, Address over the radio concerning the attack upon the destroyer Greer, September 11, 1941, p. 116. Addresses and Messages, Address over the radio of Navy Day concerning the attack upon the destroyer Kearny, October 27, 1941, pp. 120-21.

¹⁷William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Undeclared War 1940-1941 (New York, 1953), p. 528.

Hemisphere.¹⁸ This concern over fifth column activities bordered on hysteria when encouraged by the President of the United States. "Everyone sees a member of the fifth column under his bed," claimed an American psychologist, who felt that concentration camps for suspected fifth columnists were a possibility if people depended on feelings rather than intelligence.¹⁹

There is no doubt the Bund had an effect opposite to that of its intended purpose of increasing American good will towards Germany and of insuring American neutrality towards any European war. Reich authorities had hoped German-American political pressure would thwart any attempt by the Roosevelt administration to institute economic and political sanctions against Germany. Potential German-American pressure on Washington's foreign policy was also considered a prominent possibility by the Japanese prior to the Japanese-German pact of cooperation of September 27, 1940. Yosuke Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister who presented the case for the Japanese-German pact before the

¹⁸ Addresses and Messages, Address over the radio concerning the attack upon the destroyer Greer, September 11, 1941, pp. 114-16.

¹⁹ T-81, Roll 506, frame 5269403, quoting from an undated DAI memo and Dr. Robert McMurry of Chicago, Illinois.

Japanese imperial cabinet, felt that German-American influence would prevent American entry into the war.²⁰

Many books, written both during the Bund's existence and in recent years, ascribe stronger connections between the Third Reich and the Bund than was the case, and congressional committees arrived at conclusions concerning the Bund's relationship to Germany which are invalid.²¹ For example, Rudolf Hess did not organize the Bund to antagonize the Roosevelt administration.²² The Bund was not "on the receiving end of a string pulled by Berlin."²³ The Bund was not established in order to infiltrate American industry with spies and possible

²⁰Ernst L. Presseisen, Germany and Japan, A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy 1933-1941 (The Hague, 1958), p. 265.

²¹A few of these books are: Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, Sabotage! The Secret War Against America (New York & London, 1942). Alan Hynd, Passport to Treason: The Inside Story of Spies in America (New York, 1943). H.L. Trefousse, Germany and American Neutrality 1939-1941 (New York, 1951). Louis Dejong, The German Fifth Column in the Second World War (Chicago, 1956).

²²Sayers and Kahn, Sabotage!, p. 140.

²³Hynd, Passport, p. 77.

saboteurs.²⁴ Bund leader Fritz Kuhn was not the head of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) in America.²⁵ The Bund was not established by the Third Reich "to teach racism to the American people."²⁶ Also, the Bund was not an exact replica of the German NSDAP.²⁷ Even the 1969 edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica's article on Anti-Semitism contains the erroneous statement that the Bund was "directed from Germany."²⁸ A special committee of the United States Congress concluded, also erroneously, that Fritz Kuhn and his family were highly regarded by Adolf Hitler, that the Bund was a National Socialist agency, and that Kuhn was directly responsible to Hitler.²⁹ Kuhn

²⁴Sayers and Kahn, Sabotage!, p. 46.

²⁵House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Hearings. 76th Congress, 1st Session, VIII, (Washington, 1939), 5184-85. (Hereafter cited as Hearings with appropriate volume, and page number.)

²⁶Trefousse, Germany and American Neutrality, p. 14.

²⁷Dejong, The German Fifth Column, p. 23.

²⁸Salo Wittmayer Baron, "Anti-Semitism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, II (Chicago, 1969), 86.

²⁹House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States, 78th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix--Part VII, Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States,

was also falsely reputed to have been a leading figure in German espionage and sabotage, having frequently visited Germany to confer with National Socialism's top echelon, including Adolf Hitler.³⁰ A congressional committee reported that the Bund served as the "vanguard of a Hitler Blitzkrieg" in the United States.³¹

In the following pages, it will be demonstrated that: the Bund's ideological forebearers had their beginning in pre-National Socialist times; the ill treatment afforded German-Americans during the First World War contributed to the Bund's membership in the 1930's; the Bund had what were primarily and preponderantly cultural relations with the Third Reich, but there was no German control over Bund policies; the German Foreign Ministry recognized the Bund's negative effect on American relations with Germany; the only time the Bund interested the German agencies and ministries in Berlin was when the Bund's activities strained relations

First Section--Nazi Activities (Washington, 1943), pp. 62-64. (Hereafter cited as Report on the Axis Front Movement with page number.)

³⁰Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, The Plot Against the Peace: A Warning to the Nation! (New York, 1945), p. 169.

³¹New York Times, May 25, 1941, p. 3.

between the Reich and the United States; the investigation of the Bund by a congressional committee and the Bund's legal problems were largely politically motivated; and the Bund was more of an aid to the Roosevelt administration in portraying the negative aspects of National Socialism than it was an aid in furthering friendship between the German and American peoples and their governments.

CHAPTER II

DEUTSCHTUM

The Volk-Nation idea in German culture was a century and a half old before the advent of the third Reich and continues today, almost three decades after World War II. Willy Brandt, the former German chancellor, a socialist and anti-Nazi, referred to East and West Germany as "two states in one German nation."¹ This concept of the Volk-Nation as the basic principle of an ordered society, as opposed to a politically and legally structured society, had its origin with Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who advocated devotion to country and adherence to German culture, along with resistance to foreign encroachment in cultural aspects.² Likewise Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

¹"The Rise of the 'Other Germany,'" Time, CII (October 1, 1973), 35.

²National Socialism: Basic Principles, Their Application by the Nazi Party's Foreign Organization, and the Use of Germans Abroad for Nazi Aims, Department of State Publication 1864, Prepared in the Special Unit of the Division of European Affairs by Raymond E. Murphy, Francis B. Stevens, Howard Trivers, and Joseph M. Roland (Washington, 1943), pp. 5-6, quoting Johann Gottfried Herder, Sämmtliche Werke (Berlin, 1877-1913), XIII, 149; XVIII, 337. (Hereafter

(1770-1831), one of the foremost German philosophers, believed that the Volk, rather than any set of principles codified into law, was the primary foundation of a nation. The individual demonstrated his fundamental worth by being a contributing member of the Volk, which was the embodiment of all that was valuable and powerful. Individuals sacrificed their identity for the realization of the Volk spirit, defined by Hegel as a dynamic force in and of itself, which was strengthened by each additional individual who devoted his efforts toward being a full participant in this Volkstum. This was the supernatural aspect of the Volk, the natural being the cultural, economic, political, and religious ties between people of generally the same stock.³

Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a one-time Prussian minister of public instruction and renowned philologist, also placed the individual in a subservient position to the Volk. His years of studying languages convinced him that a nation or Volk was considerably more than a collection of individuals; each person's primary identification and

cited as National Socialism with appropriate page number, and the source used by Raymond E. Murphy, et al., if applicable.)

³National Socialism, p. 7, quoting Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechtes (Stuttgart, 1938), p. 441 and Hegel, Die Vernunft in der Geschichte (Leipzig, 1930), p. 37.

contribution were with his own ethnic group.⁴ This priority of the well-being of community over self was also expounded by Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), originator of the historical seminar and perhaps the leading German historian of the nineteenth century. Von Ranke's histories of Prussia, France, and England described European nationalism and the development of the modern state: "The state became for him an ethical concept, a partner morally equal to the church, only conceivable in its particular historical and national character."⁵

This appreciation of the Volk concept by these German writers, philosophers, and scholars gave impetus, inevitably perhaps, to the school of thought that those things German were superior. Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), the French racial theorist, in his Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races, stated his conviction of Aryan supremacy. Richard Wagner (1813-1883), the brilliant composer, built upon this idea and expanded it to include anti-Semitism.⁶

⁴National Socialism, p. 8, quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt, Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaus (Berlin, 1880), II, 22, 44.

⁵National Socialism, p. 8, quoting Leopold von Ranke, "Politisches Gespräch," Sämmtliche Werke (Leipzig, 1887), XLIX-L, 333-34. Fritz Wagner, "Leopold von Ranke," Encyclopaedia Britannica, XVIII (Chicago, 1969), 1162.

⁶National Socialism, p. 9.

Wagner's son-in-law, Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1835-1927), wrote that racial differences were quite obvious and evident, with the Aryan being the most gifted.⁷

Together with Wagner and Chamberlain, Eugen Dühring (1833-1921), a University of Berlin professor, used anti-Semitism as a method of fostering the Volk concept in Germany.

Only when the Volk was purged of foreign elements (Jews were considered foreigners) would the German people reach their potential.⁸

Hermann Ullmann, the editor of Deutsche Arbeit, a magazine published in the interest of Austrian Germans after World War I, defined the nation as a national community which occurs when the process of historical evolution surpasses the family and tribe stages. This nation shared a common heritage, language, and history which resulted in a definable cultural consciousness to form a spiritual union binding the individuals of the nation together.⁹

⁷National Socialism, pp. 9-10, quoting Houston Stewart Chamberlain, The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century (London, 1911), I, 541.

⁸National Socialism, p. 10, quoting Eugen Dühring, Die Judenfrage (Leipzig, 1930), p. 7.

⁹Ralph Frederic Bischoff, Nazi Conquest through German Culture (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1942), pp. 60-62.

Moeller van den Bruck and Heinrich von Gleichen founded the Juniklub in 1919 in opposition to the Versailles peace treaty, which had been signed on June 28, 1919. Van den Bruck felt that the German nation should strengthen itself for the inevitable fight to save Europe from Communism. The nation was defined as "a Volk with a consciousness of its mission." Van den Bruck opposed the Marxist concept of class warfare and the elimination of societal classes; instead, he outlined a concept in which the nation would be "based on the strengthening of the family, the ordering of life according to discipline and authority, and a feeling of community among all classes." In effect, the conservative socialism of Prussia would be united with German nationalism, producing what van den Bruck termed national socialism. Van den Bruck favored the inclusion of all ethnic Germans into the German nation. This would allow individual Germans to receive assistance from the German nation in order to preserve their culture, while the states in which members of the German nation lived would receive allegiance in all non-cultural matters.¹⁰

The primary spokesman and architect of National Socialist principles, Alfred Rosenberg, was of course a proponent of

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 67-71.

Aryan superiority. His view of race was practically identical to the traditional German view of the Volk as expressed above. It was Rosenberg who best described the relationship between the state and the Volk:

The state is not even an end but is only a means for the preservation of the folk. . . . Forms of the state change, and laws of the state pass away; the folk remains. From this alone follows that the nation is the first and last, ¹¹ that to which everything else has to be subordinated.

The National Socialists considered the state to be necessary only as a means of maintaining the Volk in accordance with certain laws. The National Socialist party had the task of implementing the political education and the political unification of the German Volk.¹²

Herder, Hegel, Humboldt, von Ranke, de Gobineau, Wagner, Chamberlain, Dühring, Ullmann, van den Bruck, and Rosenberg all had similar ideas concerning the German nation. The primary difference between Rosenberg's National Socialism and the others was the inclusion of blood as part of the definition of nation. But all shared the belief that the nation could best represent the aspirations of the

¹¹National Socialism, pp. 31-32, quoting Alfred Rosenberg, Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts (Munich, 1935), p. 28.

¹²Organisationsbuch der NSDAP, Herausgeber: Der Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP (München, 1943), pp. 486-87.

Volk, in contrast to the artificially constructed device of the state.

Point four of the National Socialist platform stated that "none but members of the nation [Volk] may be citizens of the State, none but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation."¹³ With the terms Deutschtum and Volkstum, the traditional concept of citizenship was cast aside. All people of German stock who were citizens of countries other than Germany were considered racial comrades rather than Ausländer (foreigners).¹⁴ Conversely, those residents of Germany of non-German stock, e.g., the Jews, were not members of the nation or Volk merely because they possessed state citizenship. Under the Nuernberg laws of September 15, 1935, concerning citizenship and race, citizenship was restricted to those of German blood who

¹³National Socialism, p. 32, quoting Gottfried Feder, The Programme of the Party of Hitler (Munich, 1932), p. 18.

¹⁴Charles Culp Burlingham and others, The German Reich and Americans of German Origin (New York, 1938), p. 20. Deutschtum in its broad sense means German culture and civilization. In this paper, however, it refers to the specific movement which sought to preserve cultural ties between all ethnic-Germans, those living in Germany and other countries.

desired to serve faithfully the German people and the Third Reich. Supplements to these laws imposed in November, 1935, specifically forbade citizenship to a Jew, forbade marriage between Jews and Aryans, and forced Jews to adopt traditional Jewish names.¹⁵

According to the National Socialist concept of Deutschtum, racial kinship was most important in applying for German citizenship. In Mein Kampf, Hitler scoffed at the part of naturalization which placed emphasis on a candidate's financial status, lack of objectional political affiliation or ideas, and criminal record while "racial considerations play no part. . . ." Hitler compared this process to obtaining membership in an automobile club.¹⁶ To members of the Volk, acquisition of citizenship was a solemn commitment to assist in the endeavors of the Volksgemeinschaft (world-wide community).

This commitment to the Volksgemeinschaft included all Germans, the Reichsdeutsche (citizens of Germany) and the Volksdeutsche (persons of German stock). Hermann Goering, considered the number two man in the National Socialist

¹⁵Baron, "Anti-Semitism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, II, 85.

¹⁶Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, translated by Ralph Manheim, (Boston, 1943), pp. 438-39.

hierarchy, stated in 1936 that the primary duty of Germans under the Third Reich would be to provide protection for German culture and nationality throughout the world. Such a policy was in direct opposition to the existent structure of states and their interrelationships. In effect, Goering was claiming as members of the Volk those persons of German stock who were conscious members of the German folk-community including those who lived outside German borders in Europe, and even those in the Western Hemisphere.¹⁷ Therefore, a citizen of Czechoslovakia or the United States, for example, who was conscious of his German heritage, had obligations other than those owed the country in which he resided. These Volksdeutsche were not subject to the German state, but since they were conscious members of the larger German community, they did owe loyalty to the Volksgemeinschaft. In return, they were due protection and consideration from the Volksgemeinschaft.¹⁸ This consideration on occasion included cash payments to ethnic Germans living in

¹⁷ National Socialism, pp. 72-73, quoting Wir Deutsche in der Welt (Stuttgart, 1936), p. 6.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Czechoslovakia, but the practice had begun under the Weimar Republic. Apparently Czechoslovakia knew of the practice, but did not protest.¹⁹

In an undated National Socialist pamphlet published by the Public Relations Center of the People Service (Volksdienst) in Berlin entitled Was Wollen Wir? (What Do We Want?), the issues of freedom, power, rights, and culture of the German people were discussed. Under freedom, the party pamphlet called for an end to foreign domination of German lands, a reference to the German territory lost through the "disgrace of Versailles."²⁰ The wish to have equal rights in the circle of world powers was also expressed, and the way to obtain equal rights was to become once again a powerful nation through the sacrifice of individual special interests and devotion to national unity and discipline. A free German Volk, according to the article, would want only to live in peace with other nations, enjoying the fruits of their honest labor.

The document revealed that the surest way to guarantee that power would rest with the people was to select individuals

¹⁹Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals, XII, 934. (Testimony of German Secretary of State Ernst von Weizsaecker.)

²⁰T-81, Roll 148, frames 0187950-51, 0187956.

who had no special interests to represent but who possessed ability and character. The highest duty of those selected would be the protection of the rights of the German people, since the state was the balancing and binding force of the nation; no class or social position was to be given preference. The state must abolish class conflict, but at the same time not interfere with the economy since this would only damage a healthy economy; rather the state was to restrict itself to insuring the economic well-being of the entire populace. In culture, the governing principle of the spiritual well-being of the people was morality. As a summary in answering the question, "What Do We Want?," the pamphlet stated that National Socialists wanted a genuine people's republic with the characteristics of solidarity of public spirit, freedom, justice, and accomplishment; they wanted no part of a state controlled by political parties, the upper class, or monied interests.²¹

There existed in Germany a considerable number of organizations, private and government supported, dedicated to the preservation of ties among all people of German origin. Membership, influence, and implementation of philosophy were concentrated in five organizations and

²¹Ibid., frames 0187951-55.

agencies: one, Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA), or the League for Germandom Abroad; two, Deutsches Ausland Institut (DAI), or German Foreign Institute; three, Auslandspressebüro der NSDAP or Foreign Press Offices of the NSDAP; four, Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI), or Central Agency for Ethnic Germans; and five, Auslands Organisation (AO), or Foreign Organization of the NSDAP.

The VDA was the oldest of these organizations, having been founded on July 2, 1880, in Austria for the purpose of supporting German schools in those areas of the Austro-Hungarian empire where German-speaking citizens were in the minority and the continuance of the language was endangered by Slav and Magyar majorities. Engelbert Pernerstorfer, in fact, named this organization the German School League. From an original membership of 3,150 the organization expanded to 20,000 at the end of the first year, and by the advent of the Third Reich consisted of 2,000,000 members. Several structural and name changes occurred between 1880 and 1933. In 1883 a Germany-based organization similar to and maintaining contact with the German School League in Austria was founded. It became the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) in 1908. After World War I, with the resulting changes in state boundaries and the birth of new nations

containing substantial German minorities, the work of these German and Austrian organizations was expanded, and in 1921 the German School League was merged with the VDA. In addition, the VDA assumed management of a number of similar organizations, to the extent that over ninety percent of these organizations were working in concert with the VDA.²²

The VDA's purpose was to maintain all rights due ethnic Germans in all countries, to work for unity among the Volk, and to nurture German culture. The methods employed included establishing kindergartens and libraries, publishing magazines and newspapers, providing scholarships and visits to Germany, furnishing speakers able to spread the virtues of Volk unity, and constructing Deutschhäuser (German houses) which would serve as an outlet for German culture.²³

Due to the similarity in VDA and NSDAP conceptions of race and Volksgemeinschaft there were few changes made after Gleichschaltung (Nazi coordination), and most adjustments

²²National Socialism, pp. 424-25, quoting Otto Schäfer, Sinn und Wesen des VDA, Volksbundes für das Deutschtum im Ausland, (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1933), pp. 23-29.

²³National Socialism, pp. 426-28, quoting Sinn und Wesen des VDA, pp. 30-35.

necessary to adhere completely to the party line were made by the VDA hierarchy.²⁴ The Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland became the Volksbund für Deutschtum im Ausland in 1933, since the name more closely defined the National Socialist ideology.²⁵ While the VDA's purpose and structure on the lower levels were not greatly affected, the independent office of league director was cancelled in 1938 and replaced by a directorate consisting largely of party members and chaired by Professor Karl Haushofer, a retired general and a favorite of Rudolf Hess.²⁶ Haushofer replaced Hans Steinacher, who had been appointed in 1933 when the Führer principle was implemented.²⁷

The VDA was a necessary supplement to the NSDAP in implementing racial solidarity, especially outside German borders where the party and government were somewhat

²⁴National Socialism, p. 429, quoting Sinn und Wesen des VDA, pp. 41-42.

²⁵Bischoff, Nazi Conquest through German Culture, pp. 5, 92.

²⁶Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, III, Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, (Washington, 1946), 603.

²⁷Nazi Conspiracy, VIII, 47. (The Führer or leadership principle placed complete authority in the director of each agency.)

restricted due to political considerations. The party apparatus, therefore, was forbidden by Hess to have any part in the racial work outside Germany. The party was to give all necessary support to the VDA while maintaining the appearance that there was no connection between the two.²⁸ The VDA recognized no borders where furtherance of the racial work was concerned. National Socialists did "not want German culture, German sentiments [or] German obligations to be any longer restricted by the sphere of state borders."²⁹ For example, the head of the VDA in America, Günther Orgell, a naturalized American who registered with the State Department as an agent of a foreign power, maintained ties between German nationals in the United States and their homeland, a service for which he received \$200 per month.³⁰ The German Interior Ministry under Wilhelm Frick immediately announced its support of VDA goals; due to the disastrous economic state of Germany in 1933, this support was not financial but included special

²⁸ Nazi Conspiracy, III, 603-04.

²⁹ National Socialism, p. 434. quoting Walter Gehl, ed., Der nationalsozialistische Staat (Breslau, 1933), pp. 215 ff.

³⁰ Stanley High, "Alien Poison," Saturday Evening Post, CCXIII (August 31, 1940), 80.

treatment such as urging school authorities to assist the VDA where possible.³¹

Collaboration between the VDA and the Hitler Youth was assured in an agreement signed in May, 1933. Directors of both organizations were appointed as council members of the counterpart organization.³² This connection between the VDA and the NSDAP was generally true of the DAI also. All such organizations, whether technically independent or an extension of the party, existed only under party guidelines and approval.³³

The DAI or German Foreign Institute was founded in Stuttgart in 1917 for the purpose of maintaining contact with German emigrants, especially those from southwestern Germany. This organization compiled a tremendous amount of information about all aspects of Deutschtum in all countries containing German immigrants. Its files included not only names of individual emigrants, but, in addition, all German-language newspapers, periodicals, and publishers, German

³¹National Socialism, p. 447, quoting Wilhelm Frick, The Reich's Minister of the Interior Is for the VDA Work (Berlin, 1933), no page number available.

³²Nazi Conspiracy, VII, 1108.

³³National Socialism, p. 121.

organizations such as church and singing groups, and educational groups concerned with those things German, primarily the German language.³⁴

Just months after the National Socialists came to power, a party newspaper, the N.S. Kurier of Stuttgart, announced that the Württemberg state government had assumed control of the DAI prior to the appointment of a chairman and board of directors. The head of the VDA, Dr. Hans Steinacher then announced the appointment as chairman of Dr. Karl Stroelin, who had been named mayor of Stuttgart by the National Socialists after previously losing in the elections of 1933. Stroelin in turn appointed a new board of directors which included government officials and Steinacher; this is evidence of the relationship between all organizations dedicated to German cultural ties. Although Stroelin was chairman, the actual policy director was Professor Richard Csaki. While there existed a policy of cooperation between the NSDAP and the DAI, there is no evidence that DAI policy on a daily basis was formulated or dictated by the NSDAP. Due to the similar philosophy espoused by the party and the

³⁴ National Socialism, pp. 122-23. (The DAI was reconstructed in Stuttgart after World War II as the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.)

DAI concerning Volksgemeinschaft, the party's daily control of the DAI was nominal.³⁵

Prominent names continued to be associated with the DAI, indicating the importance attached to the idea of Deutschtum. The DAI's annual meeting, for example, hosted personal representatives of Hess, Josef Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg, and Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath. Dr. Stroelin read a telegram sent to Chancellor Hitler thanking him for being the renovator of Germandom. Hitler responded with a telegram of greetings and appreciation.³⁶ Csaki's annual report concentrated on Deutschtum, emphasizing the concept of a German nation within countries other than Germany. The second phase of the DAI's existence had begun under National Socialism and was in agreement with its goals.³⁷

In 1933, over 700,000 Germans contributed financially to the DAI's efforts to maintain contacts with ethnic

³⁵ National Socialism, pp. 124, 462-63, quoting an article in the Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt, September 21, 1933, and an article in the N.S. Kurier, September 1, 1933. Hereafter, the "party" will refer to the NSDAP.

³⁶ National Socialism, pp. 460-62, quoting the Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt, September 21, 1933.

³⁷ National Socialism, pp. 462-64, quoting the Stuttgarter Neues Tagblatt, September 21, 1933, and the N.S. Kurier, September 21, 1933.

Germans abroad; this money helped support the 116 member staff headquartered in Stuttgart, 78 percent of whom were party members. The money was also used to finance seven annual trips to Germany by groups of ethnic Germans abroad; also, around 40,000 pieces of literature annually were sent abroad.³⁸

After 1933, the DAI no longer relied solely on private contributions, but was subsidized in part by the government. On August 27, 1936, Hitler's proclamation that Stuttgart would be the "City of Foreign Germans" recognized the importance of the DAI's endeavors.³⁹

The DAI was greatly interested in creating and nurturing an interest in Deutschtum among the millions of German immigrants and their offspring all over the world, including the United States. The central card index revealed that in 1940, the DAI had contact with over 2,000 individuals who served as a liaison between the DAI and 50,000 ethnic Germans in foreign countries.⁴⁰ The DAI actually had a list of 15,000 names, but apparently corresponded with approximately 2,000.⁴¹

³⁸T-81, Roll 425, frames 5172645-46.

³⁹National Socialism, p. 127.

⁴⁰T-81, Roll 619, frame 5414485.

⁴¹T-81, Roll 425, frame 5172656.

Advocates of Deutschtum always regretted the lack of previous German-American influence in United States foreign policy. They felt that too little emphasis and effort had been directed towards this area. While it was true that many ethnic-Germans had prospered in farming and business, and contributed much in the learning vocations, culture, and in the military, German-Americans had exercised practically no influence in American political life. A revival of interest in Germany among German-Americans was therefore a primary goal of the DAI.⁴²

The DAI examined many scholarly manuscripts on Deutschtum in America, including one from Professor Doctor Eduard Brenner of Nuernberg which had as its thesis the idea that absorption of the German stock into the American mainstream would draw the American population closer to German culture. The DAI felt such optimism was totally unwarranted, and there would be no support from German-Americans for cultural ties with Germany unless a complete reversal of form occurred.⁴³ The German-Americans could be compared to a cup of clear water added to a much larger container of colored

⁴² Ibid., frames 5172737-53.

⁴³ T-81, Roll 351, frames 5080109-11. The memo and DAI review are undated, but appear to have been written in the fall of 1938.

water; the addition caused no discernible change. Apparently Professor Doctor Brenner hoped the German-Americans would represent a cup of colored water which would change the color of the larger container of clear water.

The DAI received a report in late 1937 on American Deutschtum from Fritz Konrad Krueger, professor of political science at Wittenberg College in Springfield, Ohio. Krueger told the DAI that the rate of assimilation of all foreign elements, including immigrant Germans, in America was simply astonishing and deplorable; schools, churches, one's companions, the press, movies, and especially marriage served to eliminate any ties to the old country. As soon as German-Americans ceased to speak German, they could be considered no longer a part of the German culture, Krueger wrote. The goal of all good German-Americans, Krueger felt, was to build bridges between Germany and the United States, for the benefit of all concerned.⁴⁴

⁴⁴T-81, Roll 619, frames 5414332, 5414338, 5414348. The martyr of Deutschtum in America, a role similar to Horst Wessel's position in National Socialist propaganda, was Edmund Kayser, a German immigrant who, as a pastor in the Evangelical Church in Gary, Indiana, during World War I, asked Americans in Gary and Chicago to send money to Germany. According to the DAI, four masked men killed Kayser on the night of August 24, 1915, for his pro-German efforts. The DAI used Kayser as a rallying cry for Deutschtum in America. T-81, Roll 619, frame 5413933.

The Reich realized the danger in its promotion of Deutschtum. For example, a meeting in Stuttgart of Reichsdeutsche party members living abroad was referred to in the press as a meeting of "foreign Germans." The impression was thus created, especially among Germany's enemies, that "foreign Germans" included at least a portion of the thirty million people of German stock who were lost through Versailles or who were emigrants or children of emigrants and were citizens, willingly or otherwise, of other countries.⁴⁵

Attempts to explain the difference between these two components (German citizens and non-citizens) of Deutschtum im Ausland to the satisfaction of foreign governments were not successful and many Americans, especially those willing to believe the worst, believed the Reich saw no difference between Reichsdeutsche and Volksdeutsche. The answer to this particular semantic problem, a DAI spokesman, Günter Kaufmann, stated, was not to include Reichsdeutsche im Ausland under the designation of Auslandsdeutsche; they would remain simply Reichsdeutsche im Ausland, for it was

⁴⁵T-81, roll 490, frames 5251243-44, from the magazine Wille und Macht, XXII (November 15, 1937), no page number available.

necessary to eliminate all unclear terms and categorizations. Kaufmann felt people of German origin who lived in countries other than Germany should not be designated Volksdeutsche but Auslandsdeutsche, simply because the difference between Volksdeutsche and Reichsdeutsche was imprecise and capable of misunderstanding.⁴⁶

Under Kaufmann's proposal, there would exist only two terms; the term Volksdeutsche would be discarded, Auslandsdeutsche would designate non-citizens and Reichsdeutsche designate Reich citizens. Acceptance of this proposal would have obviated much suspicion in countries with large ethnic-German populations. For instance, if a Reich pronouncement spoke of the loyalty of Auslandsdeutsche with the intention of referring to German citizens, observers--especially those anti-German elements attempting to increase anti-German sentiment--could interpret the word to mean non-German citizens of German ethnic origin. Kaufmann further suggested foreign governments with ethnic German citizens desist in perceiving all German cultural work as a National Socialist mobilization; the German government could lessen this suspicion by standardizing the vocabulary dealing

⁴⁶Ibid., frames 5251243-44.

with Deutschtum, so pronouncements of Reich-German solidarity could not be construed to include citizens of other countries.⁴⁷

The president of the DAI, Dr. Karl K^onekamp, established guidelines for DAI use on October 29, 1937, the month following Kaufmann's suggestions. He listed five points which were to be followed. First, Auslandsdeutsche would mean all Germans living abroad, both Reich citizens and citizens of other countries; this suggestion was contrary to Kaufmann's recommendations and served to dim any distinction between citizens and non-citizens. K^onekamp exempted from Auslandsdeutsche those people of German stock who lived in areas adjacent to the Reich, for instance Austria, Switzerland, and Lichtenstein, for these countries were not considered to be "abroad." Point two held it would be wrong to take the terms Deutsche and Auslandsdeutsche away from German stock in other countries, for this would rob them of an essential part of their national consciousness (Zugeh^origkeitsbewusstsein zum deutschen Gesamtvolk) and make them second-class Germans. Third, the designation making Stuttgart (the home of the DAI) the city of the Auslandsdeutsche was wrong for it was supposed to be the city of the Volksdeutsche.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Since this designation of Auslandsdeutsche had been used since 1919, Kōnekamp realized it could not easily be changed. He therefore stated that the DAI should limit its work to the Auslandsdeutsche who were non-German citizens.⁴⁸ Kōnekamp should have realized that it was his definition of Auslandsdeutsche which constituted the problem. He would have been well advised to use Kaufmann's definition, according to which none of the Auslandsdeutsche were citizens.

Point four recalled the basic principles of the NSDAP relating to peoples and races. Kōnekamp invoked the authority of Hitler in advocating that there be no clear-cut distinction between Germans of Reich and non-Reich citizenship. But Hitler had been speaking in generalities and had approved a distinction between citizens and non-citizens; Kōnekamp's interpretation was questionable, at best. Kōnekamp's fifth and last point was that a search had to be made for new terms to deal with the DAI's work, since Auslandsdeutsche was too often used for the AO's work with German citizens abroad, and the DAI's work was strictly directed towards non-citizens.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., frames 5251257-58.

⁴⁹ Ibid., frame 5251258.

Könnekamp then learned the foreign ministry (Auswärtiges Amt or AA) had designated the non-German citizens as Volksdeutsche and citizens living abroad as Auslandsdeutsche. He lauded attempts by the AA, assisted by the AO, to clarify the problem. He was certain they had failed to do so, however, and launched an argument on terminology which brought a showdown over the role of non-citizen Germans in National Socialism.⁵⁰ The AA and AO wanted a very restricted role because of the necessity of good relations with countries with German minorities, particularly the United States, France, and Italy. The term Volksdeutsche was readily definable in that it obviously meant a common cultural background rather than a common political future. The DAI was interested more in the German nation than the German state. It was not charged with the responsibility of dealing with other states and did not have to explain every protest from another state on the activities of groups seemingly loyal to the Reich rather than their country of citizenship. The DAI's contacts were made on the basis of strengthening cultural attachments to the Reich with little regard to political complications. Könnekamp stated

⁵⁰ Ibid., frame 5251259.

that non-Reich Germans who had for scores of years been called Auslandsdeutsche would consider the AA's decision to withdraw the designation a degradation and disparagement as well as a decrease in interest by the Reich. As proof, Kōnekamp appended some press comments from non-citizen German newspapers.⁵¹

Kōnekamp and the DAI did not acquiesce in the AA's definitions, but pointed to Hitler's designation of Stuttgart as the city of the Auslandsdeutsche on August 27, 1936, as proof of their position. Granted that Ernst Wilhelm Bohle and the AO (which dealt with German citizens abroad) had concurrently taken on the honorary sponsorship of the city of the Auslandsdeutsche under Hitler's designation, but since the DAI's activity dealt with non-citizens and its headquarters was in Stuttgart, the city was a spiritual home to all Germans, citizens and non-citizens alike, reasoned Kōnekamp. According to this assumption, Hitler in effect wanted the term Auslandsdeutsche to apply to citizens and non-citizens. If the AO's description were accepted and only citizens were included in the Auslandsdeutsche, Kōnekamp concluded, Hitler's concept would not be followed.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., frame 5251260.

⁵²Ibid., frame 5251261.

Such reasoning was clearly faulty, since Stuttgart could be the spiritual home of both citizen and non-citizen alike, without combining the two under one term. But Kōnekamp had justified, to himself at least, the temporary postponement of accepting the AA's definitions.

The issue was settled when Dr. Hans Heinrich Lammers, the head of the Reichskanzlei, ruled Reichsdeutsche was to refer to citizens of the German Reich, and Volksdeutsche would designate those people who in speech and culture were of German ethnic stock but not German citizens. Both of these groups could be considered part of Deutschtum im Ausland if members of the Reichsdeutsche were living abroad.⁵³ Since Auslandsdeutsche could still refer to citizen and non-citizen, the terms were still susceptible to misunderstanding. Reasonable suggestions such as Kaufmann's were discarded. Concern with personal prestige, agency rivalries, and a lack of awareness of the difficulties caused by the multiplicity of terms dealing with Deutschtum had contributed to a continuation of the confusion.

The aspect of creating favorable interest towards Germany among foreign peoples was undertaken in large part by the

⁵³Ibid., frames 5251196-97, quoting a letter of January 25, 1938, from Dr. Hans Heinrich Lammers, Reichsminister and head of the Reichskanzlei, to the head of the press department of the NSDAP, with a copy to the DAI.

Auslandspressebüro der NSDAP, the foreign press office. Rolf Hoffmann, foreign press secretary, was the central figure. He received hundreds of letters from Americans alone requesting literature, especially News from Germany, a National Socialist publication designed to explain Germany's position in world affairs as well as the accomplishments of Germany since 1933. Hoffmann worked closely with the DAI, as evidenced by the amount of foreign press office correspondence found in the DAI files.⁵⁴

In comparison to other agencies concerned with Deutschtum, there is little information available on VOMI, the agency of racial Germans. Unlike the VDA and DAI, VOMI was founded only after the National Socialists came to power. This agency was a counterpart of sorts of the AO; the AO was the party's agency for contact with party members abroad, while VOMI was the party's agency for contact with Volksdeutsche. Rudolf Hess created VOMI in October, 1933, and named his former mentor, Professor Karl Haushofer, as the first director; Haushofer was replaced in 1937 by SS-Gruppenfuehrer Werner Lorenz.⁵⁵ Hess intended VOMI to

⁵⁴T-81, Roll 533, frames 5301502-51. T-81, Roll 26, frame 22613-29.

⁵⁵Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, III, 29, 603. Alton Frye, Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere,

remain secret and to act as a deliberative body concerning questions of Deutschtum. Foreign Minister von Neurath feared VOMI would interfere with foreign affairs, but Hess insisted on assuming jurisdiction over all Volksdeutsche issues.⁵⁶ After 1938, the VDA with all its functions was absorbed by Lorenz into VOMI, and for all practical purposes ceased to exist, although the VDA retained an appearance of independence.⁵⁷

The Foreign Organization of the NSDAP, or AO, was founded in 1930 in Hamburg in order to further party goals among members abroad. It became a formal part of the party organization on May 1, 1931, and was placed under the leadership of Dr. Hans Nieland. The party hierarchy placed little emphasis on the AO prior to Hitler's election; shortly thereafter, in May, 1933, a protege of Hess, Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, became head of the AO.⁵⁸

1933-1941, (New Haven and London, 1967), p. 18. Arthur L. Smith, Jr., The Deutschtum of Nazi Germany and the United States (The Hague, 1965), p. 21.

⁵⁶ Frye, Nazi Germany, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁷ Smith, The Deutschtum of Nazi Germany and the United States, pp. 17-19, quoting from the State Department Special Interrogation Mission, pp. 14-17.

⁵⁸ National Socialism, pp. 93, 288, quoting Dr. Emil Ehrich, Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP, (Berlin, 1937), no page number available.

Members of the German foreign service resented the AO's activity in what had previously been their exclusive domain in dealing with German nationals abroad. But the AO gained the upper hand in October, 1935, when all diplomatic and consular officials were inducted as a group into the AO. The foreign service became an integral part of the party structure, assuring party preeminence in foreign matters. In March, 1936, the central office of the AO moved to Berlin; the Seefahrt or Maritime division of the AO remained in Hamburg.⁵⁹ By 1942, the AO had 548 local groups in over 45 countries. The AO was divided into eight regional departments, with North America being regional department VI.⁶⁰

The AO's prestige was considerably enhanced in January, 1937, when it was made part of the foreign office, and Bohle assumed the title of head of the foreign organization in the foreign office. Thus Bohle's jurisdiction was extended to include not only party members but all German citizens abroad. In December, 1937, Bohle became a secretary of state in the foreign office which completed his transition from a party functionary to a senior member of the government's

⁵⁹ National Socialism, p. 94.

⁶⁰ National Socialism, pp. 289, 295, quoting Ehrich, Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP, no page number available.

foreign office. Bohle's new position seemed to ensure that foreign office personnel adhered to the party line.⁶¹ It appears more likely, however, that Foreign Minister von Neurath had a purpose in mind other than increasing Bohle's power; von Neurath brought Bohle into the foreign office to prevent him from creating problems with other countries through AO activity.⁶²

Joachim von Ribbentrop depicted the AO as "the pet child of Rudolf Hess" and blamed it for furnishing President Roosevelt with the argument that Germany was organizing a fifth column in the Western Hemisphere. Ribbentrop, as so many German officials, supported the idea of Deutschtum, but regretted the complications which it caused in foreign relations.⁶³ The AO was not a fifth column organization at all; it was concerned only that party members remain organized while abroad. Inevitably, individual members of the AO caused the Reich embarrassment through unauthorized

⁶¹National Socialism, pp. 94-96. Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals, XII, 801.

⁶²Erich Kordt, Nicht Aus den Akten, (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 186. (Bohle eventually became a lieutenant general in the Schutzstaffel (SS)). Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals, XIII, 1159.

⁶³von Ribbentrop, The Ribbentrop Memoirs, pp. 80-81.

behavior, but discipline was difficult to achieve in such a wide-spread organization. Anti-German elements constructed and disseminated the myth that the AO was a danger to the independence of countries containing German minorities.⁶⁴ This was simply untrue.

The interest in Deutschtum could better be understood, the National Socialists claimed, if comparisons were made to world-wide organizations such as the World Union of Poles Abroad, the Italian Foreign Organization, Alliance Francoise, and the National Association for the Protection of Swedes Abroad. All these organizations were concerned with maintaining contacts between individuals and their homeland for the purpose of promoting a particular culture and continued support for that country's policies.⁶⁵ Bohle stated that the aims of Deutschtum were the same as England's regarding British communities abroad, i.e., to "foster a greater spirit of solidarity" and to ensure that a nation's "ideals were more generally known and appreciated by foreign nations."⁶⁶ In his book entitled Wir Deutsche in der Welt

⁶⁴ Donald C. Watt, "The German Diplomats and the Nazi Leaders, 1933-1939," Journal of Central European Affairs, XV, (July, 1955), 148--60.

⁶⁵ National Socialism, pp. 371-72, quoting Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, "Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP," Jahrbuch für auswärtige Politik (Berlin, 1938), no page number available.

⁶⁶ National Socialism, p. 392, quoting Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, "Germans Abroad," Germany Speaks, (London, 1938), no page number available.

(We Germans in the World) Bohle insisted that as far as German nationals were concerned, it was imperative that they conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect credit on their homeland. There was to be no involvement in the internal political affairs of the host country.⁶⁷ Bohle asked that National Socialists abroad be accorded the same rights as those extended in Germany to the "democrats" from France, Britain, or the United States; any abuse or disrespect shown party members was interpreted as an insult to the German government.⁶⁸

Deutschtum can be compared to worldwide Jewry and the intense concern of many Jews regarding the rights of individual Jews and the state of Israel. The 1974 international president of B'nai B'rith Women stated "I can be a good American and I can be a Jew and I don't have to lose my Jewishness by assimilation."⁶⁹ Many German-born Americans and their descendants felt they could be good citizens of

⁶⁷National Socialism, p. 357, quoting Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, Wir Deutsche in der Welt, (Berlin, 1937), no page number available.

⁶⁸National Socialism, p. 377, quoting Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, "Die Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP," Jahrbuch für auswärtige Politik, (Berlin, 1938), no page number available.

⁶⁹The Dallas Morning News, March 23, 1974, page 1C, quoting Mrs. Milton Smith.

the United States while still practicing their German customs and speaking German. The question which inevitably confronted advocates of Deutschtum in the 1930's and Jews after 1948 was whether or not this double identity necessarily meant double loyalty. Most American Jews feel they will not have to choose between the United States and Israel.⁷⁰ The German-American Bundists of the 1930's felt the same way at the outset; but as the hostility between the United States and Germany increased, many Bundists verbally attacked the United States government and sided with Germany.

On several occasions Hitler expressed his views on Deutschtum in America. He felt German-Americans would remain the superior part of the population as long as intermarriage did not occur, with a resulting decrease in ability and culture. Hitler did not preach that the Aryan had greater mental qualities, per se, but that the Aryan subordinated himself and his talents for the betterment of the community or Volk.⁷¹

Hitler saw the United States as a conglomeration of races governed by the desire to make money. There was only

⁷⁰"American Jews and Israel," Time, CV (March 10, 1975), 23.

⁷¹Hitler, Mein Kampf, pp. 286-297.

one possibility to solve the American crisis and that was for German-Americans to assert themselves in their rightful place as the leaders in society.⁷² But Hitler saw a fundamental difference between German immigrants in America and ethnic Germans in those countries bordering Germany, a difference potentially lethal to Deutschtum in America. He felt the American melting pot had rendered many German-Americans indifferent to German culture and useless to the greater German community. Hitler declared if a German emigrated to Kiev, he remained a German; but if he emigrated to Miami, he was lost to Deutschtum.⁷³

Despite this admission by Hitler, agencies in the Reich maintained contact with ethnic Germans in the United States, including Bundists. The result was not in the best interests of the Reich and, consequently, of Deutschtum itself.

⁷²Rauschnig, The Voice of Destruction, pp. 67-70.

⁷³Offner, American Appeasement, p. 15, quoting Francois Genoud, ed., The Testament of Adolf Hitler: The Hitler-Bormann Documents, February-April 1945, translated by R.H. Stevens, (London, 1961), p. 46.

CHAPTER III

ORIGIN AND IMAGE OF THE GERMAN-AMERICAN BUND

German organizations in the United States have abounded since the seventeenth century, when large numbers of emigrants left the German states. Even prior to the establishment of modern Germany in 1871, immigrants of German stock established groups to foster continued interest in German culture and the German language. Sängervereine (singing groups) were the primary type of organization as most German-Americans professed greater interest in cultural and economic aspects than in those things political. Historically, German-Americans have had little political impact; efforts by German immigrants and their offspring to designate Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin as German states failed, but large numbers of German settlers arrived as a result.¹ German-American political activity reached its apex in the 1864 presidential election, as the German-American vote proved to be the decisive factor in Abraham Lincoln's reelection.² Carl Schurz, however, a

¹Albert Bernhardt Faust, The German Element in the United States, (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1927), I, 473; II, 184-85.

²Ibid.

leading Lincoln supporter, a general for the Northern forces in the Civil War, and later Secretary of the Interior under Rutherford B. Hayes, spoke strongly against the formation of a German political party in the United States.³

Details of the German-American Bund's origin are sketchy and conflicting, but a generally accurate picture of its history can be determined. Fritz Gissibl, a twenty-year-old German immigrant, established the Teutonia Society on October 12, 1924, soon after his arrival in Chicago.⁴ If his testimony before a congressional committee is true, Gissibl, a member of Adolf Hitler's unsuccessful beer-hall Putsch in Munich in 1923, envisioned an organization based on the philosophy of the budding National Socialists in Germany even before his arrival in the United States. The Ku Klux Klan had solicited Gissibl for membership, but he decided to establish an all-German society, including opposition to Negroes and Jews, but not Catholics.⁵ As late as September 8, 1930,

³Colin Ross, Unser Amerika: Der deutsche Anteil an den Vereinigten Staaten, (Leipzig, 1937), p. 254.

⁴Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the Second Session of the Seventy-Sixth Congress, First Session of the United States of America, LXXXIV--Part 14, July 13, 1939 to August 5, 1939, (Washington, 1939), 3373. The term "Teutonia" is indicative of the philosophy of Deutschtum.

⁵Hearings, I, 48. Joseph F. Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV

Gissibl wrote to the propaganda department of the National Socialist party in Germany, identifying his group and asking for instructions for any propaganda work which the party might desire. This is proof that the party was not involved in establishing Teutonia.⁶ There were numerous German organizations in the United States and Teutonia remained small and insignificant until Hitler's quest for power began to be realized in 1932, the same year that Nazi-party member Heinz Spanknoebel, a German immigrant on assignment from the Nazi party to organize a pro-National Socialist group while living in Detroit, established the Friends of the Hitler Movement.⁷ In September, 1932, the NSDAP established an

(August, 1937), 153. It was later falsely alleged that Gissibl was sent by National Socialist leaders in 1923 to found Nazi cells in the United States. Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, The Plot Against the Peace: A Warning to the Nation! (New York, 1945), p. 167. Sayers and Kahn also alleged that Germany had started planning World War II in 1922. Ibid., p. 166.

⁶ Hoover Institution Microfilm Collection, NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Reel 35--Folder 695, Material Pertaining to United States of America, Stanford University, Stanford, California, no page number available.

⁷ Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945, Series C, II, The Third Reich: First Phase, October 1933-June 1934, Department of State, (Washington, 1959), 6-7. (Hereafter cited as DGFP with appropriate series, volume, and page number.)

auxiliary in the United States.⁸ At this time, Teutonia's membership of around five hundred, predominantly German nationals but also encompassing a number of German-Americans,⁹ increased rapidly, leading to local units in many major cities in the eastern and middle-western United States.¹⁰

On April 12, 1933, the head of the NSDAP in the United States, Geschäftsführer Hans Strewst, who lived in Detroit, wrote to all party leaders in the United States, announcing that on April 8, 1933, Hitler had decreed the party organization in the United States be dissolved. Strewst decided that all party members were to join the Friends of the Hitler Movement. Very little else had changed; dues and reports would continue as previously. Strewst announced that the "fight for Germany" would continue unabated.¹¹

⁸Ludwig Lore, "Nazi Politics in America," Nation, CXXXVII (November 29, 1933), 615.

⁹German immigrants who had received American citizenship.

¹⁰DGFP, C, III, 1113n. "Imported Bigotry," The Commonwealth, XIX (November 3, 1933), p. 1.

¹¹NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Reel 27--Folder 531, Documents of Wilhelm Schneider, NSDAP propagandist in the United States, 1927-1933, no page numbers available. House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Report. 78th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix--Part VII, Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, First Section--Nazi Activities, (Washington, 1943), p. 61. (Hereafter cited as Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States with appropriate page number.)

In July, 1933, remnants of the Nazi Party in the United States, the Friends of the Hitler Movement, and their friends met in Chicago and formed the Friends of the New Germany¹² under the elected leadership of Heinz Spanknoebel. Fritz Gissibl was named deputy leader and New York City was designated as national headquarters.¹³

Spanknoebel attempted to merge all German organizations into a pro-Hitler front by taking control of the Vereinigte Deutsche Gesellschaften, a New York federation of three hundred German societies. His efforts were initially successful; he convinced members of a majority of these societies to have their delegates to the Vereinigte Deutsche Gesellschaften support a program favorable to National Socialism and inimical to Jews. The New York Staats-Zeitung, a newspaper controlled by the Jewish Ridder brothers, Bernard and Victor, and a leading voice of the Vereinigte Deutsche Gesellschaften, denounced Spanknoebel unrelentingly. Bernard Ridder revealed he had earlier resisted Spanknoebel's attempt to dictate a pro-Hitler policy to his newspaper.¹⁴

¹²Hereafter referred to as "the Friends."

¹³DGFP, C, III, 1113n. Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, pp. 61-2.

¹⁴Lore, "Nazi Politics in America," Nation, CXXXVII, 616-17. "Imported Bigotry," The Commonweal, XIX, 2. "The Week:

Spanknoebel's activities alarmed many old non-political German societies as well as individuals favoring Hitler. Both factions realized that the publicity resulting from Spanknoebel's antics was hurting Germany and German-Americans. In Berlin on October 16, 1933, two German nationals who were members of the party in the United States, F.C. Mensing and Walter H. Schellenberg, approached Ernst Bohle, head of the party in countries other than Germany, and asked that party membership be restricted to Reich-Germans and political activity in America be terminated. In answer to another request, the party announced that Spanknoebel's mission had already been canceled in September, 1933.¹⁵

Mensing and Schellenberg realized that suspicion of the Friends would poison German-United States relations. In fact, Samuel Dickstein, Jewish representative from New York,

Propaganda by German Nazis in the United States," New Republic, LXXXVI (October 18, 1933), 264. In the same article, the New Republic reprinted a letter from the October 7, 1933 issue of The Daily Worker (New York). This letter was purported to be a copy of one sent from the Friends (controlled by Spanknoebel) to an official in Berlin in which pro-German work in the United States was discussed. The New Republic stated that Spanknoebel's assertion that the letter was a forgery needed substantiation. Thus the New Republic demanded proof for the denial by Spanknoebel, rather than for the accusation by The Daily Worker.

¹⁵ DGFP, C, II, 6-7.

in his capacity as chairman of the House Immigration Committee, had instigated a congressional investigation of the Friends almost simultaneously with the appeal to Bohle.¹⁶ Under the chairmanship of Rep. John W. McCormack of Massachusetts with Dickstein as vice-chairman, the committee concluded that the Friends organization was actually a part of the National Socialist Party.¹⁷

One piece of legislation emerging from this congressional investigation was the requirement that all agents of foreign powers register with the Justice Department. Spanknoebel fled to Germany aboard the German ship Europa in order to escape federal prosecution for failure to comply with this new law.¹⁸ The German Foreign Ministry informed its ambassador in Washington, Hans Luther, that party political activity in America would end and only Reich-Germans could be members of the party.¹⁹ After Germany disavowed any

¹⁶The results of the investigation were inconclusive as to the degree of German involvement in the United States, and failed to shock the country as Dickstein had predicted. "Nazi Inquiry: House Decides to Look into 'Brown Menace,'" News-Week, III (March 31, 1934), 12.

¹⁷"Bund Banned," Time, XXXI (March 14, 1938), 15-16.

¹⁸Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes An Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 153. Smith, The Deutschtum of Nazi Germany and the United States, p. 73.

¹⁹DGFP, C, II, 8.

connection with the Friends, it restricted its public activities but continued to organize.²⁰ Fritz Gissibl announced his intention to maintain party membership and to continue his work for Deutschtum in Germany. He resigned as head of the Friends and was temporarily replaced by Reinhold Walter.²¹

Search for a new leader of a new organization friendly to the Reich resulted in the selection on December 1, 1935, of Fritz Kuhn, former leader of the Detroit local of the Friends. Kuhn was elected by members of the Friends and was not appointed by German agents because he was favored by Hitler for the position, as was later reported in the American press.²² On March 28-29, 1936, the Friends held a national convention in Buffalo, New York, and confirmed Kuhn's selection; the new organization called itself the Amerikadeutscher Volksbund or the German-American Bund.²³

²⁰Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 153. Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 61.

²¹New York Times, March 28, 1934, p. 19.

²²Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 62. "Nazi Visitor," Newsweek, X (December 6, 1937), 19.

²³DGFP, C, III, 1113n. Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 153. New York Times, March 30, 1936, p. 9. Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 62.

Fritz Julius Kuhn was born in Munich, Germany, on May 15, 1896. He served in the German army during World War I, beginning as a machine gunner, but later attaining the rank of lieutenant in the infantry. Kuhn studied at the University of Munich after the war, concentrating on science. His brother, Dr. Max Kuhn, was a judge in Germany. Because of massive unemployment, Fritz Kuhn left Germany for Mexico in May, 1923. He had wanted to migrate to the United States, but there existed a two-year waiting period in order to qualify for the United States immigration quota. He worked in Mexico until May 18, 1927, when he entered the United States at Laredo, Texas, on his way to Detroit, Michigan. He worked for the Ford Motor Company as a chemical engineer for eight years, until he moved to New York to lead the Bund. He became a United States citizen on December 3, 1934.²⁴

In the preamble to the Bund constitution, the idea of Deutschtum presented itself. The Bund was formed to unite "men and women of the Germanic race . . . proud of their

²⁴Hearings, VI, 3706-3709, 3712, 3786. Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 62-63. Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 153. Kuhn was a huge man, around six feet two, two hundred forty pounds. Ibid., p. 152. Since Kuhn emigrated in May 1923, he was not present for the beer-hall Putsch in November, 1923.

German blood, and treasuring German traditions, language, and ideas. . . ."25 Article II of the Bund constitution detailed the twelve aims and purposes; these included an affirmation of respect for the constitution and institutions of the United States, but three points were illustrative of the Bundists' primary thrust. Point three stated the intention of contributing to the goodwill between their native and adopted countries. The next point promised to defend the mother country (Germany) against all ill-will from any source. If Bundists succeeded in these two purposes, they would then fulfill the aim expressed in point number eleven; "to be and remain worthy of our Germanic blood, our German motherhood [and] our German brothers and sisters. . . ."26

The Bund was structured in ascending order into branches, local units, districts, and departments. A branch--a designation seldom used--was any group of less than twenty members, while a unit had more than twenty. Each state was a district which in operation was usually abandoned, while units were administered directly from the department level.

²⁵Hearings, VI, 3713.

²⁶Ibid., 3714.

The three departments were sections of the country, those being East, Middle West, and West.²⁷

At the peak of Bund popularity, there were sixty-nine local units in nineteen states, twenty-three of them in New York. Other unit locations, as revealed by Kuhn's testimony before a congressional committee, were: seven in California, six in Connecticut, five in Pennsylvania, four each in New Jersey, Ohio, and Indiana, two each in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Washington, and one each in Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Oregon, Nebraska, and Texas. There were individual members in other states.²⁸

The Bund leader or Führer had virtually unlimited authority in the administration of all Bund activities; he had the power to dispose of any or all Bund monies, properties, or possessions. Only a national convention could remove a Bund Führer, and as long as he had the support of three officers of the Bund's national administration, no national

²⁷Ibid. The Bund's national headquarters was located at 178 East Eighty-fifth Street, Room 6, New York, New York; mailing address, P.O. Box 1, Station K, New York, New York. Ibid., p. 3722. The initiation fee was \$1.00, with monthly dues of \$.75. Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 154.

²⁸Hearings, X, 6071.

convention could be called for the purpose of removal.²⁹ In 1937, Kuhn was reelected to a four-year term. In the statement to the press announcing Kuhn's reelection, the Bund unnecessarily contributed to the general dislike of the organization by declaring Kuhn to be the "'best hated German-American.'"³⁰

The membership article reflected the concept of Deutschtum; Aryan blood and German extraction were a written requirement. Other nationalities could join, however, contingent upon approval of the Bund's leadership.³¹ Nonetheless, the Bund directed its appeal to Americans of German heritage who considered things distinctly German as objects to be maintained and revered, thus operating against the melting-pot concept. Kuhn constantly used the term American-Germans rather than German-Americans, thus placing more

²⁹House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Report. 77th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix--Part IV, German-American Bund, (Washington, 1941), p. 1552. (Hereafter cited as German-American Bund with appropriate page number.)

³⁰New York Times, July 6, 1937, p. 11.

³¹Hearings, VI, 3714. Kuhn testified before a congressional committee on August 17, 1939, that approximately forty percent of Bund members were not of German extraction. Of this forty percent, ninety percent were Irish, participants because of their anti-British sentiment. Hearings, VI, 3887.

emphasis on Germany than America.³² Strongest in the New York-New Jersey and Chicago areas, the Bund was nonetheless weak in areas populated by German Catholics, who generally despised Hitler. The Yorkville section of Manhattan, around 86th Street and 3rd Avenue, was the epicenter of the Bund and Deutschtum in America.³³ As in Germany, the lower middle class contributed the greatest number of followers to the anti-Jewish, anti-Communist crusade. Certainly longing for the place of their childhood, or homesickness, played an important part in the Bund's appeal.³⁴

Of the 130,000,000 Americans, around 12,000,000-15,000,000 were German-Americans,³⁵ but Bund appeal was slight. For

³²H.L. Trefousse, Germany and American Neutrality, 1939-1941, (New York, 1951), p. 14. Stanley High, "Star-Spangled Fascists," Saturday Evening Post, CCXI (May 27, 1939), 7.

³³"Fascism in America," Literary Digest, CXXIV (August 14, 1937), 17. "Imported Nazi Sadism," Nation, CXLVI (April 30, 1938), 493. "American Nazis," Newsweek, XI (May 2, 1938), 13. Alfred Hart, "Manhattan Heil," American Magazine, CXXXII (July, 1941), 39.

³⁴S.K. Padover, "Unser Amerika," Forum, CI (January, 1939), 4. "Fascism Now on Decline: One German View," Living Age, CCCIX (March, 1941), 35. Hearings, VI, 3937. T-81, Roll 420, frame 5166531.

³⁵Those people who had at least one German grandparent or great grandparent of German blood. DGFP, D, I, 667.

example, there were 700,000 German-Americans in the Chicago area, but only 40,000 maintained cultural identity through German society activities, and only 450 possessed Bund membership. According to these figures, even the estimate that one percent of German-Americans were completely pro-Nazi is too high. There were between 8,000-18,000 Bundists in all Bund posts.³⁶

Many Bundists joined because of the anti-German hysteria which had occurred in the United States during World War I, and which started again in 1933, building to a crescendo after September, 1939. They vividly recalled the abuses encountered and were determined to join together to counteract a return to such an atmosphere. They resented anti-German remarks and encouragement of the anti-German boycott emanating from many sources in the United States, including the news media and government circles. Bundists had to weather media attacks in which they were called such names as sedulous apes and rattlesnakes.³⁷ Ludwig Lore, a writer whose articles

³⁶DGFP, D, I, 667. William Seabrook, "America über Alles," American Magazine, CXXIV (October, 1937), 93. Hearings, II, 1092.

³⁷Padover, "Unser Amerika," Forum, CI, 6. Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men," Nation, CXLV (November 13, 1937), 530. New York Times, August 9, 1937, p. 8. Hearings, XIV, 8253. T-81, Reel 140, frames 177619-22. Ross, Unser Amerika, pp. 292-93.

appeared in the Nation, was typical of a legion of journalists who felt all pro-Germans were anti-American, but evinced no similar sentiment at pro-British statements. Lore accused historian Charles C. Tansill of "pro-Nazi speeches," and by implication of being a Nazi.³⁸ Oswald Garrison Villard, another contributor to the Nation, was known for his anti-German vehemence.³⁹ He attacked the exchange program between German and American school children, fearing that "American children who have gone to Germany will doubtless come home stuffed with German propaganda and imbued with fascist ideas perhaps for life."⁴⁰ In another article later in the same year, Villard concluded "that Germans have no ethical standards when it comes to what they call serving their country."⁴¹ He professed inability to understand why Germans were not morally disturbed at German attempts to abrogate the treaty of Versailles, "which the Germans had pledged their national honor to observe."⁴² Occasionally,

³⁸Ludwig Lore, "What Are the American Nazis Doing?," Nation, CXLIV (June 5, 1937), 636.

³⁹Oswald Garrison Villard, "Nazi Politics in America," Nation, CXXXVII (November 29, 1933), 614.

⁴⁰Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: No Swastikas at the World's Fair!," Nation, CXLIV (June 5, 1937), 648.

⁴¹Villard, "Issues and Men," Nation, CXLIV, p. 530.

⁴²Ibid.

an anti-Nazi journalist would write that the Bund was really incapable of spreading National Socialism in the United States, and this fact was recognized in Germany, where the Bund was "equally scorned."⁴³ But the overwhelming majority of articles concerning the Bund by the American press raised the spectre of a German invasion assisted by the Bundists.

Attempts to restrict the teaching of the German language also angered many German-Americans.⁴⁴ Not only the Bund, but German-American organizations with no political orientation whatever, were physically attacked due to the anti-German feeling in the United States.⁴⁵ Anti-Bund feeling reached hysterical proportions after September 1, 1939. For example, the adjutant of the New York national guard called for all Bundists to be thrown into concentration camps, their possessions sold, and the proceeds given to

⁴³Demaree Bess, "Hitler's Weapon Against Us," Saturday Evening Post, August 3, 1940, CCXIII, 73. "Bund Banned," Time, XXXI, 15-16.

⁴⁴"St. Louis and the Bund: Nazi Propaganda Charges Cause Ban on Language Classes," Newsweek, XII (September 5, 1938), 18. Hearings, II, 1131.

⁴⁵T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264658. Free American and Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter, July 25, 1940, p. 1. (Hereafter cited as Free American.)

Britain and France.⁴⁶ The anti-Bund campaign reached ludicrous proportions when the periodical True Story carried an account of a Virginia Gogswell, who "sold my love, in order to obtain Fritz Kuhn's bund [sic] secrets; I've had seven husbands and was once a German baroness."⁴⁷ Official German news sources called this an example of the work of those who were working against Germany in the United States.⁴⁸

After the Bund's national convention in 1936, the Bund energetically attempted to implement its four-point program which resembled the National Socialist Weltanschauung: combat the influence of the Jews and Communists; weaken the Jewish-led boycott of German products; provide a forum in which German-Americans could exert a political influence; and improve official German-United States relations.⁴⁹

⁴⁶T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264714, quoting the Schnectady, New York Herold-Journal of September 8, 1939. Brig. Gen. Walter G. Robinson had been headquartered in Koblenz after World War I.

⁴⁷T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264825, quoting True Story, February 2, 1940.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Hearings, XIV, 8258, 8260. Hearings, X, 6086. Other Americans defined the Bund's purposes quite differently. A typical anti-Bund interpretation was made by Struthers Burt, a writer for the national magazine, Forum, who stated that the Bund, controlled by the German secret service and propaganda

The Bundists attacked the Jews because they encouraged a strong stance by the United States government against the Reich and its anti-Semitic policies. The Bund desired to destroy what it termed the Jewish dictatorship in the United States, which had a dominant voice in the "press, radio, stage, screen, education, legislation, justice, finance, and the professions. . . ." ⁵⁰ Jewish leaders in the United States established two organizations in the United States in 1933 to boycott German products. Samuel Untermeyer, a New York lawyer, established the Non-Sectarian anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights. Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, an Austrian-born urologist who immigrated to the United States

bureau, wanted to assume control of American politics by allying with other "ignorant and prejudiced voters." Struthers Burt, "Why Hate the Jews?," Forum, CI (June, 1939), 293.

⁵⁰Hearings, VI, 3721. Not only Bundists, but several United States ambassadors to European countries also thought Jews dominated the Eastern press. In August 1938, Hugh Wilson, ambassador to Germany, told President Beneš of Czechoslovakia, that Jews controlled the press in the eastern United States. Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1938, II, the British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East and Africa, (Washington, 1955), 540-44, 567. (Hereafter cited as FR with appropriate year, volume, and page number.) In June, 1938, Joseph Kennedy, ambassador to Great Britain, told Herbert von Dirksen, German ambassador to Great Britain, that American diplomats and Germany-travelers voiced anti-German sentiments because they feared the Jews on the East Coast. DGFP, D, I, 713-18, 721-23.

in 1920, established the Boycott Committee of the American Jewish Congress. Tenenbaum's organization remained entirely Jewish and considered Untermeyer primarily interested in publicity.⁵¹ Untermeyer and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a vocal anti-Nazi, were considered by John Coar (an American with high administration contacts who asked Hitler to temper his anti-Semitic policies) to be extremists who were not interested in alleviating the situation of German Jews as much as they were interested in publicity.⁵² In September, 1933, Untermeyer was honored at a testimonial dinner in New York for his work against the persecution of Jews in Germany. Ezekiel Rabinowitz, secretary of the American League for Defense of Jewish Rights and the dinner's sponsor, had requested President Roosevelt to send a congratulatory message to be read at the dinner, since the message would give

⁵¹Offner, American Appeasement, pp. 61-62, quoting Sheldon Spear, "The United States and the Persecution of the Jews in Germany, 1933-1931," Master's Thesis, Syracuse University, 1965, pp. 4-6. In 1936, Tenenbaum's organization became the Joint Boycott Council of the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Labor Committee. Offner, American Appeasement, p. 62.

⁵²Nixon, Edgar B., ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969), 384. (Hereafter cited as FDR and Foreign Affairs with appropriate volume and page number.)

encouragement to American Jewry. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, however, advised Roosevelt's secretary, Louis M. Howe, that any congratulatory message would be interpreted as official government support of the boycott on German goods; therefore, Rabinowitz's request received no reply.⁵³ The Jews considered the boycott a substitute for war against Germany. Many Jews in the United States also fired their German employees.⁵⁴

Bund literature emphasized that Aryans, i.e., white Gentiles, had been the original European immigrants who had defeated the American wilderness, established the cities, devised the form of government, and prepared the way for a promising future. The Jews did not arrive in significant numbers until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, at which time many began to assume positions of influence and power.⁵⁵ The Bund literature expressed regret at the lack of previous German-American interest in political affairs and hoped that Jewish control of the United States economy and politics was not imminent. The Bund felt the

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 388-89.

⁵⁴ Hearings, XI, 8297. Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV. 157.

⁵⁵ Padover, "Unser Amerika," Forum, CI, 3-4.

Jews had a dominating influence on President Roosevelt through friends and advisers such as Felix Frankfurter, Louis Brandeis, Henry Morgenthau, Herbert Feis, Bernard Baruch, and Benjamin Cohen.⁵⁶

In the Bund's efforts against Communism, often linked with the Jews, Bundists hoped to serve as a reserve force to the police in the event of a Communist attempt to overthrow the government. They promised there would be no Communist ascendancy as long as they maintained their vigil.⁵⁷ During the 1936 presidential election, Kuhn and the Bund endorsed Alf Landon for president, primarily because the Roosevelt administration's attitude "toward the left" could possibly lead to "communism . . . and chaos." Kuhn thought the Republicans would foster a more friendly attitude towards the Reich.⁵⁸

Bund antipathy towards Communism was based on German-Russian hostility, the anti-Christian stance of Communism, the ill treatment afforded racial minorities--including German--by the Russians, and the belief that the Jews and

⁵⁶Padover, "Unser Amerika," Forum, CI, 3-5. Hearings, III, 2374.

⁵⁷"Nazis: A Tabloid Scoop; Fact and Surmise; A Senate Quiz?," News-Week, X (September 20, 1937), 14.

⁵⁸New York Times, October 16, 1936, p. 20.

Communists were conspiring to enslave the world.⁵⁹ After the signing of the German-Russian non-aggression pact, Bund attacks on Communism became less frequent but not less intense. Kuhn still fought the Communists and justified the non-aggression treaty because Germany needed Russia's raw materials. England had sought to obtain Russia's help in surrounding Germany, but Hitler had prevented it, Kuhn told a crowd of 10,000 Bundists at a Bund camp on Long Island.⁶⁰ The Bund was not only earnest in its anti-Communist pronouncements, but was then able to show its independence of the Reich government, which had lessened its propaganda attacks on Russia.⁶¹

Some of the most vigorous attacks against the Bund were by American Communists.⁶² Many American labor union officials were also vehemently anti-Bundist because of

⁵⁹Free American, September 29, 1938, p. 4; January 12, 1939, p. 1; March 30, 1939, p. 2; April 6, 1939, p. 1. New York Times, April 18, 1936, p. 7.

⁶⁰Hearings, X, 6075-77. T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264657, quoting the Anzeiger und Post, Lawrence, Massachusetts, September 2, 1939.

⁶¹T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264657. Free American, December 14, 1939, p. 7.

⁶²Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 320. "America's 'Isms,'" Newsweek, XIII (March 6, 1939), 14. Free American, October 12, 1939, p. 7.

Germany's restrictions on the German labor movement. American unionists found the Bund a convenient target for their anti-German charges. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins was a constant Bund antagonist. The Bund retaliated by accusing Perkins and other Roosevelt appointees of encouraging Roosevelt towards a more aggressive policy towards Germany. Perkins was also scored for her support of accused Communists.⁶³ Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, was another primary target because of his anti-German declarations and for his obstruction of the sale to Germany of helium, a commodity sorely needed by the Reich.⁶⁴

The economic boycott against Germany proved effective. In 1930 German exports to the United States totaled \$177,000,000, but in 1935 they accounted for only \$77,000,000.⁶⁵ Perhaps much of this decrease was attributable to the world-wide depression, but doubtless the Jewish-led boycott was partly responsible. In March, 1934, for example, the F.W. Woolworth Company announced that due to the boycott it would no longer purchase German-made goods for its dime stores in the United

⁶³New York Times, July 15, 1939, p. 16; September 15, 1940, p. 25. Free American, June 6, 1940, p. 7.

⁶⁴Hearings, I, 65.

⁶⁵"Noise Over the Nazis," Current History, XLVI (May, 1937), 28.

States.⁶⁶ The Bundists and their predecessors, who hoped for the combined effort of 750,000 people, patronized only German-American businesses in a counter-boycott.⁶⁷ But as in so many of their efforts, their tactics angered Americans and their goal of better understanding between their adopted country and the Fatherland suffered.⁶⁸

The Bund business league was established to coordinate the buying of goods from German-Americans and from merchants who stocked German-produced goods. A system of stamps or coupons was used to encourage buyers to do business with Bund-approved merchants. This endeavor enjoyed limited success, primarily in the Yorkville section of New York. Outside this area, the Bund's economic war against Jews had little effect while Jews effectively promoted their boycott of German goods throughout the entire United States. The International Trade Fair, sponsored among others by the American Jewish Congress and the American Federation of Labor, proclaimed as one of its purposes, the "stimulation of World Trade through the exhibition of merchandise from

⁶⁶"Nazi Inquiry," News-Week, III, 12.

⁶⁷New York Times, March 28, 1934, p. 19.

⁶⁸Hearings, II, 1137.

all nations other than Germany."⁶⁹ Rabbi Wise was committee chairman and was assisted by Governor Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, and Stanley High, journalist and adviser to President Roosevelt.⁷⁰

In attempting to provide a political forum for German-Americans, the Bund used its newspapers and recreation camps, as well as occasional mass meetings. The Bund weekly's primary purposes were to counter British propaganda and attack the Versailles peace treaty, the Jews, the Roosevelt administration, Communism, and after September, 1939, Germany's battlefield enemies.

The Bund had loose associations with many other groups who had similar purposes and beliefs. Many Irish-Americans sympathized with the Bund because of the Bund's anti-British bias. There was much discussion of a "white knight" who would emerge from one of the groups, unite and lead them to a victory against their enemies, or at the very least, provide a united front with greater influence.⁷¹

⁶⁹Dinneen, "An American Führer organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 154. Dinneen was incorrect in stating that part of the profits derived from the Bund business league was sent to Germany. T-81, Roll 27, frames 24129-30.

⁷⁰T-81, Roll 27, frames 24129-30.

⁷¹Burt, "Why Hate the Jews," Forum, CI, 291-95. High, "Star-Spangled Fascists," Saturday Evening Post, CCXI, 5.

The White Russians in the New York area collaborated to a limited extent with the Bund, especially in anti-Communist endeavors.⁷² Ku Klux Klan officials overlooked their anti-foreign prejudice and met from time to time with Bundists; the primary point of agreement was anti-Jewish sentiment.⁷³ The Silver Shirts, headed by William D. Pelley and headquartered in Ashley, North Carolina, journeyed quite frequently to Bund camps and participated in attacking the Jews and the Roosevelt administration. Pelley was appalled at the results of the Russian revolution and was convinced the Jews were the masterminds of Communism. The world's ills could all be laid at the Jews' doorsteps, according to Silver Shirt philosophy.⁷⁴ The Knights of the White Camellia, led by George E. Deatherage, a former member of the Ku Klux Klan, wanted to apply Klan methods previously used on Negroes and Carpetbaggers to the Communists and Jews.⁷⁵ General George Moseley, commander of the Fourth United States Army Corps prior to retirement in 1938,

⁷²Burt, "Why Hate the Jews," Forum, CI, 292-93. Lore, "What Are American Nazis Doing?," Nation, CXLIV, 637.

⁷³High, "Star-Spangled Fascists," Saturday Evening Post, CCXI, 6.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 6.

campaigned for the elimination of Communists and their supporters from the United States. He was considered a leader among anti-Roosevelt groups, being especially critical of Felix Frankfurter's appointment to the Supreme Court. The Bund and Moseley exchanged compliments for their anti-Communist vigilance.⁷⁶ The Italian-American war veterans, strongest in New Jersey, were one of the closest allies of the Bund. Dressed in black Shirts and led by the "American Duce," Salvatore Caridi, they paraded several times with Bundists at the Bund's recreation camps.⁷⁷

Of all Bund affiliates, organizations, or individuals expressing anti-Communist and anti-Roosevelt doctrine, Father Charles E. Coughlin, the Roman Catholic radio priest from Detroit, Michigan, was recognized as the most prominent and respected. He credited National Socialism as being a bulwark against bolshevism.⁷⁸ The Bund reprinted articles from Father Coughlin's Social Justice magazine and always wrote in laudatory terms of his anti-administration position.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 73.

⁷⁷ "Fascism in America," Literary Digest, CXXIV, 17.

⁷⁸ "The Nazis Are Here," Nation, CXLVIII (March 4, 1939), 253. New York Times, November 27, 1938, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 321. Free American, June 29, 1939, p. 7. President

Contrary to the situation in the United States before American participation in World War I when there were definable groups of pro-Germans, pro-Ally, and pro-neutral, there were basically only two groups in the years prior to World War II, pro-Ally and pro-neutral. In large measure, Americans considered any person or organization not pro-Ally to be pro-Nazi. Many Americans with absolutely no link to National Socialism received the undeserved label of Nazi or pro-Nazi. Included in this group were Avery Brundage, chairman of the 1936 Olympic games, Senator Ernest Lundeen of Minnesota, and Charles A. Lindbergh of aviation fame.⁸⁰ Only the Bund could be classified as a pro-German group, and much of its thrust was to promote neutrality, since aiding Hitler directly was simply out of the question.

At the time when the Bund was most popular, there were over twenty camps which members used for recreation, their primary purpose, and for meeting places where verbal attacks upon the Bund's enemies could be expressed before large, friendly audiences.⁸¹ At the opening of Camp Nordland in

Roosevelt labeled Coughlin as a disease which caused the country to ache "in every bone." FDR and Foreign Affairs, II, 437.

⁸⁰Sayers and Kahn, The Plot, pp. 188-89, 192. New York Times, November 21, 1940, p. 39.

⁸¹New York Times, July 28, 1937, p. 4.

New Jersey, between 10,000-15,000 people were present for the festivities and speeches.⁸² Camp Siegfried, on Long Island, hosted 15,000 German-American youth in the summer of 1936. Other camps included Efdende Camp in Detroit, and Camp Deutschhorst near Philadelphia.⁸³ The camps were one of the primary drawing cards for Bund membership. They offered city dwellers a chance for a weekend respite from urban dreariness. For the Bund leadership, and members also, the camps were an important part of Deutschtum. In Germany the National Socialists had generated enthusiasm through the recreation and camaraderie afforded by similar camps. The singing, marching, vigorous speeches, and sharing of experiences built an esprit de corps in all participants.⁸⁴

The Bund also borrowed from the National Socialists in arranging mass meetings. An example was the mammoth rally of February 20, 1939, in Madison Square Garden, celebrating the birthday of George Washington, who was a Bund favorite, partly because of his farewell address warning

⁸²"Uncle Sam's Nazis," Newsweek, XII (July 18, 1938), 11.

⁸³Dinneen, "An American Führer Organizes an Army," American Magazine, CXXIV, 154.

⁸⁴"Uncle Sam's Nazis," Newsweek, XII, 11.

against permanent alliances.⁸⁵ Twenty thousand Bundists and Bund sympathizers gathered to hear speakers castigate President Roosevelt and the Jews. Other prominent Americans who had publicized their anti-German feelings were verbally attacked; these included Harold Ickes, Harry Hopkins, Frances Perkins, Bernard Baruch, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. G.W. Kunze, later to be leader of the Bund, referred to President Roosevelt as "Frank D. Rosenfeld."⁸⁶

Predictably, the Bundists had inflicted another grievous wound on themselves. In Congress, a Democratic representative from Colorado labeled all Bund members traitors; his remark was applauded by Republicans and Democrats. The wife of Sinclair Lewis, Dorothy Thompson, a New York Herald Tribune columnist and prominent foe of National Socialism, defended her sarcastic description of the Bund's George Washington celebration by deriding the Bund's claim to free speech.⁸⁷ The leading liberal voice, Nation, questioned the role of the New York police in ensuring that the George Washington

⁸⁵Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 321. Graebner, Norman A., ed., Ideas and Diplomacy (New York, 1964), pp. 75-76.

⁸⁶Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 320-22.

⁸⁷"America's 'Isms,'" Newsweek, XIII, 14, The congressman was Rep. John A. Martin.

celebration could proceed peacefully. The Socialist Worker's party had organized a picket line outside Madison Square Garden, attempting to discourage participation. The Nation indicated the Socialists and Bundists should not have been separated; the magazine even accused the police of physically beating a Newish demonstrator, contrary to eyewitness accounts of the incident.⁸⁸ Such willingness to deny Bundists their constitutional rights guaranteed under the first amendment was a harbinger of things to come.

The Bund employed a uniformed corps, the OD (Ordnungs-
dienst), whose avowed purpose was to serve as ushers. Some Bund detractors labeled them storm troopers and accused them of strong-arm tactics; others, including anti-Bundists, recognized that while there may have been a physical resemblance, their deeds were in no way comparable to the authentic German stormtroopers, the Sturmabteilung (SA).⁸⁹ The primary benefit from the OD which accrued to the Bund was the pride and respect engendered among the membership, rather than any functional use.⁹⁰ At one meeting in Yorkville in April,

⁸⁸"The Nazis Are Here," Nation, CXLVIII, 253. Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 320-22.

⁸⁹"Noise Over the Nazis," Current History, XLVI, 30. Smith, "I Went to a Nazi Rally," Christian Century, LVI, 320.

⁹⁰German-American Bund, pp. 1610-11.

1938, to celebrate Hitler's birthday, the OD physically evicted a group of American legionnaires attempting to disrupt the Bundists; the result was adverse publicity for the Bund. Other instances of alleged OD brutality contributed to general distrust and contempt by most Americans.⁹¹

Bundists suffered their greatest defeat in efforts to improve official German-United States relations. The very presence of a model of National Socialism had the opposite effect.⁹² Distrust of Germany and its imitators increased rapidly among Americans, with American Jews in the forefront, as Germany's anti-Semitic and expansionist policies began to be implemented.

⁹¹"American Nazis," Newsweek, XI (May 2, 1938), 13-14. "Imported Nazi Sadism," Nation, CXLVI, 493.

⁹²New York Times, July 18, 1938, p. 5.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUND AND THE THIRD REICH

That the Bund was controlled by the German government or the National Socialist party was alleged from the Bund's beginning and throughout its existence, and it was accepted as fact by most observers even thirty years after the Bund ceased to exist. At the time, even the German Embassy in Washington and the American Embassy in Berlin could not be sure of the exact relationship between the Bund and the Third Reich.¹

German government officials had discussed the issue of Deutschtum in America during the Weimar Republic, a decade before Hitler's assumption of the chancellorship. Deutschtum was associated with no political party, but was ingrained in all Germans intent on nurturing the life of the German

¹William E. Dodd, Jr. and Martha Dodd, eds., Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938 (New York, 1941), p. 340. Records of the German Foreign Ministry, National Archives Microcopy No. T-120, Roll 1374, (Washington, 1956), frame D527831. (Hereafter cited as No. T-120 with appropriate roll and frame number.)

nation throughout the world. In the early 1920's the German ambassador to the United States, Dr. Otto Wiedfeldt, sent his written analysis of Deutschtum in the United States to the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin. Wiedfeldt stated that German-Americans had little political influence for a variety of reasons. German immigrants had dissipated any possible political strength by their dispersion throughout the country. Instead of political organizations, Germans had formed groups based on similar economic interests. Their "stinginess" in political contributions eliminated another area of possible political strength. Referring to the recent World War, Wiedfeldt sadly revealed the "timid knuckling-under" of German-Americans to anti-German sentiment, propaganda, and abuse. He lamented the lack of leaders of Deutschtum in America, but considered the establishment of the Steuben Society as "great progress."²

The melting pot had worked to the detriment of Deutschtum, as evidenced by the decline of German as a spoken or written language. Wiedfeldt reported that due to the scheduled 1927 restrictions on immigration to the United States, the influx of German immigrants necessary to invigorate the German-American community would be reduced to a trickle. The

²T-120, Roll 5189, frames K462951-52.

German fatherland, Wiedfeldt continued, was unable to supply any appreciable help because of its own serious economic problems; he hoped this would only be temporary, not only because of possible financial support for German-American institutions, but because an economically strong Germany would increase German-American pride, prestige, and social status.³

For the guidance of future Deutschtum activities in the United States, Wiedfeldt strongly advised against official common endeavors or projects which would prove politically detrimental to German-Americans and Germany. To improve morale of the German-American community, however, Wiedfeldt did suggest that the German ambassador continue German-American activities which could in no way be interpreted as meddling in purely American affairs.⁴

Wiedfeldt blamed the lack of a strong German-language press for many of Deutschtum's failings. No newspaper addressed all German-Americans or served as an official organ; the newspapers were too few in number and too regional. Wiedfeldt was flabbergasted that only one German newspaper,

³Ibid., frame K462953.

⁴Ibid., frames K462953-54.

the Chicago Abendpost, had a reporter in Washington, and he "understood not a word of German and knew nothing of Germany."⁵

In October, 1933, the German Foreign Ministry informed its ambassador in Washington, Hans Luther, that there was to be an end to party political activity in America, and only Reich-Germans could be members of the NSDAP.⁶ This policy would eliminate the practice of German-Americans joining the NSDAP. The Chicago organization of the Friends of the New Germany obeyed the order, but other units did not.⁷ This order proved insufficient since there was no restriction keeping NSDAP members from joining the Friends. Although German-Americans were no longer NSDAP members, Reich-German party members could still belong to the Friends. The American people and their government saw no substantial change. Ambassador Luther feared a return to the previous situation in which Americans could join the NSDAP. He argued

⁵ Ibid., frames K462955-56.

⁶ DGFP, C, II, 8.

⁷ House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Hearings. 75th Congress, 3rd Session, I, (Washington, 1938), 53. (Hereafter cited as Hearings with appropriate volume and page number.)

against party activity in America and realized success when Hans Dieckhoff, chief of the Anglo-American Section in the Foreign Ministry, wrote that Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, head of the Auslands Organisation (AO), was informing all party members in the United States that no local units of the party existed in America and no party members could belong to the Friends.⁸ In addition, Bohle forbade Reich-Germans to propagandize among non-Germans. Luther informed the State Department of the decisions.⁹ The State Department replied that it was against "any form of organization of the NSDAP within the United States, even if it confined itself to the collection of dues and the appointment of a representative."¹⁰

Theodore H. Hoffmann, head of the respected Steuben Society, a conservative German-American cultural group, also felt that the Friends hurt Germany's cause. On October 31, 1934, he told Hitler that Reich-Germans still controlled the Friends, and they were not only damaging German-United States relations but were causing confusion among German-Americans. Hitler replied that he had instructed party members to

⁸DGFP, C, II, 467, 492.

⁹FR, 1934, II, 532.

¹⁰DGFP, C, II, 758.

refrain from political activity abroad, and that the Friends were not receiving instructions from Germany.¹¹ In a later conversation, the German State Secretary, Vicco Karl Alexander von Bülow, stated that Hoffmann's allegations were essentially correct, but that official German representatives in the United States exhibited a reserved attitude towards the Friends.¹² Bohle and Luther agreed that caution and a moderating influence should be exercised but felt Germany ought not break off all contact with the Friends since this group was one of the few which praised National Socialism.¹³

Richard Sallet, a representative of the German Ministry of Propaganda attached to the Washington Embassy, declared in a letter to the propaganda ministry that the Friends were a hindrance in efforts to establish good relations with Americans. He suggested that not only party members but all Reich-Germans be prohibited from membership in the Friends

¹¹DGFP, C, III, 1116. James V. Compton, The Swastika and the Eagle: Hitler, The United States, and the Origins of World War II, (Boston, 1967), p. 67. Hitler preferred not to commit himself to support his foreign adulators, not only because of the probable friction with foreign governments, but also because he did not wish to incur any obligations. Dejong, The German Fifth Column, p. 289.

¹²DGFP, C, III, 1117.

¹³Ibid., 1120-21.

and "anyone disobeying this should be called to account on his return home." Sallet recommended that dissemination of this information be entrusted to reputable German-Americans such as F.W. Elven, Cincinnati Freie Presse editor, a respected "spokesman of the Americans of German stock. . . ." ¹⁴

In the autumn of 1935, Vice Chancellor Rudolf Hess agreed with Sallet's recommendation and forbade Reich-Germans to join the Friends. ¹⁵

After the Bund's establishment in 1936, it could have done much to prevent the appearance of any official connection with the NSDAP, but Bund officials, especially Fritz Kuhn, were anxious to impress their members with accounts of the high regard in which they were supposedly held by high Reich officials, including Hitler, Goebbels, and Goering. Of more importance, the Bund was anxious to be accepted by the Reich and even asked Reich officials for instructions and guidance. ¹⁶ The Bund was not easily dissuaded by the Reich's aloofness and continued to act as if it were indeed the party representative in the United States. The Deutschtum organizations in the Reich continued to correspond with

¹⁴ Ibid., 1113-14.

¹⁵ DGFP, D, I, 685-86.

¹⁶ Ibid., 701-03.

Bundists and non-Bundists in the United States after they were forbidden to do so by Reich officials. Many Bund detractors emphasized these unofficial connections, and they injured German-United States relations.

Of all Deutschtum agencies, the Deutsches Ausland-Institut (DAI) had the most extensive contacts with the Bund and individuals in the United States. It is evident by the volume of non-USA DAI correspondence, however, that the German agencies concerned with Deutschtum were more interested, as was Hitler, in establishing a Germandom encompassing central Europe. Many countries, European as well as those in the Western Hemisphere, had ethnic-German organizations. Canada's Deutsches Volksbund von Kanada, headquartered in Montreal, was led by a Herr Thierbach. Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, and Chile were other countries which had organizations in contact with the DAI.¹⁷

The DAI's statements about Deutschtum in the United States revealed that it was not very well informed, and that the DAI did not consider the Bund to be the Deutschtum agent for Americans. For instance, the New York Staatszeitung und Herold was listed by the DAI as being Deutschtum's second-most-important newspaper in America; this was an

¹⁷T-81, Roll 490, frame 5251368.

interesting bit of misinformation since the New York newspaper was Jewish-controlled.¹⁸ As late as July 7, 1939, an official of the DAI, Dr. Zuig, wrote that there was no organization in the United States which could be considered a central organization for Deutschtum.¹⁹

Heinz Kloss, an important official in the DAI hierarchy, concluded in 1934 that an earnest effort should be begun to regain or foster the Deutschtum work in America. Acting belatedly on Kloss's suggestion, the DAI in 1937 sent Karl Götz, a Stuttgart city official, to America to ascertain what could be done.²⁰ Götz reported great enthusiasm among German-Americans for their homeland and for Deutschtum.²¹ Such exaggerated reports reinforced the DAI's conviction to continue contacts with German-Americans, against the German government's wishes. Götz wrote a book about his trip and received rave reviews in the Völkischer Beobachter, the party organ, and other National Socialist publications. The

¹⁸T-81, Roll 420, frames 5166422-24.

¹⁹T-81, Roll 490, frame 5251368.

²⁰T-81, Roll 490, frame 5251439, quoting a manuscript dated February 6, 1939, by Dr. Hermann Rudiger, head of the press section of the DAI.

²¹Ibid., frame 5251440.

reviews stated that the German-Americans belonged to the Reich-Germans and vice versa.²²

Dr. Hermann Rüdiger, head of the press section of the DAI, made another estimate of Deutschtum in America in October, 1938. He came to some incredible conclusions, including his estimate that German-Americans had retained their German culture to a greater extent than had the Reichsdeutsche; they had supposedly accomplished this by grouping together against the wilderness and the strange cultures of other Americans. Rüdiger felt that the political and economic implications of the Volksdeutsche issue were too important to be conducted by "pensioned officers or ladies of the so-called better class," whom Rüdiger considered amateurs. Since the Third Reich had been founded on principles of Deutschtum, concluded Rüdiger, it was necessary that the Deutschtum be given a high priority.²³

On occasion the DAI quoted Hitler's statements which denounced any interference with ethnic Germans in foreign countries, especially in bordering countries such as Poland.

²² Ibid., frames 5251458-63. Karl Götz, Bruder über den Meer: Schicksale und Begegnungen (Stuttgart, 1938). Götz was a schoolmaster from Schwaben, also a folk-poet, who had gained fame for his book Kinderschiff. T-81, Roll 490, frame 5251458.

²³ Ibid., frames 5251506-07.

Nonetheless the DAI also indicated its support of Hitler's belief in the self-determination of German minorities in lands that were German prior to the Versailles peace treaty.²⁴ The DAI indicated, through its continued contacts with ethnic-Germans of other countries, that it felt Hitler's disclaimers were camouflage, intended to reduce resentment of foreign governments towards Deutschum.

The work of the DAI did not stop during the war. In the winter of 1939-40, the DAI circulated a confidential memorandum entitled "Proposals for the Genealogical Understanding of the German Emigrants to America in the Nineteenth Century." The crux of the proposals, outlined by Heinz Kloss, was to strengthen the ties of Germandom in America to the Reich, especially following the war. The Auswartiges Amt (AA) had insisted the DAI maintain absolute secrecy regarding the memorandum, because of the bad relations already existent between the Reich and the United States. The DAI realized that the mere public consideration of the procedures outlined in the memorandum would ensure that they could never be implemented.²⁵

²⁴ Ibid., frames 5251791-92.

²⁵ NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Reel 57, Folder #1386, Memo by Deutsches Ausland-Institut, Stuttgart, marked "Vertraulich!," entitled "Vorschläge für die sippenkundliche Erfassung der

In a telephone conversation from Berlin on April 25, 1940, Dr. Kruse of the DAI office in Berlin, told Herr Grisebach of the DAI office in Stuttgart, that Dr. Goecken of the AA forbade further dissemination of the memorandum. The AA agreed with the memorandum but argued it was not practical for public knowledge. The AA also wanted to know the exact number of copies of the memorandum and who possessed them. Grisebach sent a letter to all DAI research offices, instructing them to keep the memorandum from falling into the hands of any American official or any American citizen. Soon thereafter Grisebach talked to Kruse, who had frequent contact with the AA in Berlin. Kruse felt that although the work of Deutschtum was important during the war, it was not important for the war. Kruse also told Grisebach that the AA wanted to be kept fully informed of important policy decisions made by the DAI. On July 8, 1940, Grisebach informed Dr. Goecken that the memorandum of proposals was being handled in strict confidence.²⁶

reichsdeutschen Amerikawanderer des 19. Jahrhunderts," no page numbers available. Kloss made frequent references to a book written in 1939 by a Herr J. Scheben, Untersuchungen zur Methode und Technik der deutschamerikanischen Wanderungsforschung.

²⁶Ibid.

Because of the increasing likelihood of a confrontation with the United States, the AA in August, 1941, told the DAI that no further steps were to be taken in the American Deutschtum effort; the AA stressed that no further use was to be made of the forty-five copies of the memorandum. The AA had decided nothing was more important, not even a basic tenet of National Socialism, than keeping the United States out of the war.²⁷

In March, 1938, Peter Gissibl, the leader of the Chicago branch of the Bund, received a letter from Gustav Moschak, director of the DAI in Stuttgart, in which Bund members and friends were invited to Germany to see the progress Germany had made under National Socialism. Moschak also invited Bundists to attend a week of Deutschtum classes at the DAI. The proposed visit was to be a great demonstration of Germandom in America. Moschak had also sent Fritz Kuhn a similar invitation, but Kuhn had not answered. Gissibl did go to Germany, but not as an official representative of the Bund.²⁸

Kuhn had had previous contact with Karl Stroelin, the DAI's President, however; on March 2, 1937, Kuhn wrote to

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ New York Times, June 6, 1944, p. 11.

Stroelin and asked him to find a job for a Bundist who was returning to Germany because of his wife's ill health. The DAI took Kuhn's request under consideration, but there is no record of the final outcome.²⁹ These personal contacts indicate there was no formal tie between the Bund and the DAI. The request for a job was a personal one and was not part of any established procedure.

The Kameradschaft USA (USA fellowship), an organization located in Stuttgart and consisting of former Bund members who had returned to the Reich, was another society of Deutschtum that was detrimental to the Reich's relationship with the United States. The association was founded in 1938 by Fritz Gissibl, Peter Gissibl's brother, and was subordinate to the AO of the NSDAP, although Fritz Gissibl's office was in the DAI headquarters, where he performed various duties for the DAI.³⁰ Reich officials felt some responsibility to those fellow ethnic-Germans who had returned from the United States in order to be more involved with National Socialism. But Gissibl and his fellow returnees created a number of difficult and embarrassing situations for the Reich.

²⁹T-81, Roll 420, 5166531-32.

³⁰T-81, Roll 140, frames 175985, 177169, 177489.

Fearing that the Kameradschaft USA would involve the Reich in needless disagreements with foreign governments, especially the United States, Karl Blakenhorn of the AO, in a letter to Gissibl on January 25, 1939, told him to confine his organization to social activities and the discussion of old times. Blakenhorn stressed that any assumption of tasks not specifically authorized for the Kameradschaft USA would simply not be tolerated. The next day Gissibl replied that the AO should not worry about his "harmless club." In early February, 1939, the AO told Gissibl that although it had nothing against the Kameradschaft USA, it was necessary that he come to Berlin to learn the purposes and goals of the AO from AO official Andersen.³¹

Several days later AO official Wolf read in the London Daily Worker that several hundred German immigrants in Canada had received a questionnaire from the DAI, inquiring as to the name, age, profession, interests, race, and present nationality of every person in each immigrant's family. Wolf was chagrined to learn that one question asked "What connections do you have with your fatherland through relatives, through friends, and other people?" Wolf wrote a confidential

³¹Ibid., frames 177201-05.

letter to Gissibl, asking if the Daily Worker report were true; if it were, Wolf desired a copy of the questionnaire and an explanation of its purpose.³²

In a two-sentence letter Gissibl affirmed that the DAI had sent the questionnaire, but noted that Wolf could conclude for himself, from an enclosed copy, that it was a form mailed by the genealogical research division of the DAI to German immigrants in many countries.³³ This incident demonstrates that responsible Reich officials were doing everything possible to prevent Gissibl and other advocates of Deutschtum from contributing to diplomatic difficulties.

One of Gissibl's concerns was to assist German-Americans returning to Germany in finding housing and employment. The returnees encountered many hardships, especially financial. They felt they suffered as second-class citizens in Germany, the reason many had departed the United States. Gissibl maintained contact with the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA) and the AO, organizations which attempted to assist the returnees, but rebuffed Gissibl's efforts to assume a position of authority.³⁴

³² Ibid., frames 177169-70.

³³ Ibid., frame 177177.

³⁴ Ibid., frames 177284, 177622, 178022-25, 177787-91, 178158.

In August, 1939, Gissibl submitted to the DAI a two-and-a-half page report on the Bund by a Gissibl confidant in the United States. The report was too pro-Bund to be unbiased. Fritz Kuhn was said to enjoy "an enormous respect" among ethnic-Germans in New York. Gissibl's source reported that after the mass meeting of February 20, 1939, in Madison Square Garden, several Bund leaders met in Washington with representatives John C. Schafer of Wisconsin and Frederick C. Gartner of Pennsylvania; this was supposedly another sign of Kuhn's political power. Much of the report was an account of the many official investigations plaguing the Bund. The report concluded with an appeal for German financial assistance to cover "at least the obligations of the Bund in Germany." These obligations were bills for books, magazines, and novels purchased in Germany by the Bund.³⁵ These bills indicate that the Bund had bought its written material in Germany and that the Reich was not supporting the Bund financially.

The foreign press office of the NSDAP, headquartered in Munich, was another agency which was involved with the concept of Deutschtum and which had a large correspondence with individuals and organizations throughout the world.

³⁵T-81, Roll 144, frames 183228-30.

Rolf Hoffmann, the principal correspondent, answered letters from individuals and asked German-language newspapers to publish articles favorable to National Socialism. Hoffmann asked Bund newspapers in Chicago and New York to reprint, in English, articles originally published in other newspapers. Letters identical to those sent to Bund newspapers were also sent to other newspapers that had no Bund affiliation.³⁶

Hoffmann asked specific newspapers in the United States, both Bund and non-Bund, to advertise a National Socialist English-language newsletter, News from Germany. The purpose of the newsletter was to supply information about Germany to interested readers in foreign countries. Cost of the magazine was two dollars per year, although it was possible for a person who could not afford the price to receive it temporarily without paying.³⁷ The text of the letters to Bund and non-Bund newspapers was identical; this fact, coupled with the fee of two dollars per year, indicates that the Bund was not a Reich-controlled organization, for a Reich-controlled organization would not receive requests, but instructions.

³⁶T-81, Roll 25, frames 22451, 22603. T-81, Roll 26, frames 22932, 22517, 22487, 22604-05, 22803.

³⁷T-81, Roll 26, frames 22517, 22803.

The Congressional Committee on Un-American Propaganda Activities estimated a total of nine-and-a-half tons of Hoffmann's pamphlets entered the United States during the twelve-week period of September 5, 1940 to November 27, 1940. What was especially galling to the committee was that under the Universal Postal Union Convention, the United States Postal Department had to absorb the entire expense of delivering Hoffmann's propaganda from the time it was unloaded from Japanese ships (the British navy prevented shipment by German vessels) until it was delivered to the addresses in the United States.³⁸

As early as April 1, 1936, Hoffmann in a letter to Kuhn had expressed his gratitude for the photographs, pamphlets, posters, and proclamations of the Bund's endeavors which had been sent to the foreign press office of the NSDAP. Hoffmann stated these articles were placed in the foreign press archives in order that later generations might examine the work of Deutschtum in America.³⁹ Two months later Hoffmann requested of the Bund newspaper five copies of an

³⁸U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 77th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 1, Investigation of Un-American Propaganda Activities in the United States, January 3, 1941, (Washington, 1941), p. 19.

³⁹T-81, Roll 26, frame 23443.

article about Rudolf Hess which Hoffmann had sent the Bund to use and which had appeared in the May 28, 1936, edition of the Bund newspaper.⁴⁰ In a letter of October 9, 1939, Hoffmann asked the Bund to send him articles about America in return for any articles he would send it.⁴¹ The Bund had used the material in 1936, but evidence indicates the sharing of articles was haphazard and inconsistent, not the type of arrangement suggestive of a client relationship.

There were hundreds of letters in Hoffmann's files from Americans asking to receive News from Germany. The largest percentage was from non-Bundists; they ranged from a Massachusetts woman who "would love to see Adolf Hitler" to a lieutenant colonel at West Point, who was a frequent correspondent.⁴² It would be illogical to conclude that the United States Military Academy was a Nazi organization. In the same way, correspondence between Reich-Germans and Bundists does not demonstrate Reich control of the Bund, as was frequently alleged. Three years after the founding of the Bund, Hoffmann wrote Wilhelm Kunze of the Bund's New York office that the Bund would begin receiving the

⁴⁰Ibid., frame 23441.

⁴¹Ibid., frame 22602.

⁴²Ibid., frames 22613-23773.

News from Germany.⁴³ This belated decision is not indicative of close cooperation between the Bund and the Reich.

Carl Nicolay, director and correspondent of the Bund newspaper in New York, spent the summer and autumn of 1936 in Germany, much of it Munich. This was the year of the Olympics in Berlin, but Nicolay also intended to obtain material for the Bund newspaper. He tried repeatedly to meet Hoffmann. Nicolay's manner was obsequious, but it did not help in seeing Hoffmann, who found various excuses to avoid any meeting.⁴⁴ The probable reason for Hoffmann's aloofness was his sincere desire to work for a better understanding between Germany and the United States, for such understanding was clearly beneficial to the Reich. He used the Bund and its newspaper, as he used other newspapers, to achieve this goal, but he feared his cause would suffer if he allowed the Bund to become too familiar and it implicated Germany in its boisterous attempt to serve Deutschtum.⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid., frame 22937.

⁴⁴Ibid., frames 23617-33.

⁴⁵Ibid., frame 23773.

Kuhn was also in Berlin in 1936; he visited the American ambassador, William Dodd, who incorrectly confided to his diary that Kuhn was secretly a representative of the NSDAP.⁴⁶ In fact, following the denials of 1933 and 1934, official German sources continued to assert that no connections existed between Germany and its American admirers.⁴⁷ At last, on Christmas Eve, 1935, the Friends of the New Germany, the Bund precursor, had officially acknowledged its excommunication and stated that Germans would no longer be members.⁴⁸

After his return to the United States, Kuhn's braggadocio about his contacts with National Socialism's hierarchy immediately placed an additional burden on German-United States relations. The August 6, August 27, and September 10, 1936, issues of the Bund newspaper contained articles which implied there was more to Kuhn's visit with Hitler than a mere greeting from German-Americans. The articles hinted that Hitler had received a report from a subordinate, Kuhn, and Hitler had given him instructions for future pro-German

⁴⁶Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938, p. 340.

⁴⁷New York Times, October 5, 1935, p. 7. New York Times, October 6, 1935, p. 26.

⁴⁸New York Times, December 25, 1935, p. 2. New York Times, December 27, 1935, p. 12.

activities in the United States.⁴⁹ All this was an attempt to curry favor with pro-Reich German-Americans by inflating the value placed on the Bund by the Reich. On October 17, 1936, the German Foreign Ministry announced that Kuhn's statements suggesting that Hitler and Hess had decided that all German-Americans should vote for Alf Landon in the presidential election were not based on fact. In Washington, German Embassy counselor Hans Thomsen announced that he had been present when Hitler had received Kuhn and there had been no discussion of American politics.⁵⁰

Pressure for definite action by the German government increased in November, 1937, when Jacob Schurman, former American ambassador to Germany, told the new German ambassador in Washington, Hans Dieckhoff, that attempts to spread National Socialist ideas in America might result in temporary gains but would be offset by a deterioration in German-United States relations. Evidently Schurman felt the Bund had contacts with Germany. In reporting Schurman's visit to the German Foreign Ministry, Dieckhoff acknowledged that the "stupid and noisy activities" of the Bund provided

⁴⁹Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 63.

⁵⁰New York Times, October 18, 1936, p. 29.

"our Jewish opponents" material "for a new hate campaign." He asked for a clarification of Germany's attitude towards the Bund.⁵¹

The American State Department had also become concerned about the Bund's continued effect on relations with Germany. On October 2, 1937, Prentiss Gilbert, the chargé d'affaires in Berlin, told Ernst von Weizsaecker, director of the political department of the foreign ministry, that Americans were nervous about reports of German colonies in the United States taking orders from Germany. He asked the Germans to dispel this belief.⁵² Weizsaecker assigned the problem to Dr. Freytag, counselor of legation and chief of the American section, for analysis. Freytag reviewed the history of relations with the Friends and concluded that the Bund was essentially the same organization. He surmised that German nationals were still members of the Bund, that the Bund would collapse with their departure, and that a renunciation of all contact would result in a loss of German prestige. He recommended that relations be established with

⁵¹DGFP, D, I, 650.

⁵²Ibid., 632.

a new German society which would be founded for cultural purposes only; there would be no political activities.⁵³

The wheels began to turn in Berlin. The State Secretary's office determined that organizations in contact with Germans abroad, such as the AO and Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI), would not include German-Americans in their activities.⁵⁴ Having received no answer from Berlin on his request for information concerning the Bund's relationship to Germany, Dieckhoff, on December 20, 1937, warned Berlin that Americans who previously believed that National Socialism would not be exported now suspected the Bund to be an official representative of National Socialism. The spectre of National Socialism extending its influence and control world-wide was a reality to many Americans.⁵⁵ Two days later Dieckhoff received an answer to his first request. State Secretary Hans G. von Mackensen stated that several persons in VOMI had initiated contacts with the Bund despite established German policy, but the foreign ministry ordered the contacts severed and instructed the general consul in New York to have Kuhn destroy the correspondence.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid., 635-38.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 657.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 659.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 662.

Dieckhoff responded on January 7, 1938, with a detailed description of the role played by the Bund in German-United States relations and his suggestions for improving the situation. He stated there was no hope of assistance from German-Americans in avoiding a repetition of 1917 (United States entry into World War I). They lacked unity and political influence. Dieckhoff labeled as ridiculous the idea that "10 to 20 thousand energetic men, ready for any sacrifice, distributed throughout the United States, could render good service" as "a sort of assault troop."⁵⁷ Dieckhoff stated it was unfortunate that these philosophical adherents of National Socialism could not be actively supported, but their abrasive and tactless methods were reaping a harvest of hatred rather than converts. The most important point which inevitably arose was that the Bund was poisoning relations between Germany and the United States, as well as among German-Americans. Just as Germany had decided not to apply its Deutschtum programs to the ethnic-German population in Alsace and South Tyrol for the sake of tenable relations with France and Italy, so also must Germany write off the German-Americans, reported Dieckhoff. Dieckhoff accused some Bund leaders of stating

⁵⁷Ibid., 670-71.

that NSDAP authorities in Germany had rescinded the order against Reich-German participation in the Bund. He recommended that the foreign ministry authorize German representatives to withdraw the passports of any Reich-German offenders. He also wanted to prohibit the Bund from using the German flag in order to avoid unfavorable conclusions by Bund detractors. Nonetheless Dieckhoff argued against a complete break, but VOMI representatives in the United States should be the only contact and there must be no communications between officials in Germany and the Bund.⁵⁸

In response to Dieckhoff's report, representatives of the NSDAP, AO, VOMI, the propaganda ministry, the political intelligence department of the foreign ministry, and the German Embassy in Washington met in Berlin on February 3, 1938, to decide on suggestions to be made to von Mackensen. VOMI argued for a definite separation of Reich-Germans from the Bund, but this recommendation had been made before and "Kuhn had rejected all advice and admonitions and . . . had particularly encouraged the membership of Reich-Germans and party members." Other recommendations included forbidding the Bund to use NSDAP and Reich-German designations and emblems, only the director of VOMI would receive Kuhn if he

⁵⁸ Ibid., 673, 675-77.

were to come to Germany again, and VOMI would censor any speeches by Bundists in Germany. This recommendation was an attempt to prevent a recurrence of the pro-National Socialist speech in Stuttgart by Peter Gissibl, leader of the Chicago Bund, in 1938.⁵⁹

On February 10, 1938, Hess, through von Mackensen, reaffirmed that Reich-Germans could not belong to political organizations in the United States, including the Bund as well as its affiliated groups. Freytag later told a member of the American Embassy that the German government was renouncing all relations with the Bund and similar organizations and would take the necessary measures to insure compliance by its officials and citizens. German consuls would take up the passports of those Reich-Germans who refused to withdraw from the Bund, while a notice would be sent to all party members in the United States to refrain from Bund or similar activities. In addition, the German Embassy would ask the Bund to desist in using Reich-German designations and emblems.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ibid., 684-88.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 691. FR, 1938, II, 461-63. On April 28, 1938, the Bund announced that it would no longer use the German national flag. New York Times, April 29, 1938, p. 3.

In his report to Secretary of State Hull, Chargé d'Affaires Prentiss Gilbert requested that Hull publicly express his gratification at these developments since the German Foreign Ministry had adopted the procedures against considerable opposition from other Reich officials. Gilbert also reported Freytag's efforts to reduce German press criticism of the United States government and Freytag's request that American press criticism of the Reich be likewise diminished.⁶¹ When Ambassador Dieckhoff reported the German decisions to Hull, the Secretary of State remarked that this disavowal of the Bund would probably remove a cause of German-United States friction.⁶² The Bund greeted the news with the statement Bundists took "orders from no one, German or otherwise." But it was clearly a serious rebuff to the "self-commissioned Nazi apostles, whom the leaders in Germany explicitly called a 'nuisance.'"⁶³

⁶¹FR, 1938, II, 462-63. Freytag had been very upset by an article in the February, 1938, issue of Harper's, which had been especially critical of the German Chancellor, particularly in view of the fact that the German government had provided the author, S.H. Roberts, facilities while in Germany, as well as a personal interview with Hitler.

⁶²Ibid., 462-64.

⁶³New York Times, March 2, 1938, p. 13.

Kuhn went to Berlin in March, 1938, in an attempt to convince the German government to remove the restriction on Reich-German participation in the Bund.⁶⁴ He called on Captain Fritz Wiedemann, aide to Hitler, in an attempt to establish closer contacts with Germany. The resulting conversation illustrated the extent to which Germany distrusted Kuhn and the Bund. Kuhn, who prefaced his remarks by stating he was an American citizen and expected no instructions from the Reich, indicated he was disappointed in the German treatment of the Bund. Wiedemann replied that since Kuhn was an American, he not only could give him no instructions, but was going to inform American ambassador Hugh Wilson of the discussion. Wiedemann charged that Kuhn had misrepresented his connections with the Reich and created tensions between Germany and the United States. Kuhn protested this unfriendly attitude and expressed a desire, contrary to his opening statement, to receive guidance and understanding from the Reich. After telling Kuhn his sole contact in Germany was to be VOMI, Wiedemann dismissed him with the admonition to "respect American laws."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Offner, American Appeasement, p. 85. Kuhn told a congressional investigating committee that he went to Germany for his parents' golden wedding anniversary. Hearings, VI, 3787.

⁶⁵ DGFP, D, I, 701-03.

When Kuhn returned to America in April, 1938, there were rumors, probably initiated by Kuhn, that he had visited Hitler and Goering. Kuhn officially denied the rumors and characteristically asked for a congressional investigation of the Bund.⁶⁶ By the summer of 1938, the German Foreign Ministry, despite determined efforts to sever all connections between the Bund and various agencies in the Reich, had not realized the desired results.

The political specialist in the foreign ministry's American section, Ernst Woermann, gathered statements about the Bund's conduct from the German general consuls in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco in May, 1938.⁶⁷ Hans Borchers, the New York consul, stated that the Bund had made stupid mistakes and was receiving bad publicity. He thought that VOMI still had some contact with the Bund and urged that this should cease at once. Consul Baer of Chicago stated that the Bund was hated not only by anti-Germans, but also by other German-Americans. Consul Ponschab of San Francisco gave a similar report.⁶⁸

⁶⁶New York Times, April 26, 1938, p. 3.

⁶⁷T-120, Roll 1399, frames D548574-75.

⁶⁸Ibid., frames D548576-77, 548580-83.

On November 8, 1938, Dieckhoff submitted another lengthy report concerning the Bund to Weizsaecker of the foreign ministry. He related that it would assist him in his relations with the Roosevelt administration if the foreign ministry's position on Deutschtum would be obeyed by all agencies.⁶⁹

Before the foreign ministry could reply to Dieckhoff, the assassination of Secretary Ernst von Rath of the German Embassy in Paris by a Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, resulted in a pogrom in Germany on November 9-10, 1938.⁷⁰ Many Americans who had been willing to give Germany the benefit of the doubt were appalled at this anti-Jewish rampage. The United States and Germany did not break diplomatic relations, but ambassadors were recalled. So it was Hans Thomsen, the German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, who received an answer to Dieckhoff's request from Ernst Woermann.⁷¹

Woermann referred to the Bund as that "thorny problem" when he told Thomsen that the foreign ministry's investigation

⁶⁹T-120, Roll 1374, frame D527834.

⁷⁰This incident became the "Week of Glass," in reference to the attacks on Jewish businesses, resulting in extensive property damage. Erich Kordt, Wahn und Wirklichkeit: Die Aussenpolitik des Dritten Reiches, Versuch einer Darstellung (Stuttgart, 1948), p. 140.

⁷¹T-120, Roll 1374, frame D527838.

of Kuhn's 1938 visit revealed Kuhn had been told there could be no contact between Reich agencies and the Bund. Woermann also told Thomsen that Kuhn had not seen Hitler or Goering and that Kuhn probably had "swerved from the truth" in order to strengthen his position with his Bundist followers. Thomsen answered with a letter of thanks, stating it was a relief to have the situation clear at last.⁷²

Although the Bund increasingly depicted itself as independent from Germany by emphasizing aspects of Americanism such as the Madison Square Garden celebration in February, 1939, it still clung to some of its old, despised tactics by displaying a pair of swastikas mounted on the speakers' platform and employing the Ordnungsdienst (OD) as uniformed ushers.⁷³ The Reich in turn emphasized its dissociation, but the effort was too little and too slow to influence public opinion favorably. On February 25, 1939, the Reich reiterated that no ties existed with the Bund, and National Socialism was not a product for export. Yet when Reich officials stated their sympathy with the tenets of anti-Communism and anti-Semitism as expressed by the Bund, their disavowal was weakened.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid., frame D527838-41.

⁷³"Noise Over the Nazis," Current History, XLVI, 30.

⁷⁴New York Times, February 26, 1939, Sec. IV, p. 4.

Chargé d'Affaires Thomsen welcomed the release on April 3, 1939, of the report from the Congressional Committee on un-American Propaganda Activities, since he thought it would end rumors, suspicion, and conjectures about the Bund. The next month Thomsen reported to the foreign ministry that Fritz Kuhn's imprisonment had been a death sentence for the Bund. Consul Borchers reported that, happily for the Reich, German agencies would not suffer from Kuhn's conviction and the decline of the Bund. He felt that the decision to shun the Bund had proved to be a correct one and he suggested that this policy be continued because "the less German agencies concern themselves with the operations of the Bund, the better served is the Reichsdeutsche position in the U.S."⁷⁵

German diplomatic officials in the United States clearly denounced the Bund. Evidence exonerates Luther, Dieckhoff, and Thomsen of encouraging interference in American political affairs. The German consuls also realized the Bund's danger to German-United States relations, although they were accused in the American media of actually supervising Bund activities. The two most-maligned men were Fritz

⁷⁵T-120, Roll 1399, D548593-94, 548598-600.

Wiedemann, German Consul-General in San Francisco from 1939-1941, and Consul-General Hans Borchers in New York.

Nazi-watchers in the United States accorded Weidemann, Hitler's commanding officer in World War I, the position as the most powerful Nazi official in America. Supposedly Wiedemann directed a spy and propaganda apparatus, controlled the Bund, was "fuehrer of the fifth column," and gave orders to the German Embassy.⁷⁶ In fact, he lacked sufficient money for living expenses and was an outspoken Bund critic; at one time the foreign ministry had questioned him about his coziness with Communists.⁷⁷ Wiedemann called Bund speeches stupid and believed they created difficulties for the Reich.⁷⁸ National Socialism was good for Germany where the leadership principle could be implemented, Wiedemann said, but had no place in democracy.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Stephen King, "America's No. 1 Nazi," American Magazine, CXXX (December, 1940), 24. High, "Alien Poison," Saturday Evening Post, CCXIII, 80. "Nazi Visitor," Newsweek, X, 18-19.

⁷⁷ DGFP, D, I, 701-03. DGFP, D, VI, 895-96. New York Times, November 26, 1939, p. 32.

⁷⁸ New York Times, November 26, 1939, p. 32.

⁷⁹ T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264663, quoting an Associated Press dispatch of November 27, 1939. T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264674, quoting a United Press International dispatch of November 26, 1939, printed by La Libre Belgique, November 27, 1939.

Wiedemann faced a denazification court in 1948, in Passau, Germany. He was originally charged as a major Nazi offender and was placed in the most serious crimes category of the four classes of Nazis, class one. This was probably in response to the press speculation as to his Bund contacts. The denazification court, however, placed him in class four, a category for Nazis who played no active role in party affairs. The court decided he had even worked against the Nazis while in America, committing, according to Court President Ludwig Salisco, "high treason against the Nazi regime in order to save Germany from complete ruin." He was fined about \$600.⁸⁰

Ernst Hanfstaengl, the American-educated head of the NSDAP's Foreign Press Section and a one-time member of the National Socialist inner-circle, stated that Wiedemann was a decent sort of man.⁸¹ According to Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, Wiedemann had lost favor with Hitler and was sent to the United States because Hitler no longer wanted him around.⁸²

⁸⁰New York Times, November 18, 1948, p. 9.

⁸¹Ernst F. Hanfstaengl, Unheard Witness (Philadelphia and New York, 1957), pp. 293-94.

⁸²von Ribbentrop, The Ribbentrop Memoirs, p. 82.

Testimony before the Un-American Activities Committee on October 4, 1940, accused Borchers of controlling American citizens in the Bund. Hans Meyer, a mechanic and German immigrant who had become a naturalized American citizen, returned to Germany in 1939. The investigating committee decided that since Borchers had helped Bund-member Meyer return to Germany, Germany controlled the Bund.⁸³ But Borchers had for years espoused a policy which would have definitely shown that Germany had no close ties to the Bund.⁸⁴

The Bund was an embarrassment for the German Foreign Ministry and the American State Department. State Department officials generally attempted to defuse any potential complications which the Bund could pose to German-United States relations. Germany had discouraged the Bund from aping the Reich, but had been reluctant to break off all contact with the Bund for three reasons: the idea of Deutschtum united all Germans for the perpetuation of the German culture and glory of the German nation; the National Socialists and the Bund had similar programs based on anti-Communism and anti-Semitism; and the Reich hoped to use

⁸³Hearings, XIV, 8352-54.

⁸⁴DGFP, D, I, 710.

German-American pressure to temper the Roosevelt administration's anti-German stance and to press for German economic advantages in the United States, such as the purchase of badly-needed helium. All these reasons were insufficient to compensate for the damage resulting from Reich contact with the Bund. After Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes blocked the German attempt to purchase helium, Dieckhoff ruefully admitted there was no hope for political pressure by the German-American element.⁸⁵ Wiedemann also realized that the German-Americans could not be relied upon in times of crises.⁸⁶ Hitler and the foreign ministry admitted they could obtain no help from the Bund or supply the Bund any assistance for its programs, but they did not wish to assail the Bund because of its support of National Socialism. On numerous occasions, nevertheless, Reich officials disclaimed any association with the Bund because of the need to maintain the best-possible relationship with the United States.⁸⁷ Regarding German sympathy for the Bund

⁸⁵Ibid., 707.

⁸⁶DGFP, D, VI, 896.

⁸⁷Burlingham, The German Reich and Americans of German Origin, p. 45. New York Times, October 18, 1936, p. 29. New York Times, March 1, 1938, p. 1. New York Times, September 1, 1938, p. 7. New York Times, February 26, 1939, Sec. IV, p. 4. New York Times, November 19, 1938, p. 5.

in view of Deutschtum, many organizations put the interests of the German nation above those of the German state.

Eventually the German nation also suffered from this policy.

The story of the Bund and its predecessors illustrates how a small group can influence diplomatic relations between world powers. Germany had supported a German-American association because of similar philosophies, but later discouraged it for practical considerations. The Bund had striven to aid the Reich by keeping the United States neutral, but its efforts contributed to an opposite result because opponents used it to dramatize the anti-democratic principles inherent in National Socialism.

CHAPTER V

INVESTIGATION OF THE BUND

Because the Bund supported Hitlerian Germany and encouraged United States neutrality, it became the target of a host of municipal, state, and federal inquiries supported by both well-intentioned citizens and Germanophobes. The Bund's actions in fighting the Jewish boycott, campaigning against Communism, and providing a pro-German political program which praised National Socialism ensured a wealth of powerful enemies. The Bundists proved too few in number and too poor in resources to combat effectively the onslaught of legal attacks. To their credit and as proof of their commitment to Deutschtum rather than fifth column activities, the Bundists never resorted to organized violence, espionage, or sabotage.

The earliest congressional investigation of a German-American organization possibly subject to control from Berlin was in 1934. Although Representative John W. McCormack of Massachusetts headed the committee, the vice-chairman, Samuel Dickstein, Jewish representative from a predominantly Jewish New York district, supplied the impetus. The committee

investigated the Friends of New Germany and called it the American section of the Nazi party.¹ This conclusion was in large measure valid, but a portion of the testimony revealed Reich antipathy towards the Friends. For example, the German ambassador had stated his opposition to the propaganda effort supported by Dr. Otto Vollbehr, a Reich-German living in America who had spent a fortune on pro-German literature.²

After the advent of the Bund with its announced program of anti-Semitism, Dickstein renewed his charge that Germany was using an American-based organization to spread National Socialist doctrine, but he alienated a majority of the House through his lack of facts and his inane comments, including one attributing a \$20,000,000 propaganda fund to Kuhn. His resolution of July 11, 1935, to investigate un-American propoganda and activities was not reported out of the rules committee.³

¹House of Representatives, Special Committee on Un-American Activities. Report. 74th Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 153, January 5, 1935, Washington, 1935), p. 1.

²"Bund Banned," Time, XXXI, 15-16. New York Times, March 31, 1934, p. 5.

³Congressional Record, CXXIX--Part 10, 11059.

Dickstein did not cease his efforts for a congressional investigation and the increasing wariness of foreign influences in the United States changed the congressional attitude in the years following. On April 8, 1937, Representative J. Will Taylor of Tennessee stated that orators with "non-American" names encouraged economic disruptions and other discord. As an example of un-American activities, Taylor called Kuhn an agent of Adolf Hitler and asked for a congressional investigation of the Bund. Representative Lindsay C. Warren of North Carolina responded by charging that the proposed investigation would be worthless, intended for the "self-glorification and advertisement" of the investigators. Warren's comments that the 1934 investigation was practically without results and that racial bigotry would surely result from an investigation of the German-Americans in the Bund drew repeated applause. Warren quoted the editor of the American Hebrew as being opposed to a further investigation.⁴

Representative McCormack emphasized the opposite side of the argument. While Warren had spoken of German-Americans as honest citizens involved in purely cultural pursuits,

⁴Congressional Record, LXXXI--Part 3, 3286-87.

McCormack raised the spectre of the fifth column.⁵ Dickstein also continued his earlier attacks. The Bundists were surely fifth columnists, Dickstein stated, for the reason they left Germany was to join the Bund "army." As for the native-born German-Americans, Dickstein reasoned they joined the Bund because failure to do so would endanger their relatives still living in Germany.⁶

The continued abrasiveness of the Bund eventually convinced the House to hold an investigation.⁷ The Speaker of the House appointed a seven-man committee with Martin Dies of Texas as chairman to investigate "un-American" activities of a Communist or National Socialist nature. The hearings continued intermittently from 1938 through 1944, but the committee completed the bulk of the Nazi investigation during August and September, 1938.⁸

⁵Ibid., p. 3288.

⁶Congressional Record, LXXXII--Part 1, 291-95.

⁷DGFP, D, I, 674.

⁸House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Hearings. 75th Congress, 3rd Session, I, (Washington, 1938), 1. (Hereafter cited as Hearings with appropriate volume and page number.) High, "Star-Spangled Fascists," Saturday Evening Post, CCXI, 5.

The first witness on the first day of hearings, August 12, 1938, was John C. Metcalfe, a reporter for the Chicago Daily Times, who had joined the Bund under the name Hellmut Oberwinder in order to obtain material for an exposé.⁹ Metcalfe's performance supports the contention that "the testimony of Fascist-baiters is no more to be relied upon than that of Red-baiters."¹⁰ Metcalfe, who for one appearance before the committee wore a uniform similar to that of the National Socialist Sturmabteilung (SA) in an evident effort to create publicity, damaged the committee's attempt to picture the Bund as a fifth column organization by relating that Kuhn had attempted to initiate contact with Germany rather than being recruited for sinister purposes by Germany.¹¹ Exaggerating his importance in the Bund, Metcalfe stated that Kuhn had asked him to visit and speak before Bund units in different parts of the country.¹² This was not the whole truth, for after

⁹Hearings, I, 1, 3-4.

¹⁰High, "Star-Spangled Fascists," Saturday Evening Post, CCXI, 5.

¹¹Hearings, II, 1112, 1137. "Hitler's Shadow," Time, XXXII (October 10, 1938), 9.

¹²Hearings, I, 8-9. "The War on 'Isms,'" Newsweek, XII (August 22, 1938), 12.

Metcalfe had joined the Bund under a false name, he approached Bund officials about visiting other Bund units while he was on a business trip. The Bund leadership had only asked Metcalfe to convey its greetings to units he visited in the course of his business.¹³

Metcalfe attempted to create the impression he had detailed knowledge of Bund operations. In fact, he did not. He had to resort to surreptitious looks at Bund records in order to learn the names of the Bund leaders across the country, names which were printed in the Bund newspaper on several occasions.¹⁴ Metcalfe testified that Kuhn told him the German government had removed Ambassador Luther from his post in Washington because of Luther's lack of cooperation with the Bund.¹⁵ Kuhn later denied he had made such a statement or had the power to have Luther removed.¹⁶

¹³New York Times, October 15, 1938, p. 3. Free American, October 20, 1938, p. 2.

¹⁴Hearings, I, 9.

¹⁵Ibid., 11. On one occasion, Metcalfe referred to Luther as a German consul, rather than ambassador. Hearings, I, 19.

¹⁶Free American, October 20, 1938, p. 1. New York Times, October 15, 1938, p. 3.

The committee attempted above all to establish a firm connection between the Bund and the German government which would demonstrate the Reich's total control over Bund policy. The committee cited visits by German consular officials to Bund gatherings as proof.¹⁷ Since German consuls met with a wide variety of groups, including the Steuben Society, singing groups, and church organizations, the same logic could show these organizations to be Nazi-fronts. Kuhn at one point accused the committee, and in this case he was close to the truth, of being so desperate to find a link to the German government that he was afraid to write his mother in Germany, for fear the committee would use such a communication as a basis for an accusation of German control.¹⁸

Chairman Dies announced over national radio on August 30, 1938, that he had discovered a definite link between the Bund and the Reich government.¹⁹ He was referring to twenty-five letters of Bund official Peter Gissibl which the Dies committee had subpoenaed and placed in evidence.²⁰ None

¹⁷Hearings, II, 1142-43.

¹⁸Hearings, X, 6060.

¹⁹Martin Dies, "The Real Issue is Plain," Vital Speeches, IV (September 15, 1938), 731-32.

²⁰Hearings, I, 60-61.

of the letters indicated any connection between the German government and the Bund; most were letters from the Deutsches Ausland Institut (DAI) regarding German books and literature.²¹

Metcalfe resurrected Dickstein's old argument that German-born members of the Bund had come to the United States to join the Bund. The reporter accused those Bundists of having had no intention of honoring their oath of allegiance to the United States and implied that they planned to work for a foreign government, Germany.²² Metcalfe neglected to mention that many Bundists had become citizens before 1933, and practically all had emigrated from Germany for economic reasons. Like other nationalities, they had retained old customs and associations with their homeland. Metcalfe's charge that America was in danger of being taken over by the Nazis was absurd and led to a facetious German comment that Germans felt flattered for supposedly having such power.²³

²¹Ibid., 60, 62, 64. Free American, November 3, 1938, p. 3.

²²Hearings, II, 1167.

²³"Nazis: A Tabloid Scoop," News-Week-The Nation, X, 13-14.

Every circumstance which could remotely suggest a fifth column connection with the Bund was presented by committee members as relevant information. Representative Joe Starnes of Alabama professed to see a relation between the Bund's major strength in the northeastern part of the United States and the large number of munitions plants in that area.²⁴ The committee's counsel, Rhea Whitley, felt all Bund members working in defense plants were awaiting a signal to effect a pre-conceived plan of sabotage.²⁵ Metcalfe and Dies accused the Bund of having had intimate knowledge of Hitler's intentions regarding the Sudetenland because the Bund had announced a celebration to demonstrate its support of the German population of the Sudetenland. Between the time of the announcement and the celebration itself, Germany carried out its annexation. The committee used this coincidence as proof of the Bund's fifth column status.²⁶

Committee members were unable to understand the commitment of Bund members to the concept of Deutschtum, and they reasoned that Kuhn

²⁴Hearings, X, 6074.

²⁵Ibid., 6116.

²⁶Hearings, II, 1108.

was involved in Bund activities for financial gain.²⁷ This was definitely not true. When Kuhn left the employ of the Ford Motor Company to head the Bund, he was earning \$125 per week, an excellent salary in 1936. His personal finances suffered thereafter, for as Bund leader his compensation was considerably less.²⁸ Dies showed surprise and naïveté when Kuhn testified in August, 1939, that it would cause him (Kuhn) and many German-Americans much anguish if it became necessary to aid the United States in a war between Germany and the United States. Bundists feared that "every rifle bullet and every bomb sent to Europe from the United States is aimed at the heart of a German lad."²⁹ Kuhn's attachment to the German nation was heightened by his parents still living in Germany.³⁰ Bundists had a spiritual and emotional attachment to Germany and felt it their duty to assist their ethnic comrades; the most significant contribution they felt able to make, other than returning to Germany, was to work for American neutrality in any European

²⁷Hearings, VI, 3768, 4112.

²⁸Hearings, X, 6117, 6124.

²⁹Free American, November 9, 1939, p. 7. Hearings, VI, 3788.

³⁰Ibid.

conflict. In November, 1941, the Bund's newspaper printed information on how to send packages to German prisoners in Canada. To counter expected objections, the Bund explained that other Americans were sending packages to British prisoners in Germany.³¹

Metcalfe labeled attempts to maintain German culture as fostering the "racial and religious hatreds . . . [of] the pagan German kultur [sic]."³² There was no need for Bund-sponsored German language classes, reasoned Metcalfe, since American schools offered "any number" of German classes.³³ Metcalfe even lamented that toy German soldiers rather than toy American soldiers were sold to children of Bund members.³⁴ Since there was no need for any preservation of German culture or German language, according to the committee's reasoning, the Bund's program was basically subversion of democratic principles and establishment of a force responsive to the German government. Chairman Dies allowed Metcalfe to charge that the Bund's purported fifth column activities were supported not only by the German government but also

³¹Free American, November 20, 1941, p. 3.

³²Hearings, II, 1123.

³³Ibid., 1131.

³⁴Ibid., 1136.

by "high-up American industrial leaders."³⁵ No proof was offered, only the excuse that lack of time and money did not afford an opportunity to prove the allegation.³⁶

Samuel Dickstein had made the same charge in September, 1937, stating the Bund was receiving financial support from American corporations.³⁷

Committee members and witnesses inevitably compared Kuhn and the Bund to pro-German individuals and organizations in other countries. The most frequent comparison after 1940 was to Vidkun Quisling, the Norwegian fascist who collaborated in the German invasion of Norway.³⁸ Prior to 1940, anti-Bundists frequently used the name of Konrad Henlein of Czechoslovakia to portray the possible influence Kuhn could have on undermining opposition to German expansion in Europe.³⁹ The Dies committee concluded that Kuhn was

³⁵ Ibid., 1138, 1170. "Hitler's Shadow," Time, XXXII, 9.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ "Nazis: A Tabloid Scoop," News-Week--The Nation, X, 13.

³⁸ Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 59.

³⁹ Hearings, X, 6048-49. Free American, August 31, 1939, p. 3. "Bund Banned," Time, XXXI, 16. Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 64.

flattered at being considered another Henlein, the Czechoslovakian citizen of German heritage who led a movement advocating that that part of Czechoslovakia inhabited primarily by German stock be annexed by the Reich.⁴⁰

Kuhn testified before the Dies committee on August 16-17, 1939, and again on October 19, 1939, but nothing of a seriously incriminating nature was learned. Kuhn admitted he had ordered Bund records destroyed, partly in response to the impending congressional inquiry. He suggested he took this action in order to prevent any recriminatory actions against Bund members by employers, neighbors, and anti-Bundists.⁴¹ The committee examined Kuhn closely on his 1936 Berlin visit at which time he met Hitler. The committee attempted to depict the visit as one in which Kuhn made a report to his superior on the Bund's pro-German efforts in the United States. Kuhn rejected all such inferences, and asked that his testimony be corroborated by American non-Bundists who had been present at the ten-minute public meeting. According to Kuhn, Hitler asked no questions about the Bund; instead all conversation revolved

⁴⁰Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 64.

⁴¹Hearings, VI, 3730.

about the Olympics.⁴² Since Hitler's public meeting with Kuhn was not prearranged and was adequately explained by the winter relief check presented to Hitler, and since the German government attempted to dissociate itself from the Bund, it is hardly plausible that Hitler and Kuhn discussed fifth column activities. Both men were eager to rejoice in the performance of German athletes in the Olympic games; both men were interested in the glory of the German nation.

That the Bund and Deuschtum agencies had exchanged correspondence was proved by the committee's questioning of Kuhn. The committee felt this indicated Bund subordination to the German government, since the latter had assumed control (Gleichschaltung) over all Deuschtum agencies. Kuhn interpreted German government control of these agencies as nominal rather than all-encompassing and considered the Bund's correspondence to be of a non-political nature with a private organization.⁴³ Neither interpretation was wholly accurate, but Kuhn's had more legitimacy, since the Deuschtum agencies in contact with the Bund, especially the DAI, had considerable freedom of activity, at least until the beginning of the war.

⁴²Hearings, VI, 3774. Hearings, X, 6052.

⁴³Hearings, VI, 3844.

Kuhn acknowledged that several members of the DAI in Stuttgart were personal acquaintances.⁴⁴ Kuhn freely admitted contact with the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (VDA), including correspondence with VDA headquarters in Berlin, and personal visits from Günther Orgell, the VDA representative in the United States. Bund leaders distributed the books supplied by the VDA to Bund members.⁴⁵ But Kuhn denied any political connections through the VDA and reiterated his denial of receiving instructions, directly or indirectly, from the Reich.⁴⁶ He gave an emphatic negative reply when asked if the Bund had any connections with the Auslands Organisation (AO), the foreign organization of the NSDAP.⁴⁷

The testimony of Richard W. Werner, a disgruntled former Bund member, disputed the Bund's public claim of being an independent organization. Werner accepted the private boasting and exaggerated claims of Bund officers as fact and testified he believed the Bund was a subordinate of the NSDAP. In testimony given later, however, Werner divorced the Bund from the NSDAP when he stated that the

⁴⁴Ibid., 3873.

⁴⁵Ibid., 3858-63.

⁴⁶Ibid., 3867.

⁴⁷Ibid., 3878.

NSDAP was more important in the United States in furthering German aims than was the Bund, which consisted of a group devoted to "hell raising."⁴⁸ Through its newspaper, the Bund questioned Werner's morality and credibility. The Bund often questioned the veracity of its accusers and detractors; but in no other instance did the Bund approach in intensity its denunciation of Werner, who was called a forger, swindler, rapist, abortionist, adulterer, and thief. The Free American reported Werner's entire testimony was basically one huge lie, except when he said he dared not return to Yorkville.⁴⁹

During the summer of 1939 Dies called unsuccessfully for the Justice Department to indict the Bund for failure to register as an agent of a foreign government. Attorney General Cummings ordered an FBI investigation, partly because of a request by Dickstein, and the FBI submitted a 1,000 page confidential report to the attorney general's office absolving the Bund of any federal crimes.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Hearings, XIV, 8362, 8378, 8386.

⁴⁹Free American, October 17, 1940, pp. 1, 4, 7.

⁵⁰New York Times, August 21, 1939, p. 6. New York Times, January 13, 1938, p. 4. Donald F. Whitehead, The FBI Story, (New York, 1956), pp. 163-64.

The Dies committee's investigation of New Deal programs and labor unions, as well as left- and right-wing groups, had resulted in antagonism between the Roosevelt administration and the committee.⁵¹ The committee had only \$25,000 for its investigation, but was authorized by House Resolution 510 to secure additional manpower from the different departments of the executive branch.⁵² The Departments of Justice, Labor, and Interior, with President Roosevelt's concurrence, refused Dies's request for additional investigators, stenographers, and attorneys. The Justice Department, however, did send the committee a copy of the FBI report of the Bund. This was not enough to assuage Dies's feelings, who was quite bitter with the Roosevelt administration, particularly Secretary of the Interior Ickes and Secretary of Labor Perkins, who ridiculed some of the committee's revelations of communist activity.⁵³ The Dies committee concluded its January 3, 1940, report to the House of Representatives with the statement that since most citizens

⁵¹Hearings, IV, 3097-98.

⁵²House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Report. 76th Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 2, January 3, 1939, (Washington, 1939), p. 2.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 1-8, 86, 122.

had remained loyal to American institutions, the least the government could do was to put an end to ten years of economic deprivation and misery and solve the "economic and social problem of unnecessary poverty in the midst of possible plenty."⁵⁴

The committee was determined to disband the Bund; it urged the Congress to declare illegal any organization found to be subject to orders from Germany or any other foreign government.⁵⁵ In order to disband the Bund, therefore, it was necessary to find the Bund to be an agent of Germany. Despite testimony of the most superficial nature, Metcalfe, Dies, and the committee concluded the Bund was a wing of

⁵⁴House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Report. 76th Congress, 3rd Session, House Report No. 1476, January 3, 1940, (Washington, 1940), p. 25.

⁵⁵House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Report. 77th Congress, 1st Session, House Report No. 1, January 3, 1941, (Washington, 1941), p. 24. (Hereafter referred to as House Report No. 1, January 3, 1941.) Representative McCormack's bill for the registration of foreign agents became law on June 8, 1938. August Raymond Ogden, The Dies Committee: A Study of the Special House Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities 1938-1944, (Washington, 1945), p. 42.

the Nazi propaganda machine of Germany.⁵⁶ Kuhn called the accusation slanderous and stated, quite correctly, "such charges are brought as a sop to artificially created false public opinion."⁵⁷

Denunciation of the Bund centered on the fifth column accusation. Metcalfe, confident his investigation was more thorough than the cursory one conducted by the FBI, stated that the FBI's estimate of 8,500 Bundists was three times too small.⁵⁸ The Bundists were not primarily advocates for the preservation of German culture, Metcalfe testified, but had established "a vast spy net . . . [and] a powerful sabotage machine. . . ."⁵⁹ In August, 1940, Navy Secretary Knox told reporters that the Bund was "an integral part of [the] Nazi conspiracy for world dominion."⁶⁰ Although offering no proof, Knox called the Bund "the finest Nazi-trained fifth column in the world, one which in case of war

⁵⁶House Report No. 1, January 3, 1941. Hearings, II, 1157. Dies, "The Real Issue is Plain," Vital Speeches of the Day, IV, 731-32.

⁵⁷New York Times, November 29, 1938, p. 9.

⁵⁸Hearings, I, 21.

⁵⁹Ibid., 25.

⁶⁰Free American, September 5, 1940, p. 1.

with Germany could be our undoing."⁶¹ Knox indicated the United States was threatened by an enemy within, just as Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Holland had been.⁶² In the 1943 report to the House of Representatives on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, the Dies committee mistakenly reported the Bund had been a fifth column organization, engaged from its origin in "disruption, espionage, sabotage, and treason."⁶³ Despite all evidence to the contrary, the committee concluded that the Bund was "an absolutely secret organization" which was "organizationally tied to Nazi Germany."⁶⁴ There was nothing "absolutely secret" about an organization which published a regular newspaper sold on the street corners of the country's largest city, granted interviews to the nation's press, conducted summer camps across the country, and held a rally in Madison Square Garden attended by 20,000 people. The Bund was quite open in its anti-Roosevelt administration opinions, its efforts to combat the Jewish boycott of German-produced goods, and its anti-Communist endeavors. The Bund

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid., p. 7.

⁶³Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 59.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 61.

made public its constitution, aims and purposes, location of all units, and the names of all its officers. The tragedy of the Bund from the German government's point of view was that through its public campaign it had convinced many Americans that the Roosevelt administration was correct in opposing National Socialism. There was no proof to the charge that the Bund was part of the National Socialist political structure, although Kuhn and others freely admitted the connections between Deutschtum agencies and the Bund. The committee concluded that Kuhn's ten-minute public visit with Hitler proved Kuhn to be "a subordinate of Hitler himself."⁶⁵ Such logic is indicative of the committee's investigation. The committee accepted testimony which supported the preconceived idea that the Bund was a fifth column organization while it rejected conflicting testimony.

The Bund encountered its first major legal difficulty at Riverhead, Long Island, in July, 1938, where authorities charged six directors of the Bund's Camp Siegfried with violating a New York State civil rights law which required any organization using an oath of allegiance to register with the New York Secretary of State. Fifty Bundists were available to testify that no oath existed, and twenty did

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 64.

so, but the judge and jury believed a member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) who had infiltrated the Bund to obtain possible evidence against it.⁶⁶ The DAV had long worked against the Bund. Judge L. Barron Hill sentenced Ernst Mueller to one year in jail, and his five associates to one-year suspended sentences; in addition Hill levied a fine of \$13,000 against Camp Siegfried and the six men.⁶⁷ The appellate division of the New York supreme court overturned the conviction in November, 1938, by ruling there was no oath involved with Bund membership.⁶⁸

On May 25, 1939, the New York County grand jury indicted Fritz Kuhn on twelve counts of embezzlement of \$14,548 in Bund funds. As soon as the indictment was released, three detectives who had been assigned by District Attorney Thomas E. Dewey to follow Kuhn arrested him, even though the Bund leader had told Dewey's office where he would be. In a statement to the press, Dewey called Kuhn a common thief. This sort of statement before an examination

⁶⁶"Uncle Sam's Nazis," Newsweek, XII, 11. "'Heiling' Muffled," Newsweek, XII (July 25, 1938), 13. "The Yahoos of Yaphank," Nation, CXLVII (July 23, 1938), 81. Free American, November 10, 1938, p. 1.

⁶⁷"'Heiling' Muffled," Newsweek, XII, 13.

⁶⁸Free American, November 10, 1938, p. 1.

of the facts, by an official sworn to uphold the law, is another indication of the abuse of Bundists' constitutional rights.⁶⁹ The national magazine, Nation, also hoped for a conviction, relating that Kuhn was a common criminal, a gangster, and of course, a Nazi. The Nation speculated that the German government was thus forced to decide whether to support its fifth columnists.⁷⁰ New York mayor Fiorello La Guardia, who had earlier proposed hanging an effigy of Hitler in a chamber of horrors, and Dickstein, the foremost Bund-baiter, were largely responsible for Kuhn's indictment.⁷¹

In late September, 1939, Dewey brought Kuhn to court where the bail was increased to \$50,000 because Dewey contended that Kuhn might flee the country. The presiding judge denied an appeal and Kuhn went to jail.⁷² The Bund raised an additional \$45,000 in cash, and Kuhn was again a free man.⁷³

⁶⁹New York Times, May 26, 1939, p. 1. "Common Fox?," Time, XXXIII (June 5, 1939), 17. "Woes of a Fuehrer," Newsweek, XIII (June 5, 1939), 12. Free American, June 8, 1939, p. 1.

⁷⁰"The Arrest of Fritz Kuhn, the Nazi," Nation, CXLVIII (June 3, 1939), 631.

⁷¹DGFP, D, VI, 588. "Noise Over the Nazis," Current History, XLVI, 28. "Common Fox?" Time, XXXIII, 17.

⁷²Free American, October 5, 1939, p. 1.

⁷³Free American, October 12, 1939, p. 1.

The trial began in November, 1939, and lasted three weeks. Dewey asked that embezzlement of \$8,907 in receipts from the Madison Square Garden rally be severed from the indictment; Kuhn objected vigorously, confident that no offense could be proved. The judge ruled in favor of the severance, so the trial proceeded, concerned with the remainder of the money involved, around \$5,600.⁷⁴ Kuhn had thus posted \$50,000 bail for an alleged embezzlement of \$5,600. The same judge placed a \$5,000 bond on a non-Bundist accused of stealing \$65,000.⁷⁵

Judge James G. Wallace ruled that Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Herman J. McCarthy had failed to produce sufficient evidence in all but five counts. The amount of money involved in the remaining five counts was around \$1,200. The trial centered on the question whether Kuhn could spend Bund money as he saw fit. The defense lawyer argued that under the Bund constitution, Kuhn could spend the money as he chose.⁷⁶ No Bundist had complained and members testified that Kuhn had authority to spend Bund money

⁷⁴Free American, November 9, 1939, p. 1.

⁷⁵Free American, November 16, 1939, p. 1.

⁷⁶"The Kuhn Trial," Newsweek, XIV (December 4, 1939), 17. "Trouble," Time, XXXIV (December 4, 1939), 18.

without accountability. Aware that Bund members were supporting Kuhn, McCarthy focused attention on the \$717 Kuhn had spent to move the furniture of Florence Camp, a friend of the Bund, from the West Coast to the East Coast. Kuhn's correspondence with Mrs. Camp indicated his infatuation with the woman, but Kuhn's feelings quickly changed when Mrs. Camp turned his personal letters over to Dewey's office. The Bund explained that Mrs. Camp had repaid Kuhn \$600 for moving her furniture. Mrs. Camp testified she had given Kuhn \$600, but this money was not a reimbursement. La Guardia and Dewey, who had gone to extraordinary lengths to discredit the Bund, reveled in Kuhn's discomfort.⁷⁷

In addition to the money involved in the Camp episode, there was a charge that Kuhn had embezzled \$500 scheduled for payment of lawyer fees. William Luedtke, a member of the Bund staff, told the court he gave the \$500 in question to a lawyer's office assistant and obtained a receipt. The lawyer denied ever getting the money. Several Bund witnesses testified that no one at Bund headquarters saw the receipt after Dewey's assistants raided the office and seized various papers and books.⁷⁸ What became increasingly clear during

⁷⁷"Trouble," Time, XXXIV, 18.

⁷⁸Free American, November 30, 1939, p. 1.

the trial was that Dewey's primary concern was not in protecting Bund members' money but in acquiring a conviction.⁷⁹ Dewey had prosecuted Kuhn in order to enhance his chances for the 1940 Republican party presidential nomination, by showing that he was not anti-Semitic or pro-fascist. The court found Kuhn guilty on December 5, 1939; the next day, Dewey opened his campaign for the nomination in Minneapolis.⁸⁰

On December 8, 1939, the German Consul General in New York, Hans Borchers, wrote the foreign office in Berlin that two things caused Kuhn's conviction--his letters to Mrs. Camp and the loud, unruly mannerisms of Kuhn's lawyer while arguing the Führer or leadership principle. While lamenting that the Bund had hurt the cause of Deutschtum, he agreed with the Bund's assessment that the trial was political in nature.⁸¹

After the trial the Bund attempted to demonstrate to the public that Kuhn was financially responsible by disclosing Kuhn had received only forty-four dollars per week as salary, although he was authorized seventy-five dollars, plus

⁷⁹Free American, December 7, 1939, p. 1.

⁸⁰T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264832, quoting the New York Staatszeitung und Herold, December 6, 1939.

⁸¹T-81, Roll 502, frame 5264838.

expenses.⁸² Also, in the three and a half years as Bund leader, he had reduced the \$9,000 Bund debt by seventy-five percent.⁸³

Convicted of the five charges, the court sentenced Kuhn to two and one half to five years in prison for the embezzlement of \$1,200.⁸⁴ While Kuhn was in jail Gerhard Wilhelm Kunze, born in Camden, New Jersey, on January, 10, 1906, served as acting Bund leader from December 5, 1939, to September 1, 1940, at which time membership elected him Bund leader.⁸⁵ From the time of Kuhn's imprisonment until Pearl Harbor, the Bund emphasized its belief that America should not heed British propaganda, but should remain neutral. Since Bundists no longer used the Nazi salute and the swastika, there was less public antagonism.⁸⁶ Kunze and the Bundists devoted much of their time and resources to defending themselves from the fifth column charge.⁸⁷ On July 7, 1940, Kunze

⁸²Free American, December 7, 1939, p. 2.

⁸³Free American, December 21, 1939, p. 1.

⁸⁴"Bund Leader Convicted of Felonies," Christian Century, LVI (December 13, 1939), 1533. Free American, December 21, 1939, p. 8.

⁸⁵Report on the Axis Front Movement in the United States, p. 64.

⁸⁶Free American, October 3, 1940, p. 7.

⁸⁷"The Bunders Resume," Newsweek, XV (June 24, 1940), 35.

appeared before the sub-committee of the United States Senate Judiciary Committee to speak against any limitation on organizations such as the Bund.⁸⁸ The attempt was futile as Senator Tom Connally of Texas threatened to jail a number of Bundists in order to obtain a Bund membership list.⁸⁹ On September 13, 1940, Kunze issued a protest against the National Conscription Bill which would prohibit Bund members from working in war industries.⁹⁰ Two days later, after Congress passed the bill, investigators exonerated the Bund from any participation in a powder factory explosion in New Jersey.⁹¹

In a letter to President Roosevelt on September 26, 1940, Kunze stated his opposition to the conscription bill which he felt discriminated unnecessarily against German-Americans by excluding Bund members from the military draft and employment in defense plants. He accused Roosevelt of being a confirmed Germanophobe and responsible for the anti-Bund provisions, "or at least responsible for retaining

⁸⁸Free American, July 18, 1940, p. 1.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰New York Times, September 14, 1940, p. 8.

⁹¹New York Times, September 16, 1940, p. 19.

the said provision in this bill. . . ."92 The letter had no effect, except to vent Kunze's frustration.

After Pearl Harbor Dies bypassed the Departments of State and Justice by convincing the House the Bund was a German agent. On December 19, 1941, by a vote of sixty-one to nine, Congress passed a bill requiring Bund members to register with the Department of Justice.⁹³ The Bund was dead. Dies stated the Department of Justice had had evidence proving a German connection for over two years but had failed to act; but, Dies continued, there could no longer be any doubt since the requirement to register was thereafter a part of the written law.⁹⁴

Attempts to revoke Kuhn's citizenship began in August, 1937, when New York Mayor Julius Hochsfelder asked Henry B. Hazard, an official of the United States Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, to institute proceedings. Hochsfelder based the attempted revocation on the charge Kuhn had had mental reservations when he took the oath of allegiance in 1934, since he was serving the German government.⁹⁵ In

⁹² Free American, September 26, 1940, p. 1.

⁹³ New York Times, December 20, 1941, p. 1.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹⁵ New York Times, August 7, 1937, p. 2.

October, 1937, Federal Judge John W. Clancy, who ruled only the United States Justice Department had authority to question a person's citizenship, dismissed Hochsfelder's action.⁹⁶ The next month, however, Common Pleas Judge J. Wallace Leyden told a group of new citizens in Hackensack, New Jersey, that membership in the German-American Bund was sufficient grounds for denial of United States citizenship since "a person believing in dictatorship cannot also believe in the American form of government."⁹⁷

A few years later moves to revoke Kuhn's citizenship revived. On May 27, 1940, Representative Leland M. Ford of California told the House of Representatives he had signed an affidavit alleging Kuhn's citizenship should be revoked because he obviously had mental reservations when swearing allegiance to the United States at the time of his naturalization.⁹⁸ The attempt to deprive Kuhn his citizenship culminated on March 18, 1943, when Kuhn and ten other Bund leaders lost their citizenship in the courtroom of Federal Judge John Bright, who ruled that Bund membership alone was not sufficient evidence for denaturalization, but Kuhn and

⁹⁶New York Times, October 30, 1937, p. 9.

⁹⁷New York Times, November 20, 1937, p. 20.

⁹⁸New York Times, May 28, 1940, p. 28.

the other ten had accepted the Fuhrer principle, a definitely un-American act.⁹⁹

Kuhn, sentenced to two and a half to five years on the embezzlement conviction, lost an appeal in May, 1941.¹⁰⁰ He gained parole from prison on June 18, 1943, after serving three and one half years. Since he was no longer a citizen, FBI agents took him to a federal internment camp for enemy aliens at Crystal City, Texas. In February, 1944, authorities moved Kuhn to a similar camp at Kennedy, Texas; in August, 1944, Kuhn became an internee at Fort Stanton, New Mexico. On September 6, 1945, Attorney General Thomas Clark ordered Kuhn deported to Germany because he considered Kuhn dangerous to the United States and because he "'had adhered to the Government of Germany and to the National Socialist principles thereof.'"¹⁰¹ Clark's statement was true to a point, but he failed to state that Germany did not recognize the Bund's efforts and had tried for several years to dissociate itself from Kuhn and the Bund.

⁹⁹New York Times, April 1, 1942, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰New York Times, May 10, 1941, p. 17.

¹⁰¹New York Times, June 19, 1943, p. 1. New York Times, July 1, 1943, p. 8. New York Times, May 19, 1945, p. 4. New York Times, September 7, 1945, p. 25.

Upon his arrival at Frankfurt on the Main, Germany, on September 29, 1945, American occupation troops arrested Kuhn, for they considered him "'one of the greatest security threats in the American zone,'" capable of gathering "'together his henchmen and threaten[ing] our security.'"¹⁰² On April 25, 1946, Kuhn obtained his release from Hohen-Asperg prison in Asperg, Germany. In an interview with the Associated Press, Kuhn vowed he would never concern himself with politics again.¹⁰³

In February, 1947, German denazification authorities cleared Kuhn of charges he had been a Gauleiter (district leader) in the NSDAP. The authorities stated Kuhn had never held a position under the NSDAP. Kuhn's freedom was short-lived, for in July, 1947, military authorities arrested him for trial before a German denazification board.¹⁰⁴ It appears the German authorities realized Kuhn had never been a Nazi, but American military government officials felt it undesirable to have such an opinion officially supported,

¹⁰²New York Times, October 5, 1945, p. 25. New York Times, February 19, 1946, p. 27.

¹⁰³New York Times, April 26, 1946, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴New York Times, February 5, 1947, p. 4. New York Times, February 2, 1947, p. 10. New York Times, July 24, 1947, p. 5. New York Times, May 1, 1947, p. 8. New York Times, July 8, 1947, p. 11. New York Times, September 27, 1947, p. 2.

because of all the previous decisions made by American authorities alleging Kuhn to have been a tool of the Nazi government.

Kuhn remained at Dachau while awaiting trial, but in February, 1948, he simply walked past the gate guards while visitors were departing. On April 20, 1948, a denazification tribunal in Munich sentenced Kuhn in absentia to ten years in a labor camp. Military authorities recaptured Kuhn on June 16, 1948, when he applied for a permit to open a chemist's laboratory. The denazification court granted Kuhn a new trial in January, 1949, in Munich. The court again found him guilty but released him after crediting him with serving two years of his ten-year sentence. On December 14, 1951, Kuhn died in Germany at the age of fifty-five.¹⁰⁵

The Bund faced numerous other investigations. In one court action against the Bund in 1939 regarding tax evasion, magistrate Jeanette Brill made public Fritz Kuhn's home address, resulting in the "terrorizing" of the entire street by anti-Bundists. Kuhn sent his son to a boarding school and gave up his house.¹⁰⁶ In addition to income tax

¹⁰⁵New York Times, February 5, 1948, p. 1. New York Times, January 18, 1948, p. 11. New York Times, April 21, 1948, p. 7. New York Times, June 18, 1948, p. 11. New York Times, December 30, 1948, p. 7. New York Times, February 2, 1953, p. 11.

¹⁰⁶T-81, Roll 144, frame 183229. Free American, March 16, 1939, p. 1.

inquiries from New York City officials, the state of New Jersey revoked the Bund's liquor license at its summer camp in Camp Nordland, New Jersey, because of a state law prohibiting the wearing of foreign uniforms or symbols.¹⁰⁷ Authorities also arrested Kuhn once for drunkenness and profanity; although he maintained his innocence, he pleaded guilty and paid a five dollar fine "as the best means of avoiding a theatrical performance."¹⁰⁸ On several occasions state and federal authorities stopped and searched Bund members for evidence of possible fifth column activities. They discovered no such evidence.¹⁰⁹

The sheriff of Sussex County, New Jersey, Denton J. Quick, continually harrassed Bund members until he himself was sentenced to the federal penitentiary. On September 14, 1940, Quick and eighteen armed constables raided Camp Nordland but found nothing incriminating, even though the raid had come as a complete surprise to Bundists.¹¹⁰ Quick also distributed a Bund membership list to employers in

¹⁰⁷ Free American, April 6, 1939, p. 4. Free American, July 13, 1939, p. 1. Free American, October 26, 1939, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Free American, July 27, 1939, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Free American, June 20, 1940, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Free American, September 26, 1940, p. 1.

the Sussex County area, in an attempt to cause Bundists to lose their jobs.¹¹¹

In October, 1940, New Jersey authorities indicted the Camp Nordland trustees for violating the New Jersey law which prohibited a gathering of three or more persons which would result in provoking racial hatred.¹¹² The Bund members admitted the allegations in order to test the provisions of the statute.¹¹³ Only one of the speeches given at the gathering was in English, yet none of the three complainants understood German. The speech in English referred to "the Asiatic internationalists who today run America."¹¹⁴ Convicted of permitting anti-Jewish speeches, Sussex County Judge John C. Losey sentenced the nine Bund members to one to two years in jail, plus fines of \$1,000-\$2,000.¹¹⁵ The Bund appealed and won. On December 5, 1941, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the New Jersey law known as the "Race Hatred Act."¹¹⁶ The ruling was really

¹¹¹ Free American, October 3, 1940, p. 1.

¹¹² Free American, October 17, 1940, p. 1.

¹¹³ Free American, October 24, 1940, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Free American, January 30, 1941, pp. 1, 7.

¹¹⁵ Free American, February 6, 1941, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Free American, December 11, 1941, p. 1.

academic at that point, for in two weeks Congress declared the Bund was an agent of a foreign power.

On May 30, 1941, Sheriff Quick and his constables again raided Camp Nordland and ordered the camp closed under a New Jersey law which permitted law authorities to close any "'place where the law is continually violated.'"¹¹⁷ Quick arrested one Bundist, Paul Huisel, as an alleged spy and turned him over to the FBI, which quickly cleared Huisel and released him.¹¹⁸ At this time, the New Jersey legislature passed a bill revoking Camp Nordland's charter. Before the governor signed the bill, the Bund returned its Camp Nordland charter to the state of New Jersey on the grounds the charter was of no value since it did not provide protection from illegal raids by Sheriff Quick.¹¹⁹

The Bund asked for an injunction against Sheriff Quick but on July 21, 1941, the court ruled that since the United States was on the brink of war, it was necessary that privileges ordinarily enjoyed would have to be withheld from German-Americans. Judge V.C. Fielder postponed a final decision.¹²⁰ In the meantime, authorities indicted

¹¹⁷Free American, June 5, 1941, p. 1.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹⁹Free American, June 12, 1941, p. 1.

¹²⁰Free American, July 24, 1941, p. 1.

Sheriff Quick on charges of accepting a bribe in a bootleg whiskey investigation.¹²¹ Found guilty of violating the internal revenue laws, he went to jail.¹²² After Quick's imprisonment, there was less harrassment of the Bund.

After Germany and the United States declared war on one another and the Bund disbanded, a few ex-members, none of them prominent in the Bund movement, did attempt to assist the German war effort. These individuals had departed the United States before December 11, 1941, most of them years before, and returned on a mission of sabotage in June, 1942. Two coordinated groups of intended saboteurs came ashore from German submarines, four men in Florida and four in Long Island. The scheduled targets included war materials, factories, and transportation facilities. In a matter of days the FBI arrested the intended saboteurs, four of them ex-Bundists and all amateurs. There was little difficulty in the arrests since all of the intruders immediately attempted to contact acquaintances from their earlier days in the United States. Of the eight men, six died in the electric chair in Washington, D.C., in August,

¹²¹ Free American, June 12, 1941, p. 1.

¹²² Free American, August 28, 1941, p. 1. Free American, October 23, 1941, p. 1. New York Times, October 15, 1941, p. 11.

1942, two months after their capture. The other two had provided the FBI with information; the court sentenced one to life imprisonment, the other to thirty years.¹²³ This incident, involving four ex-Bundists, did not in any way establish the Bund as a fifth column organization. It can be cited as the exception proving the rule. The incident occurred after the Bund was dissolved and had no sanction from the Bund. Unfortunately, this incident remains attached to the Bund.

The record of investigations reveals a history of charges, indictments, and convictions which were basically of a harrassing nature; that most convictions were later overturned confirms this view. Law authorities treated Bundists far more harshly than non-Bundists. One consoling factor in this anti-Bund campaign was the appellate and review system inherent in the American judicial system, which later reversed many legal errors made by authorities who were overly zealous in their prosecution of Bundists.

It was apparent the Dies committee had the preconceived notion that the Bund was a subordinate of the German government. Its chief anti-Bund witness, John Metcalfe, engaged in rambling theatrics, specialized in innuendos and insinuations,

¹²³Sayers and Kahn, The Plot Against the Peace, pp. 170-71. Hynd, Passport to Treason, pp. 58-59, 249-301.

and was a master of half-truths.¹²⁴ His knowledge of Deuschtum agencies, accepted as truth by the committee, was very superficial and inaccurate. For example, Metcalfe stated that the DAI directed and financed the Bund and the VDA was established by the National Socialists. Metcalfe thought the Fichte Bund, a Deuschtum agency located in Hamburg, was an individual with the name Frichte Bard.¹²⁵

Using the flimsiest evidence, the committee announced it had proved the connection between the Bund and the German government. That the opposite was true was not important, for the committee and others used the Bund as a means of alerting the American people to the realities of National Socialism. The committee used scare tactics for this educational endeavor.

Kuhn's assertions before the Dies committee--that he was never a Nazi party member in Germany; that he had not participated in Hitler's abortive Putsch; that he had not been in close contact with the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (VOMI); that he had not attended Nazi meetings on his 1936 visit to Germany; and that his reception by Hitler was not

¹²⁴Hearings, II, 1108, 1117, 1138-39, 1145.

¹²⁵Hearings, I, 25-26, 31, 88.

prearranged--were in contradiction to his earlier statements or Bund newspaper accounts, and Americans, especially the Dies committee, preferred to believe the worst.¹²⁶ His disavowals were disregarded, even though they were true.

¹²⁶Hearings, VI, 3712, 3773-74, 3784, 3844.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Americans have historically taken pride in the culture of their pre-American ancestors. Activities endorsed by particular ethnic groups or nationalities and linked to an old homeland were not deemed anti-American by the majority of citizens, only by certain nativist groups with a decided case of xenophobia. Practically every European nationality represented in America has numerous societies dedicated to some preservation of European culture and tradition. German Day is celebrated each year by thousands of German-Americans on October 6; the German consul, if one is available, is invariably one of the guests of honor and civic leaders send their greetings. Very little attention is given the occasion by anyone but the participants.

During World War I the situation was considerably different, however, as Americans of German ancestry suffered, often physically as well as socially and economically, at the hands of their fellow Americans. After, April, 1917, the Wilson administration found it necessary to teach the American people to hate Germany, Germans, and everything

connected with Germany.¹ This hatred was undeserved and rightfully resented by German-Americans, a number of whom, including Gerhard Wilhelm Kunze, were determined not to act as passively if a similar situation occurred in the future.²

The situation in the 1930's, although reminiscent of 1914-18, differed in several crucial aspects; the suspicion and hatred of a Germany capable of persecuting its Jewish minority had a factual basis. Of course, many German-Americans in the 1930's were convinced the charges of German criminality made by the American press, the Roosevelt administration, and Jews were merely the same World War I-vintage anti-German charges resurrected to convince the American people to assume once again an anti-German posture in order to preserve democracy, civilization, human dignity, or whatever cliché would help serve the purpose. Based on this conviction, thousands of German-Americans joined the Bund in an attempt to assist their homeland and their ethnic

¹Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, Frank Freidel, American History: A Survey (New York, 1966), pp. 698-701.

²House of Representatives, Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States. Hearings. 77th Congress, 1st Session, XIV, (Washington, 1941), 8253- 8259.

comrades to secure what they considered was Germany's correct place among nations.

Had the Bund restricted its pursuit of German culture to teaching the German language and customs, it would not have been persecuted and prosecuted to the same extent it was. But its opposition to Jews and democracy ensured it would be attacked, fairly and unfairly, in every possible manner by advocates of democracy and Jewish rights. The many lawsuits, investigations, and harrassing tactics prevented the Bund from expanding its Deutschtum work. Had the Bund assumed a lower profile and worked as a lobby to deny assistance to the Allies, it possibly could have been of more assistance to the Reich. By representing German-Americans who hoped to avert a war between Germany and the United States, its efforts could have realized some degree of success with the isolationist members of Congress. The tactics of the Bund made it very difficult for any member of Congress to associate or work with the Bundists. Significant political pressure from German-Americans was a possibility only in the Midwest where their voting strength was critical in the election of several United States senators. Conceivably the existence of the Bund discouraged the founding of a German-American group which favored United States neutrality, but condemned the excesses of National Socialism.

The Bundists faced the problem of dual allegiance to the United States and Germany, much as many of today's politically active Jews are faced with allegiance to both the United States and Israel.³ The Dies committee made much of the Bund's \$2,500 contribution to German relief. American Jews have contributed over \$4,000,000,000 to the State of Israel and have influenced American policy to aid Israel.⁴ The difference between the two cases is that Germany was considered by many to be a threat to the United States, while Israel, of course, is not. The Bundists did not work through Congress because of their lack of sophistication and because they realized the futility of turning the tide of anti-German opinion in Congress. They could not match the financial or numerical support of Germany's opponents, whose arguments had greater appeal to most Americans than the Bund's pro-German stance.

Deutschtum in European countries where it represented a vanguard of more developed and sophisticated culture, such as southeastern Europe, was one thing; but Deutschtum in the United States where it enjoyed no similar advantages

³"American Jews and Israel," Time, CV (March 10, 1975), 23.

⁴Ibid., pp. 23-24.

was quite another. German immigrants to the United States had departed of their free will, whereas the Versailles peace treaty had made millions of ethnic-Germans reluctant citizens of other European countries. In the Sudetenland, for example, many ethnic-Germans continued to consider themselves politically as Germans; in the United States few ethnic-Germans concerned themselves with German politics.

Hitler and the National Socialist would have been well advised, and they were so advised by Dieckhoff, Thomsen, and others, to write off the German-Americans in order to maintain better relations with America, just as Hitler disavowed any attempt to bring the South Tyrolian Germans into the Reich as part of the price of good relations with Mussolini's Italy. But the entire matter of Germans abroad taking an active interest in the Reich, and vice versa, was an integral part of National Socialism. To say the Reich would have benefited had there been no AO, VDA, DIA, or VOMI is akin to saying communists should not advocate nationalization of industry. It was the nature of National Socialism to be concerned intimately with all Germans as members of the Volk. To believe the only purpose of contact with Reichsdeutsche or Volksdeutsche abroad was to build a fifth

column or foment trouble in other countries is to fail to understand the ardor which many Germans, party members and non-members alike, exhibited in this matter. The idea of Volk and Volksgemeinschaft predates the modern German state and was not invented by the National Socialists. The realization of a close-knit Volk-community working in harmony was a goal of the socialistic National Socialists and was not merely an idea or means to recruit members to implement aggressive designs. German disavowals of the Bund were forthcoming, but they were not issued soon enough, nor with enough emphasis.

The concept of Deutschtum, not a fifth column connection, allied the Bund with Germany, and at that time it was the Germany of Hitler. Bund members would have actively supported Germany had there been no Hitler or National Socialism. A basic assumption in a free society is the right to convince the public of the correctness of a particular belief, be it political or otherwise, as long as no laws are violated. Therefore, the Bund's endeavors, as long as they did not involve fifth column activities, should have enjoyed the protection of the constitution.

Reich officials refused to recognize the Bund for fear the Bund would reap more harm than good. Even when Bundists

met with German officials in Germany, there was no exchange of confidences, no trust shown by German officials. The Bundists--Kuhn on his several visits, Gissibl in his letters, and Nicolay in his attempts to meet with Hoffmann--all showed an eagerness to serve Deutschtum. Party officials rebuffed them, realizing the Bund was an albatross. Officials of Deutschtum agencies, not charged with maintaining viable relations with foreign countries and convinced of the legitimacy and importance of their work, continued contact with Bundists until the German government reiterated in no uncertain terms its earlier pronouncements to cease Deutschtum work in America. The government finally realized Deutschtum activities in America could serve no useful purpose. Hitler's gathering of the Germans in central Europe obviously could not include German-American Bundists. In fact, it is likely Bundist activity caused suffering on the part of European ethnic-Germans, since American antipathy towards Germany, nurtured by the Bund's presence, assisted the Roosevelt administration in its anti-German policy of aiding the Allies prior to December, 1941.

Joachim von Ribbentrop, during his post-war interrogation, stated the AO and the concept of Deutschtum were described in American propaganda as a gigantic undertaking of the German

government when in fact this was not the case. The result was the creation of diplomatic difficulties for Germany.⁵ At Oberursel, Germany, on February 14, 1946, Dr. Heribert von Stempel, who was assigned under the Reich to the Press and Political Departments of the Foreign Office in Berlin and who served as first secretary in the German Embassy in Washington under Chargé d'Affaires Thomsen, was asked by an American interrogator when the foreign office had shown interest in the Bund. Von Stempel replied only when its "activities were straining good relations between Germany and America."²⁶

The Bund was clumsy and over-zealous in attempting to assist Germany by convincing Americans and their government to cease aiding Germany's political, and eventually military, enemies. Its amateurish endeavors had an opposite effect, for Germany's enemies in the United States convinced the American people and Congress it was a fifth column organization with direct ties to Hitler. Germany's cause in the United States would have been better served had there been no Bund,

⁵ Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supplement A, Office of United States Chief of Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality, (Washington, 1947), pp. 1198-99.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 550-51, 554.

but the desire of those particular German-Americans to assist their ethnic comrades negated the possibility of their remaining uninvolved. Its tactics can be questioned but not its sincere desire to remain a part of the German nation. To Bundists and other advocates of Deutschtum, Germany was not merely a piece of real estate, but a spiritual union of a Volk, bound together in a feeling of community by a common culture, history, and language.

The evidence does not support the charge the Bund was a fifth column organization. Although it never obtained official recognition from Germany, the Bund endeavored for six difficult years to serve the German nation. Its true relationship to Germany has always been clouded by anti-German propaganda. Its undeserved reputation as a subversive group will be hard to erase.

APPENDIX

ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

AA (Auswärtiges Amt)--Foreign Ministry

AO (Auslands Organisation)--Foreign Organization of the
National Socialist German Workers Party

Auslandsdeutsche--Germans living abroad; on occasion this
term referred to citizens or non-citizens

Auslandspressebüro der NSDAP--Foreign Press Office of the
National Socialist German Workers Party

DAI (Deutsches Ausland Institut)--German Foreign Institute

Deutschtum--In its broad sense Deutschtum means German
culture and civilization. In this paper, however, it
refers to the specific movement which sought to preserve
cultural ties between all ethnic-Germans--those living
in Germany and other countries.

Gleichschaltung--political coordination; bringing into line

Kameradschaft USA--United States of America Fellowship

NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei)--
National Socialist German Workers Party

Putsch--uprising, riot

Reichsdeutsche--citizens of Germany

SA (Sturmabteilung)--Storm Detachment

VDA (Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland)--League for
Germandom Abroad

Vereinigte Deutsche Gesellschaften--United German Societies

Volksdeutsche--ethnic Germans

VOMI (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle)--Central Agency for ethnic-Germans

Volksgemeinschaft--unity of the entire nation

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