

For release afternoon papers  
Monday, April 3, 1939

Re: German American Bund

On December 31, 1937, the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice transmitted to the Criminal Division a report of its investigation up to that time of the activities of the German American Bund in the United States, and accompanied the same with approximately 175 exhibits.

On October 12, 1924, one Fritz Gissibl founded the "Teutonia" at Chicago, Illinois. Out of this grew the League of the Friends of the New Germany which was established in Chicago on June 30, 1933. On March 29, 1936, the name of the League of the Friends of New Germany was changed to the German-American Volksbund, now commonly referred to as the Bund. On June 3, 1936, the German-American Bund was formally established. The constitution of the Bund was adopted at the National Convention at Deutschhorst, Croydon, Pennsylvania, in 1936 and was amended in Buffalo, New York, in 1936. The preamble of the constitution is as follows:

"We associate ourselves together to unite all honorable, seriously minded, courageous, and unselfish men and women of the Germanic race,

loyal and prospective citizens of the United States, proud of their German blood, and treasuring German traditions, language and ideals of national and individual liberty, justice, truth, duty and absolute honesty, into one great, free, proud and respect-commanding German American Bund for the mutual benefit of the United States of America and Germany."

The alleged aims and purposes of the organization as set out in the constitution are substantially as follows: Above all to uphold and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States, to respect and honor the flag and institutions thereof, to promote good will and friendship between the United States and Germany, to defend with all lawful means the honor of the mother country (Germany) against defamation, propaganda, etc., to bring a better understanding to American citizens of the German achievements in the sciences and arts, to act as honorable descendants of the Germanic race for the purpose of creating good will toward the German people and their government, advocate the right of every civilized nation to attend to its own business without any interference from outsiders, to promote friendship among nations and peace among mankind, to remain worthy of the Germanic blood, the German motherland, and to cultivate the German language, customs and ideals and to be proud of the same, to remember that only in unity there is strength and if firmly united, the German-Americans shall be of real value and a desirable and respected class of law-abiding citizens of the United States.

A pamphlet entitled "Purpose and Aims" published by the German-American Bund sets out the alleged purpose and aims of the organization. The principles enunciated in this pamphlet are substantially the same as found in the constitution and heretofore set out, except that in the pamphlet there is set out a pledge that the Bund will use its best efforts to expose and depose Communism, Marxism, Internationalism, and un-American boycott rackets within the United States. The boycott racket referred to in this pledge is the Jewish Boycott of German goods. As will later be pointed out, the Bund places the responsibility of Socialism and Communism upon the Jew and directs considerable propaganda against the Jew.

The constitution of the Bund provides for a national organization. Provision is made for a national leader, a national executive committee, which is the administrative body, and the national convention, which is the legislative body. Geographically the Bund is divided into three departments, being Department East, Department Middle-West, and Department West. The leader of each department is ex officio a member of the national headquarters staff. In some cases a department is broken up into districts which comprise a group of local units. Usually, however, the department is comprised of the various locals throughout the territory of that department.

At the present time there appears to be approximately 50 local units of the German-American Bund. Information obtained from various

local leaders indicates a total membership of 6,617. On the other hand information obtained from Fritz Kuhn, National leader, discloses a total membership of 8,299. The membership is distributed geographically as follows:

Eastern Department - 4,529 (estimate of local leader);

(Estimate by Kuhn - 5,324).

Middle-West Department - 1,546 (estimate by local leader);

(Estimate by Kuhn - 1,970).

Western Department - 542 (estimate by local leader);

(Estimate by Kuhn - 1,005).

The Eastern Department consists of approximately 26 locals; the Middle-West Department - 14 locals, and the Western Department - 10 locals. The local units of the Bund are generally comprised of membership of men and women.

There are four newspapers sponsored by the Bund, Der Deutsche Weckruf und Beobachter, 178 East 85th Street, New York City, the Philadelphia Deutsche Weckruf und Beobachter, 3718 North 5th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, both in the Eastern District; the Chicago Deutsche Weckruf und Beobachter, 3243 Northwestern Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, in the Middle West, and the California Deutsche Weckruf und Beobachter, 634 West 15th Street, Los Angeles, California, in the West. These are controlled by three corporations and in turn being owned by the A. V. Publishing Corporation. The A. V. Publishing Corporation is the official organ of the German-American Bund and the German-American Business League

(D. K. V.) and was incorporated in New York on March 27, 1937. The certificate of incorporation is signed by Fritz J. Kuhn and others.

There are several organizations or movements which are associated or affiliated with the Bund in some way. The German-American Settlement League, Inc., a corporation incorporated in the State of New York and the particular objects, according to the certificate of incorporation, for which the corporation was organized are substantially as follows: to cultivate and propagate German culture, customs, language and ideals; to enlighten the members of their civic obligations and principles of American citizenship; to inculcate in its youth a spirit of loyalty, love for country, respect for the flag of the United States and good citizenship. This organization is the owner of the property occupied by Camp Ziegfried at Yaphank, Long Island, and which is used by the Bund.

The German-American Bund auxiliary is a corporation organized under the laws of the State of New Jersey. To be a member of this organization it is also necessary to be a member of the Bund.

Deutscher Konsum Verband, Inc. This organization is commonly referred to as the D. K. V. meaning German-American Business League. Kuhn stated that the membership of this organization is separate from that of the Bund. He also stated that he is president and that the purpose of this organization is to fight the Anti-Nazi boycott. It

appears that in fact the D. K. V. is an organization to promote an Anti-Jewish boycott. Through a distribution of trading stamps the organization seeks to induce the German people to purchase from stores owned by members of the D. K. V.

Ordnungs Dienst. This organization is the uniformed group of the Bund and is commonly referred to as the O. D. Kuhn is also the national commander of the O. D. It is claimed that the purpose of this organization is to fight Bolshevist and Marxist movements, to take part in the parades, to make arrangements for the various meetings, prepare decorations, serve as ushers, carry flags, and protect meetings of the Bund from assaults by Communists. Members of the O. D. wear uniforms which consist of black trousers, gray shirts, black necktie, tan Brown belt, black overseas cap trimmed with white piping, gray coat with black collar, black shoulder straps with white piping and black cuffs with white piping. On the left arm is worn an arm band with an emblem which consists of the rays of the sun terminating in a Swastika, the semi-circle of the sun containing the letters A. V., these being the initials of the German American Volksbund. On the other side of the emblem are located the letters O. D. Members of the O. D. drill, but the report of the Bureau discloses no evidence that firearms of any type are used.

Youth Movement or German-American Youth League (Deutsche-Jugenschaft).

The youth movement was originated in 1934 and it cooperated with Friends of the New Germany which is now defunct. The German-American Youth League, Inc., is not incorporated. The executive headquarters is in New

York and the youth movement is divided into the same districts as the Bund.

The report of the Bureau indicates that the youth movement is being carried on and fostered by the Bund. The alleged purpose of this movement is to bring about the development of camps throughout the United States where the youth can be schooled in the customs, ideals, and traditions of the German race; taught the German language and given various exercises and recreation to encourage physical vigor and discipline. A uniform is used by the youth and considerable drilling without firearms is required of the youth. Everything is done in connection with the youth movement which will stimulate pride and love of Germany and their ancestral background. Anti-Semitic literature is placed in the camps for the children to read and also on numerous occasions inflammatory speeches are made against the Jews blaming them for Communism and its activities.

German American Bund Camp Sites. There are at the present time seven camp sites in use by the Bund which are as follows:

Camp Hindenburg at Grafton, Wisconsin; Camp Deutschhorst, St. Louis, Missouri; Camp Siegfried, Yaphank, Long Island, New York; Camp General Von Steuben, Southbury, Connecticut; Camp Nordland, Andover, New Jersey; Camp Deutschhorst, Croydon, Pennsylvania, and Tanglewood Park, Buffalo, New York. The Bund has a future camp site at Bridgman, Michigan, and also uses a camp named Deutsche Zentrale or another German organization at Cleveland, Ohio. A camp site near South Bend, Indiana, has been

purchased and this camp is to be known as Camp Von Wolfskeel.

Generally speaking, a local is comprised of several activities and has several affiliated or associated movements. In most instances the local units have only a skeleton organization and have not developed the associated activities which are contemplated by the Bund. In those instances where the local units have developed all the features contemplated by the Bund the following activities are carried on - (1) circulation of the official newspaper Deutsche Weckruf und Beobachter; (2) camp activities; (3) youth movement; (4) Ordnung's Dienst (5) women's unit; (6) Deutsche Konsum Verband; (7) Front Kämpfer Bund; (8) Prospective Citizens League.

Camp Activities. The camp activities are carried on mainly in connection with the youth movement. It appears that it is used primarily for occasions of celebration by adults and for summer camps for the youth.

In the summer camps only the German language is permitted so that the boys and girls are forced to learn German. The curriculum also includes discipline, singing of German songs, sports, history of Germany and America and some instruction with reference to the menace of Communism. The camps are conducted on a 24-hour schedule with strict discipline and considerable drilling, hoiling and calisthenics. However, there is no evidence to indicate any use of firearms.

During the months of camp activities various days are set aside for celebrations such as "Day of the German Woman", "German Day Celebration",



etc. On these occasions the celebration is commenced by the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" and the German national anthem. The flag of the United States and Swastika flags are on display. Thereafter there is a great deal of marching and parading by the various groups of the Bund, such as the youth, the Ordnungs Dienst. There is flag raising, speeches, military and calisthenics drills.

Each local of the Bund attempts to foster a youth movement, however, thus far a great number of the locals have not set up activities for a youth movement. It is claimed by the various officers of the Bund that one of the main purposes of the youth movement is to provide opportunity for recreation outside of the large cities.

Two pledges used in connection with the Youth Movement and contained in the Bureau report are as follows:

German Youth Pledge

"I promise the German Youth to be faithful to the German way. To live and to act always in accordance with its rules. To follow the instructions of the Leader with absolute obedience and to help the Society and all comrades also in time of need and distress with all my powers. To this I pledge my word as a boy of German stock."

Boy's Pledge

"I pledge to be loyal to the German Boy Scouts, always to live and act according to their laws, to follow their leaders in strict obedience, and to come to the assistance of the Bund and all my comrades with all my strength and power in time of danger and distress. This I promise with my word of honour as a youth of German race and blood."

The investigation indicates that in most instances members of the O. D. are naturalized American citizens. In fact, it is claimed by members of the Bund that it is necessary to be an American citizen before becoming a member of the O. D. The Bureau report sets out what purports to be an O. D. pledge required by the Buffalo unit, which is as follows:

O. D. Pledge

"Comrade..., I herewith pronounce you a full-fledged member of our O. D. You promise to be a loyal Comrade, faithfully to follow the orders of your leaders, always to fulfill your obligations as a citizen of this country, and never to bring shame and dishonour upon your German race in this or in the old Country. With this handshake you pledge your honour as a man always to stand up for the Bund and your Loyalty we shall return with ours.

Heil America      Heil Germany"

In many of the locals there is no unit known as the D. K. V. (German-American Business League). Where such an organization does exist, it appears that its main purpose is to foster a boycott of Jewish goods by encouraging patronage of Gentile stores and especially members of the D. K. V.

Each local endeavors to maintain a woman's unit. This unit engages in the usual work of women's auxiliaries and, in addition to charity work among the Bund members, arranges and attends to cooking, entertainment, etc., at the various meetings of the Bund and its affiliates.

The Front Kampfer Bund is an organization of World War veterans. In some instances the members of this group do not appear to be members

of the Bund. In most of the locals there is no unit of this organization and the Bureau report indicates practically no activity.

The Prospective Citizens League is an auxiliary of the Bund, and its purpose appears to be that of encouraging and assisting alien Germans in becoming naturalized citizens. Members of this League attend social functions of the local and are given instructions in citizenship, American History, etc., for the purpose of assisting them in obtaining citizenship papers.

Fritz Kuhn is the Bundsfuehrer, or national chairman of the German-American Volksbund. He is Landes Fuehrer of the Ordnungsdienst. He is President of both the A. V. Publishing Corporation and the Deutsche Konsum Verband. Kuhn was born in Munich, Germany, in 1896. He served in the Bavarian Life Guard Regiment and was in the front lines during the World War from 1914 to 1918, being lieutenant in the machine gun detachment of the Alp Corps and saw service on the French, Italian, Serbian, and Roumanian fronts, being wounded three times. In 1919 he served in the Epp Free Corps fighting against the Soviet Republic. He joined the NSDAP, commonly known as the Nazi Party, in 1921 and on November 9, 1923, participated in the famous Hitler Putsch at Munich. In 1924 he migrated to Mexico and then into the United States. His last foreign residence before coming to the United States in 1928 was Mexico City. Elsa Kuhn, wife of Fritz Kuhn, was born in Germany and she and Fritz Kuhn were married at Munich in March 1923. She migrated to the United States in December 1928. The

Kuhns have two children, both of whom were born in Mexico. Kuhn filed his declaration of intention in the United States Court at Detroit on December 6, 1928, and petitioned for citizenship in the same court on June 28, 1934. He was granted citizenship on December 3, 1934. Kuhn was leader of the Detroit Local and then became leader of the Department Middle-West and subsequently was made national head of the Bund. Kuhn maintained his residence in Detroit from 1928 until 1934, and during part of that period was employed by the Ford Laboratory.

On one occasion when Fritz Kuhn was interviewed by a Government agent, Kuhn stated that it was incorrect to refer to the German-American Bund as Nazi, since the Nazis were members of the National Socialist Party of Germany, and that his organization was not a part of that group. Kuhn did state that members of the Bund were proud to be called Nazis and that Naziism and National Socialism, such as exist in Germany today, hold the only hope for the future of the world.

It is claimed by the various leaders of the Bund throughout the United States that before a person can be a member of the Bund he must be a citizen of the United States. While it does appear from the Bureau's report that the leaders of the Bund throughout the country are naturalized citizens, it also appears that there are members of the Bund who are not naturalized citizens of the United States. In the majority of cases the leaders of the Bund have come to the United States from Germany since the World War and have obtained their citizenship during the last few years.

A considerable number of these leaders lived in Germany after the World War and were exposed to the various social and political movements which took place in Germany up to the advent of Hitler.

Various leaders of the Bund claim that no oath is required of members of the Bund. The application for membership which the applicant must sign provides as follows:

"I hereby apply for admission to membership in the German-American Bund, the purposes and aims of which are known to me and I obligate myself to support them to the best of my ability. I recognize the leading principle in accordance to which the Bund is being directed. I am of Aryan origin, free from Jewish or colored blood."

On all occasions both the flag of the United States and the Swastika are displayed, and the Nazi salute with arms raised in Hitler style is used. It is claimed by the leaders that the Nazi salute is nothing more than a friendly greeting which was in use in Germany many years ago. At some of the camps and meeting places of the Bund, pictures of Hitler are displayed.

Most of the activities of the Bund to date have been in the Eastern part of the United States. It is in this part of the country where most of the camps have been established and the celebrations have taken place. There has been some activity in the Middle-West and on the Pacific Coast, but at the present time these particular sections show a relatively low membership and little activity as compared to the East. The various locals of the Bund which are active generally meet from two to four times a month. At these meetings there is speaking, social activities, drilling, flag waving, and organization work. It is claimed that ordinarily these meetings are open to the public. In vicinities where there are no camps, schools

have been established for the youth movement which are held generally on a Saturday and at which time the German language, German history, and German traditions are taught. There is also dancing, calisthenics, and military drills. It is claimed that American history is also taught. In the vicinities where camps are located most of the activity of the Bund centers in and about the camp during the summer months. A summer camp or school is maintained for boys and girls. A summer camp is run on a regular schedule with strict discipline and includes flag raising in the morning and flag lowering at night, calisthenics, military drills, dancing and all forms of athletics. The Nazi salute is used and the youth have a regulation uniform. German is spoken and songs are sung in German for the purpose of teaching the language. Periods are set aside for instruction in German history and considerable effort is devoted to developing a spirit of pride in German traditions, customs and background. Instruction is also given in some of the camps as to the evils of Communism and Marxism. There is also considerable anti-Semitic propaganda. A flag of the United States and a Swastika are displayed at the summer camps and both are used in the flag raising and lowering exercises.

The adults of the Bund use the camp for recreation during week-ends and on special occasions set aside for celebrations. At these celebrations all groups of the Bund, including the youth and O. D.s, take part in the activities. There is considerable marching, Nazi saluting, heiling, flag waving, drilling of the uniformed organizations, speeches, and athletics. There is usually a drum and fife corps or a band at these celebrations. Generally there are speeches by the leaders which are interrupted by Nazi

salutes and heils by the various uniformed organizations and by the spectators. The speeches generally have to do with Communism, the Jewish boycott of German goods, Germany and her place in world affairs and many other topics having to do with fostering Germanism and German ideals. It appears that on all occasions a definite effort is made by the speakers and the leaders to instill pride into Germans living in America and especially the youth of their German background and love for Germany.

From the material presented by the report of the Bureau of Investigation, it appears that one of the purposes of the Bund and its leaders is to perpetuate Germanism abroad. In connection with the opening of Camp Nordland in July, 1937, a booklet was used by the German-American Bund Auxiliary. Excerpts from this booklet revealed the purpose of the dedication of Camp Nordland.

"\* \* \*with the festive act of today we are acting to give over officially this magnificent little piece of God's earth to its roal destination: service to the German racial ideal \* \* \*."

"\* \* \* the mission which our camp has to fulfil is a holy one just as every service in the interest of our German racial ideal is a holy and noble one. We the living generation who have called into life this enterprise, concentrate this work to the service of the German racial ideal in America.\* \* \*"

"\* \* \* our camp is designed principally to be a place which breathes of the spirit of the New Germany.\* \* \*"

"\* \* \* conscious of this fact. the 'camp' is consecrated to our youth. It is there that our boys and girls shall be educated; it is there where the spirit of comraderie and the feeling of belonging to one community is to be

innoculated into them; it is there where they shall learn 'you for me, I for you'; it is there where they shall be strengthened and confirmed in national socialism so that they will be conscious of the role which has been assigned to them as the future carriers of German racial ideals in America. \* \* \*

"Hereby we give you over 'Camp Nordland' to your holy mission. We consecrate you as a little piece of German soil in America, as a symbol of our motto: 'obligated to America, tied to Germany'.

Another excerpt found in the booklet under the heading

"DER ORNUNGS DIENST"  
(The Order Service)

is as follows:

"We want to be a community for service in honor for our German racial comrades--sworn to honor and faith, obedience and comradeship \* \* \*".

"We also want to be helpers and advisers who are ready at all times to do any work, to provide for order and to make propaganda for the ideals of our great German racial community."