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Brief of
Interrogation of ERNST WILHELM BOHLE

by

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BOHLE was interrogated to clear up certain gaps in previous testimony taken here and at USFET. He describes himself as a loyal Nazi and states that the life of the Auslands Organisation was preserved in 1933 as a result of his contact with Hess in April of that year, at which time Hess proposed to dissolve the existing organization and was persuaded by BOHLE to retain it. The argument used was that it would be better to have a disciplined party organization in each country than unorganized efforts on the part of enthusiastic Germans which might create trouble. BOHLE was made chief of the A.O. in May 1933. He states that Hess never tried to influence his actions and never suggested what should be done other than to insist that BOHLE keep his Reichsdeutsche out of trouble with foreign governments. BOHLE appears to have been given a free hand in handling the A.O. so far as Hess was concerned.

Subsequently, BOHLE persuaded Hess that the A.O. should have a representative in the Foreign Office and Hess suggested that BOHLE talk with Neurath. As a result Neurath agreed to appoint BOHLE as State Secretary for A.O. in the Foreign Office. Neurath permitted BOHLE to operate his own organization which BOHLE claimed was always a separate organization and never part of the Foreign Office. Neurath never tried to give directions to BOHLE as to policy other than to insist that BOHLE's A.O. not cause trouble in countries where it was operating. BOHLE was receiving reports regularly in regard to the conduct of the Diplomatic Corps in all countries where the A.O. was located and from time to time made recommendations to Neurath directly regarding the replacement of persons who did not appear to have the proper attitude toward the Party. Through his Party connections it appears that BOHLE exercised a considerable influence on the appointments in the Consular Service of the Foreign Office, during Von Neurath's tenure of office.

When Ribbentrop took office there appears to have been a year or more in which little attention was paid to the A.O., and thereafter a series of acrimonious discussions between BOHLE and Ribbentrop in which Ribbentrop insisted that he should control the A.O., and that decisions with regard to its activities must be approved by him. These claims BOHLE rejected and bitter hostility between Ribbentrop and himself resulted; while he retained his position in the Foreign Office he was not taken into its councils thereafter.

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BOHLE states that he was regularly sending information on the activities and purposes of the Nazi Party in Germany to Reichsdeutsche in foreign countries, but admits that the handling of the Jewish problem, the conflict with the Church and the necessity for a policy of territorial expansion urged by Party leaders were eliminated from such communications. He admits that his policy of keeping Germans abroad informed as to Nazi policy at home was to publicize those aspects of the policy which would make Germans in foreign countries strong supporters of the National Socialist program while agreeing that he was not giving a complete picture of all aspects of that program.

In regard to the Intelligence activities of his organization, BOHLE states he received regular reports from the Landesgruppenleiter by whatever means was available, sometimes by courier and often by use of the diplomatic pouch. He strongly denies that he attempted in any way to organize an Intelligence service in foreign countries but says that this was left entirely to the Landesgruppenleiter. He admits, however, that such information could not have been gathered without some form of organizational activity and that on occasion he informed the Landesgruppenleiter that their reports were not sufficiently adequate because a check upon the information furnished through other sources indicated that their reports were inaccurate. He states that from time to time requests were made of the A.O. by the S.D. for information through Standartenfuhrer Schnaus, liaison of the A.O. with the S.D. and Abwehr. He also states that reports by Landesgruppenleiter were turned over to the S.D. when the material in them appeared pertinent for the purposes of those organizations.