

S E C R E T

Ref No SAIC/24
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SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER: Init: PK
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US ARMY: Date: 26 May 1945

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AMANN'S CONTROL OF GERMAN PRESS

I. SOURCE

MAX AMANN, Director of REICHSPRESSEKAMMER (State Press Commission).

Rating: C-3 Date of Information: May 45 Interrogator: W.K.

AMANN made few appearances in the public life of the party, but through brutal seizure or suppression of German publications, he built up an enormous Nazi newspaper concern. Through the books and newspapers he published, he had a strong influence on the minds of the German people. AMANN himself, despite mediocre business ability, became a multi-millionaire.

In appearance AMANN is homely and has only one arm; the other he lost in a hunting accident. He is coarse by nature and speaks in a Bavarian dialect.

His relationship to the party stems from the fact that as Feldwebel (Sgt) he was HITLER's immediate superior in World War I.

II. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO HITLER

During World War I when HITLER joined the staff of the 16th Bavarian Reserve Inf Regt as messenger, AMANN was regimental Sgt Major. AMANN describes HITLER as having been a homely, pale soldier, whose civilian occupation was listed as "Kunstmaler" (artist painter). HITLER was courageous and stood up well under strain; even then he showed a passion for war. He was not promoted because there was no opening.

After the war AMANN was a clerk-accountant and made good money. HITLER met him on the street and asked him to join his party and organize the press. AMANN joined only after his wife encouraged him.

AMANN describes HITLER as a sexually normal man. HITLER's only woman friend, with whom he had occasional intimate relations, was EVA BRAUN, a former employee of the photographer HOFFMAN. She had a little house in MUNICH/BOGENHAUSEN. During the last months she was constantly around HITLER.

Otherwise AMANN seldom met HITLER. HITLER had very little understanding of economic matters; so AMANN had less occasion than other party leaders to visit HITLER in person. However, he alone had the right to address HITLER with "Good morning, Herr HITLER". Since the beginning of 1943, according to a decree by BORMANN, no party leader could come near HITLER without BORMANN's permission. AMANN met HITLER for the last time on 24 Feb when HITLER spoke to the leaders in the REICHSKANZLEI. Even then HITLER appeared physically failing, and he was very much under the influence of BORMANN.

III. OTHER POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

a) BORMANN, chief of the REICHKANZLEI. After HESS' flight, BORMANN, an uneducated, brutal individual, gained more and more influence over HITLER. Together with HIMMLER he maintained a spy system against everybody, including party leaders. During the last months he had made HITLER a tool for himself and had the nickname, "HITLER'S RASPUTIN". BORMANN's friend, GAULEITER GIESSLER, of MUNICH, was also unscrupulous. The often met and conspired together.

b) HIMMLER. AMANN's neighbor on the TEGERNSEE, HIMMLER seems to be of a homely nature, and his outward appearance belies his tyrannical rule. AMANN regards HIMMLER as a kind of Robespierre, or as a witch-burning Jesuit. HIMMLER considered it his duty to eliminate all enemies of the

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Nazi ideology, and he did so calmly and impersonally, without hate and without sympathy. During the last months HIMMLER's importance went to his head and he played the great commander with a special train and great surroundings. In the end, BORMANN pushed even HIMMLER aside.

c) GOERING. GOERING was no National Socialist, but always the big gentleman. He never had contact with little party people like AMANN. He alone led HITLER into the war, by giving him wrong impressions of the power of the LUFTWAFFE, on which HITLER based his great hopes. (As AMANN was saying this, GOERING, by coincidence, was being led past as a prisoner. AMANN jumped up excitedly, pointed out the window at GOERING, and said, "This fat slob here, you should hang him. He is responsible for the war and the death of my son. It is him, and not we small people.")

AMANN has no proof of GOERING's war responsibility. He states merely that "the people say it".

d) GOEBBELS. AMANN considers GOEBBELS his enemy because he always wanted to interfere in the management of the press, which AMANN says was solely his responsibility. AMANN believes BORMANN, HIMMLER, and GOEBBELS were the three bad spirits of HITLER.

IV. THE EHER PUBLISHING CO.

a) Establishment.

AMANN, upon HITLER's wish, took over a small MUNICH publishing house for the party in 1920. This concern was owned by a widow named EHER. It is characteristic that AMANN allowed the moneyless widow a monthly rental of only 50 RM until her death.

The paper, at that time the "VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER", was not solvent, and was kept going only through the sale of books. HITLER never received a fee from the concern for his articles. For his book, "MEIN KAMPF", which the EHER firm published, HITLER asked only 10 per cent of the sales price. A large sum was still owed to HITLER by the publishing firm, was never claimed.

b) Organization.

AMANN admits that he could not have succeeded in the organization of such a big concern without help of men experienced in the publishing field. Especially helpful were Dr WINCKLER and Dr RIENHARDT, both of BERLIN. After RIENHARDT went to HIMMLER, Wilhelm BAUER was AMANN's right hand man.

The system controlled about 700 daily newspapers. The "VOELKISCHER BEOBACHTER" with its three editions (BERLIN, MUNICH, VIENNA) had a total circulation of 1,500,000. AMANN admits that the small number of subscriptions was a result of poor contents. The "STUERMER", STREICHER's organ, was independent; AMANN did not want it in his system because it was too filthy. On the other hand, HIMMLER's paper, "DAS SCHWARZE KORPS", was part of the chain, but was directed only by the editor, D'ALQUEEN.

For organization of the system see appendix.

AMANN himself was in charge of the main office in MUNICH (bombed out several months ago). Individual districts of the party received one-third of the income of the district publishing houses. The GAULEITERS appointed district editors, but AMANN held the final jurisdiction.

To implications that AMANN had ruthlessly destroyed other publications, AMANN replied that he had compensated the owners. The ULLSTEIN Publishers got 12 million RM, HUGENBERG got 65 million; and likewise SCHERL Publishing Co., KNORR & HIRTH Publishing Co. in MUNICH, and the Stock Exchange paper were paid. AMANN admits that some of these "made trouble", but he sees no injustice in his acquisition of these concerns.

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The suppression of the "FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG" was accomplished by HITLER himself.

When asked which foreign newspapers were subsidized, AMANN replied he did not know. That information is known to either the press department of the Foreign Office or to Dr WINCKLER.

c) Financial Statement.

AMANN does not know the exact balances of the concern. These statements could be made by his financial director BICKEL in MUNICH; Dr RICHTER, also of the EHER concern; or Dr RIENHARDT.

At any rate, the concern was one of the greatest undertakings in Germany, and equaled IG FARBEN in sales and profits. Net yearly income averaged 100 millions. Net profits of about 500 millions have been deposited in the REICHSBANK. Asked why he did not use profits to acquire paper factories, forests, etc., AMANN replies, "I don't want to let myself in for such things."

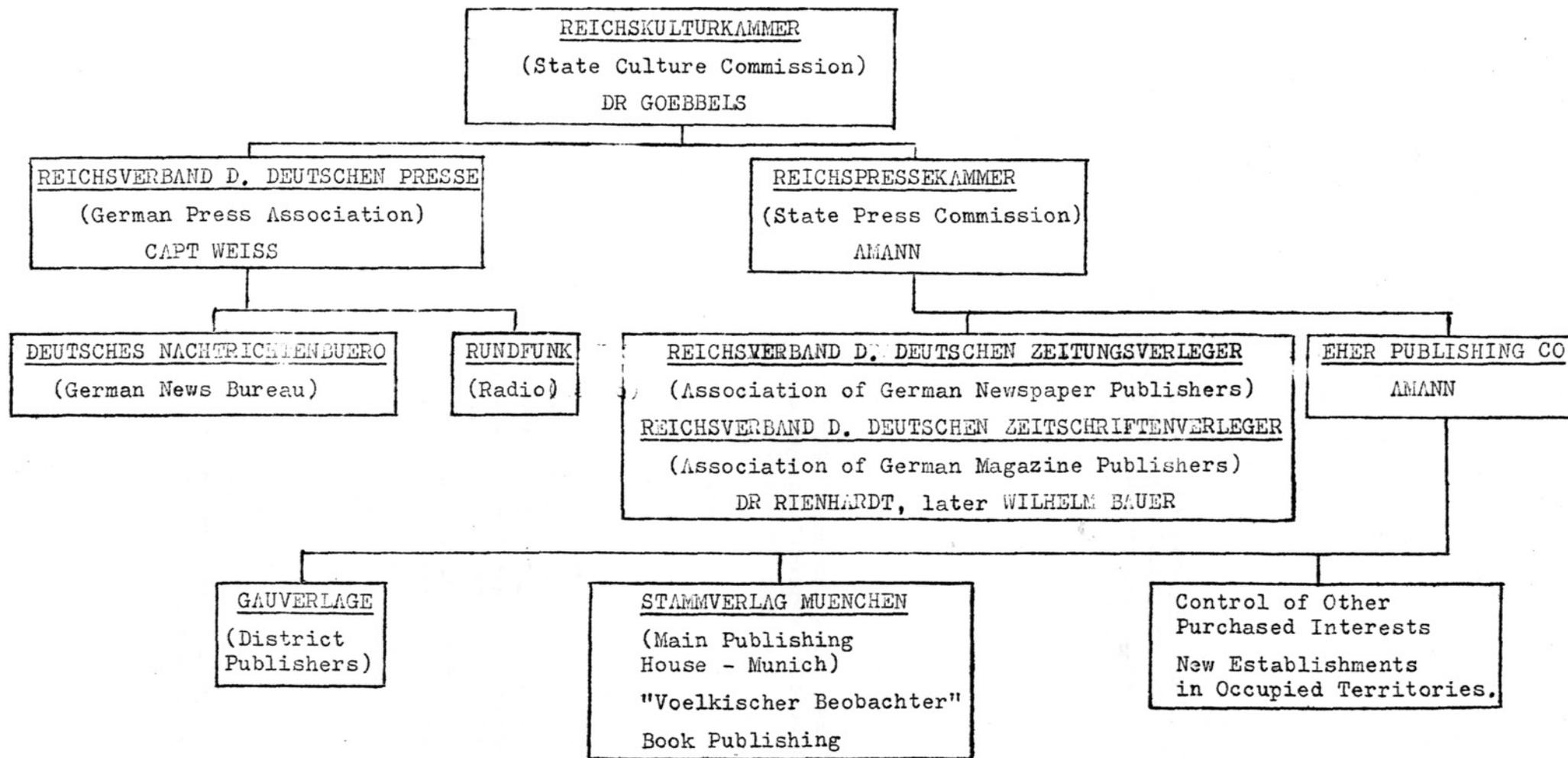
AMANN's personal economic status is according to his own statements as follows: As head of the EHER concern he received a yearly income of 120,000 RM, and 5 per cent of the net profit. He does not know the exact sum of his capital; it is, however, several millions. Of real estate he possesses the following: one apartment house in MUNICH/BOGENHAUSEN, WASSERBURGERSTRASSE 6, and one villa in ST QUIRIN on the TEGERNSEE. Upon HITLER's request he furnished it luxuriously for display purposes. In addition he had large hunting grounds. He did not invest any money for himself or his concern in foreign lands.

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SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER

Paul Kubala
PAUL KUBALA,
Maj, MI,
Commanding.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GERMAN PRESS



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APPENDIX