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OFFICE OF US CHIEF OF COUNSEL  
APO 403, US ARMY  
INTERROGATION DIVISION

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1 November, 1945.

Brief of  
Interrogation of Karl STROELIN  
by  
Lt (jg) John B. Martin.  
31 October 1945 (AM & PM)

STROELIN was questioned with regard to his knowledge of the operations of the Deutsches Ausland Institute. He states that he had been made an Honorary President of the Organization in 1933 and that its Managing Director was Dr. Ruettiger. At this same time, STROELIN became Mayor of Stuttgart and claims that his primary interest in the DAI was its possible use in advertising Stuttgart as the Home of Germans Abroad. He claims that a certain amount of friction existed between himself and his managing director because he attempted to use the Institute to publicize the city and the personnel of the organization felt that he did not understand its more far-reaching purposes.

He says that the functions of the DAI were purely cultural, involving the gathering of all available information with regard to the activities of Germans abroad and with regard to the living and working conditions in such countries for the use of Germans who might be going abroad. He states that the Institute was careful to avoid mixing in any matters of a political nature because this was the function of other organizations, such as the AO, and the DAI would have had trouble if it had gotten out of its purely cultural field.

The Institute maintained large foreign newspaper files, a card index of Germans and German organizations abroad, a lending library, a map department, a genealogical department, a film lending library, a book exchange, a book-forwarding service, and a magazine editorial service. In addition, STROELIN also encouraged the maintenance of an Umwelt Museum, in order to increase the understanding of Germans of the countries to which they were going or in which they were living, upon the theory that better understanding by Germans of such countries would lead to better understanding of Germans by the natives of those countries in which they were living.

Questioned in regard to the magazine publicized by the DAI, STROELIN states that, insofar as he knows, it dealt with no political subjects but primarily with matters of German activities abroad, based upon information obtained from the newspaper files of the organization and upon such occasional letters as they might have received from members.

STROELIN shows a strange lack of knowledge of details of the organization which he might well be expected to know. He is unable to estimate the number of the members of the organization nor does he know the procedure by which they became members. He says, in this connection,

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that, at the time he was given his position in the DAI, its membership was already in existence and he had nothing to do with the problem of recruiting. He denies that there was any organized system of reporting or that any effort was made to obtain material for governmental purposes. He recalls one incident after the war with Russia had begun, when he was advised that the Institute had been requested to prepare a map of the Caucasus for the government. He states that he only remembered this fact because he happened to request a map of the Caucasus at that time from the DAI and then learned of the governmental request. He does not recall any other incidents where such requests were made but says that they would not have been brought to his attention since requests for material were made directly to the managing director of the Institute. He states that the Institute was operated at first under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior and that a Dr. Volkert dealt with matters affecting the DAI. He recalls having made certain reports to Volkert but does not recall the details of such reports, which were made irregularly and not in writing. Later the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, of which Werner Lorenz was chief, had some supervisory authority over the DAI.

STROELIN requested permission to make a statement regarding matters raised in the morning interrogation with regard to the furnishing of maps to the government for military purposes. He says that the DAI was not in a position to furnish any detailed maps, but could only indicate on large-scale maps the location of known German groups. On the particular map of which he received a copy, he recalls that names of places were indicated in Russian and German. In regard to his failure to recall the number of members in the DAI, he states that the records of the DAI included organizations as well as names of individuals, so that a numerical account of the total would not have been of any meaning. In regard to the problem of intelligence gathering, he indicated that so far as he is aware, no instructions were ever given to Germans going abroad as to what they should report or how they should report it.

On the question of finance, he indicated that all these matters were handled by his Finance Officer, Eisenmann, and states that he has no knowledge of details. Funds for the operation of the DAI came from the Ministry of the Interior, the Foreign Ministry, the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, the city of Stuttgart, and from membership fees. He estimates that the actual budget was something between 300,000 and 1 million RM.

With regard to the AO (Bohle) he states that he was interested in knowing the extent and method of their operation, but says they were very secretive about what they were doing and that he was unable to get any satisfactory information from Bohle. He stresses, however, that the DAI had members but no organization as such in foreign countries of the form adopted by the AO, which involved the establishment in each country of Landesgruppenleiter, who were responsible for all operations in that country. He further states that the DAI had no close relations with the Volksbund fuer das Deutschtum in Ausland or with the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, which finally absorbed the VDA.

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If the functions of the DAI were as indicated by Stroelin, it would not appear that the Institute played any material part either in the work of foreign propaganda or in intelligence gathering. It appears that STROELIN is telling the truth so far as he knows it, and that, in spite of his position as Honorary President, he was not informed on operating details of the DAI. This conclusion is in accordance with that of other interrogators who worked with him at Oberursel. His transfer to the Witness Wing of the Nurnberg Jail is recommended.