

Affidavit of Hans Fritzsche

Nürnberg, 13 November 1945

1. My name is Hans Fritzsche. I was born on April 21, 1900 at Bochum, Westphalia. I attended the classical high school (Humanistisches Gymnasium) in Halle/Saale, Breslau and Leipzig. Afterwards, I studied history, philosophy and economics.
2. I started my practical work in 1923 as editor of the Prussian Yearbooks (Economic-Political Review)(Preussische Jahrbuecher)(Wirtschaftspolitische Rundschau). From 1924 until 1932 I was editor with the Telegraph-Union (Telegraphen-Union).
3. Around March 1933, after the seizure of power, Dr. Josef Goebbels called me in. I was acquainted with him since 1928. Apparently he had taken a liking to me, besides the fact that in my press activity I had always treated the national socialists friendly until 1931. During that conversation Goebbels suggested that I join his ministry, the Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichministerium fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda) as head of the "Wireless News Service" ("Drahtlesen Dienstes")(Rundfunknachrichtendienst)(Radio News Service). In May 1935 he suggested to me, as the specialist on news technique (nachrichtentechnischen Spezialisten), the establishment and direction of a section "News" ("Nachrichtenwesen") within the press division of his Ministry, in order to organize fully and to modernize the German news agencies, beginning at first with the Telegraf-Union and the Bureau Wolff (Wolffschen Bueros), and thereafter their fusion into the German News Agency (Deutsches Nachrichtenbuero, or D.N.B.) I accepted this appointment.
4. I next joined the Press Division of the Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda on 1 May 1935 as head of the wireless service of the Reich Radio Corporation (Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft m.b.H.) with my entire staff.

At that time I did not become Chief of the Radio Division in the Ministry and I never was editor-in-chief of the news agency (Nachrichtenagentur) D.N.B. Heads of the press division and my superiors were successively "Geheimrat" Heide, Ministerial Counsellor (Ministerialrat) Jahnke and Ministerial Director Alfred Ingemar Berndt. The deputies of these press division heads between 1933 and 1938 according to my knowledge have been successively the Ministerial counsellors, Stephan and Brauweiler. Around summer 1938, I was deputy head to Berndt, at that time head of the division, when I succeeded in December 1938.

Dr. Albrecht, a former head (Direktor) of W.T.B. (Wolffs Telegraf-Büro), was editor-in-chief, respectively head of the German News Agency (Deutsches Nachrichten Büro, or D.N.B.), from its establishment until 1945, according to my own knowledge. The former head of the Telegraf-Union, Mejer, who at first became also general manager (General-Direktor) of D.N.B. retired later on. The heads of the radio division of the Ministry of Propaganda, according to my own knowledge, were ministerial counsellors (Ministerialrat) Dressler-Andress, Hadamowski, Alfred Ingemar Berndt, Kriegler, Wolfgang Diewerge, and from the end of 1942, I.

5. In execution of the assignment given to me by Dr. Goebbels, I took for my field the entire news system for the German press and the radio in accordance with the directions given by the Propaganda Ministry, at first with the exception of D.N.B. As head of the news section, I extended the apparatus of Transocean G.m.b.H. and constructed several modern shortwave transmitters for it. I intensified the activity of the agency Europa Press and put on a new basis the issuing of economic news within the ^{Fast-Service Company} ~~Feld~~dienst G.m.b.H). Around 1937 I coordinated the work of these offices within the inland, European and overseas foreign countries with each other and in relationship to D.N.B.. With this office I conflicted the first time by establishing a wireless television radio (Drahtloser Fernschreibfunk). The task of the section until that period was therefore a purely journalistic-organisational one; actual political directives were

only given by the head of the press division or by his delegate to the news agencies.

6. Around 23 December 1938 I was officially appointed head of the German/^(or domestic) press division. This division, the foreign press division and the periodicals press division formed together the Press Division of the Reich Cabinet (Presseabteilung der Reichsregierung) with the Reich Press Chief (Reichspressechef), Dr. Dietrich, as head. In my new capacity, I held daily press conferences in the Ministry for the representatives of all German newspapers. At this opportunity I gave to the press representatives all instructions, which the Reich Press Chief, Dr. Dietrich, communicated to me almost daily in a already fixed manuscript over the phone from headquarters through the so-called "Daily parole of the Reich Press Chief (Tagesparole des Reichspressechefs). Before the wording was fixed I transmitted to him the actual press suggestions from Dr. Goebbels and other Ministries, especially those of the Foreign Office. Over these Dr. Dietrich wanted to make decision personally or to have them made by his deputies in headquarters, Suendermann and Lorenz. In the beginning of 1939 I still had an opportunity to comment freely on these daily paroles in the press conference, while after the middle of 1939^I had to stick to the directions given by Dr. Dietrich.

Attached and subordinate to my division was an undergroup. This group, by collection of newspaper clippings, extracts, summaries of the contents of domestic and foreign newspapers and periodicals, formed one of the basis for the work of the division. The material, thus obtained, was put regularly at the disposal of the top Reich Authorities (hoechsten Reichsbehoerden) and also in individual cases, when requested.

7. In another working group all news information, inquiries, suggestions, and responses were centralized in a day and night service established for that purpose. Here almost certainly was the central nerve of the division.

Moreover, I established within the German Press Division a section called "Speed-Service" (Schnelldienst). This "Speed Service", under the direction of Superior Government Counsel (Oberregierungsrat) Koerber, at the start had the task of checking the correctness of news from foreign countries with the competent agency, for example the atrocity stories. Later on this section also elaborated on collecting materials which were put at the disposal of the entire German press; for instance dates from the British colonial policy, from political statements of the British Premier in former times, description of social distress in hostile countries, etc. Almost all German newspapers used such material as a basis for their polemics. Hereby was achieved a great unification within the fighting front of the German press.

8. In this position within 4 years I was promoted three times. To my knowledge: (a) From Government Counsel to Ministerial Counsel, on 28 January 1939, (b) from Ministerial Counsel to Ministerialdirigent, on 9 October 1940, (c) from Ministerialdirigent to Ministerial Director on 16 October 1942.

9. While head of the German press division, according to my knowledge, I never took over the direction of the daily 11 o'clock conference in absence of Dr. Goebbels or Under-Secretary (Staatssekretär) Dr. Naumann. Dr. Goebbels held this conference with his closest collaborators.

I took this over several times, however, as head of the Radio Division and this only after 1943. On the average this was the case once weekly.

In this case Goebbels gave his directions by way of transmitting his manuscript over the phone. All in all, maybe on 5 days, these directions did not come in. In these cases I myself initiated the necessary news.

10. Around 3 November 1942 I was relieved from my office as head of the German Press Division since I had not filled this position after March 1942, when I went into the armed forces. In November 1942 a position, newly established by Dr. Goebbels, was conferred on me -

Plenipotentiary for the Political Organization of the Greater German Radio (Beauftragter fuer die politische Gestaltung des Grossdeutschen Rundfunks). At the same time I was also given the direction of the "Radio Division" (Rundfunk Abteilung) in his ministry. I held both offices until the German military collapse.

11. Around the end of 1942, a growing importance was attributed to the German radio in securing support of the direction of the war by the broad masses. The radio appeared as the only instrument to fill the space behind the then far extended German fronts. Therefore a relatively independent position was granted to the radio within the Reich Ministry for People's Enlightenment and Propaganda. While my predecessors as heads of the "Radio Division" had to take into consideration, for example, the demands of the Propaganda, Press, Foreign and Music Divisions, I finally managed to drop such consideration. An exception was consideration for the press. After January 1943 I forced the press, by competition, to somewhat more realistic news information. However, in view of his superior position with the Fuehrer, the Reich Press Chief, Dr. Dietrich, kept a priority (Primat) over the Radio. Finally in February 1945, Dr. Goebbels overthrew Dr. Dietrich. To an ever growing extent in the field of radio, I became the sole authority within the Ministry. One after the other I eliminated those side-governments (Nebenregierungen) which had disturbed my predecessors. As Plenipotentiary for the Political Organization of the Greater German Radio, I had authority only over the political domestic sendings. About six months later, in the spring of 1943, I also took over control of the foreign sendings which were under the direction of Dr. Winkelkemper. About another 6 months later I also took over control from the hands of Ministerialdirektor Hinkel, the musical part of the radio program. In spring 1945 I also had the intention of taking under my control those sendings in Eastern languages, which still were under foreign direction. However, this intention was not realized. In any case in my performance of the office as head of the radio in the field of radio publication, I was dependent only in my decisions and measures upon the following: the general political directions; the personal supervision of Dr. Goebbels, sometime going into the details; the decisions of the radio-political division of the Foreign Office which claimed leadership in the field of transmission in foreign languages.

12. As far as my activity as head of the radio division is concerned, I attended to the following working fields: (1) Planning and organization of the entire German Radio and Television system; (2) the issuance of corresponding decrees to the subordinate sections, the elaboration and submission of suggestions for the other agencies of the Reich Cabinet. In order to execute these tasks the division was essentially organized as follows: (A) Radio-Command (Rundfunkkommandostelle), a section operating day and night, which received and transmitted orders to the various sections of radio, and which acted on own its decisions in case of sending or program troubles, etc. (B) The section Reconnaissance Service, organized according to working fields or countries of origin, which gave extracts from the gigantic quantities of material of the Radio-Listening-Service (Rundfunkabhoerdienst) with the name Seehaus. (C) Section Foreign Radio (Rundfunk Ausland), a small administrative unit with scimpy tasks, because the practical work was done by myself in daily conferences with the Head of the Foreign Division of the Reich Radio Corporation (Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft).

During my time in office a special section for the organization of radio, in case of war, did not exist. Should it have existed before my time, in my opinion it could not have achieved anything. When I took over the radio division, the most important transmitters had to limit their transmissions to a few hours daily because of the lack of tubes. Only a few transportable senders had been developed in prewar times. During the war a few transportable senders, improved and smaller, were developed

for the front. (D) Section Radio-Economy. This was in charge of construction and supply of radio receiving instruments. My office practically represented the High Command of the German radio.

13. To my knowledge all of my predecessors, as head of the radio division, were also simultaneously head of the Central Radio Office of the Reich Propaganda Directorate of the NSDAP (Reichsamtsteiter Rundfunk der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP). Personally I never received this Party job, because I was always considered politically unreliable. I had acquired my reputation and influence as an expert. The Reichsamtsteiter of Radio was S.A. Group Leader Schaeffer. I was unable to have my way as against him. Even more difficult for me was the fact that Dr. Goebbels gave ample power to Reich Main Office Leader (Reichshauptamtsteiter) Cerff, the officer in charge of the culture in the NSDAP headquarters. This was allowed out of concern of the National Socialist ideology in radio programs. Cerff caused me the biggest difficulties until I ousted him after a scandal caused by him in the middle of all my collaborators. Dr. Goebbels sent him to Italy in November 1944 and did not name a successor. I then felt freer as to the organization of radio programs. Subsequently I reintroduced the Church service on the radio which had been prohibited by my predecessors. This was done in a round-about way, by giving radio time for Catholic and Protestant services in churches near the front. My working field can be summarized as follows:

To spread as far as possible the conception of my government as to the cause, character and goal of the war in Germany, in the occupied countries, abroad and even in enemy countries as well. To organize a radio program as artistic and entertaining as possible, to revive the dwindling interest of the German people in radio and to grant them an opportunity to hear as many sendings as possible.

14. Upon my suggestion those directions and instructions which had been fixed by me daily in writing were transmitted by teletype to all Reich Propaganda Offices (Reichs Propagandaamter). Those Reich Propaganda Offices used those directions and instructions at their discretion and transmitted them frequently to their Gau leaders. This material consisted of: a) the so-called radio parole. This I worked out until 1943 or 1944 after the daily morning conference with Dr. Goebbels together with a representative of the Foreign Office and the head of the Foreign division of the Propaganda Ministry. Afterwards it was given verbatim by Dr. Goebbels; b) the comments on this, which were worked out by one of my collaborators based on a comment which I gave orally at noon at the Radio Conference. Dr. Goebbels himself gave daily a highly confidential radio speech to the Gau leaders personally, which was spoken through a microphone and extended over special transmissions. In his absence, Undersecretary (Staatssekretaer) Dr. Naumann acted for him. If he was absent, the radio speech was cancelled. Dr. Goebbels always rejected the suggestion made by the Undersecretary that I should take over the representation. I acted frequently for him (Dr. Goebbels) in individual reports, such as with generals.

15. From fall 1932 until April 1945 I regularly made radio speeches. According to my memory until fall 1939 once weekly, until December 1939 daily, then three times, then twice and finally once weekly. In my instructions to the press and radio, when head of the German Press Division, I was most strictly bound by the directions of my superiors. However, in my radio speeches I enjoyed a greater liberty. Dr. Goebbels once had tried to make me submit my texts before the speeches were given. I refused, indicating I dictated a brief speech just before

speaking and hence spoke half-extemporaneously. Subsequently he renounced the submission of texts upon the condition that at least certain topics be discussed upon demand. The addresses formerly were called "Political and Radio Show"; later "Hans Fritzsche Speaks". In these addresses I discussed political and human problems of all kinds and reported on the general situation as well. According to my memory, I did not take any position on the Jewish question for many years. In my position as head of the German Press Division I had tried twice to forbid the appearance of "Die Sturmer" without success. Later, especially during the war and mostly upon request, I took a position concerning the statements of Jewish individuals and organizations against Germany. The sharpness of these polemics, as the sharpness generally of my polemics, remained less than the sharpness of the opposition publicists. I remember I stated that Jewish emigrants, already years before the war, referred to the necessity of a war against Germany. I also remember that I referred to the role of this Jewish propaganda in accomplishing an alliance between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. According to my knowledge, this alliance was not supposed to have been established by the German declaration of war against Russia, but by an Anglo-Saxon secret treaty of 1940. The utilization of the productive capacity of the occupied countries for the strengthening of the war potential, I have openly and gloriously praised, chiefly because the competent authorities put at my disposal much material, especially on the voluntary placement of manpower. Where I made claims before the occupied territories, for instance 3 French Radio transmitters for Spanish and Portuguese night sendings, I refused any sequestration and saw to it that private agreements were made with the owners of the transmitters. Moreover, I had the impression that many production shifts from the Reich had many advantages for the other territories and disadvantages for the Reich. In my field for instance, certain musical productions could only be made in Prague, to which flowed people, machines and money. All the factory equipment of the German recording industry came to Prague. A direct or indirect request for the ruthless utilization of occupied countries by me was all the more out of question as it would have meant a strike against my own propaganda. The goal of it was to win the hearts of the population of the occupied countries.

The correctness of the above given statement is hereby assured by me under oath.

/s/

HANS FRITZSCHE

DR. FRITZ

Defense Counsel.

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENT 3041-PS

I, FRED NIEBERGALL, 2nd Lt., U.S. Army, O-1335567, hereby certify that I am thoroughly conversant with the English and German languages; and that the above is a true and correct translation of Document No. 3041-PS. 24 November 1945

FRED NIEBERGALL
2nd Lieutenant,
O-1335567