

EDITORIAL ROOMS

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EVENING

POST

FOUNDED BY

Benjamin Franklin

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Dear Mrs. Daufeldt:

I have just returned from the Near East to find your letter of Dec. 10th addressed to my wife awaiting me. I enclose herewith a statement regarding my relationships with Mr. Daufeldt in 1940-41.

I hope that this statement may be of some use to him. The fact that he held responsible posts in the SS and the Gestapo, as you know, make him a member of organizations which were declared criminal in themselves at the Nuremberg trials. But I am informed that each individual members' relative responsibility will be determined separately, and I have tried to show, in my statement, that Mr. Daufeldt did not agree with many ideas and practices held by most SS leaders then and later.

With good wishes, in which my wife joins me,

Sincerely yours,

Demaree Bess
Demaree Bess

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A b s c h r i f t

Statement About Hans Daufeldt

(From Demaree Bess, Associate Editor of The Saturday Evening Post)

I first met Hans Daufeldt in Berlin in October, 1940, when I was trying to arrange a tour of German-occupied countries as a correspondent for The Saturday Evening Post. I wanted to visit Holland, Norway and Poland, but when I applied for permission to the Propaganda Ministry and the Press Section of the Foreign Office, my applications were rejected. I was then told by Mr. Karl von Wiegand, foreign correspondent of the Hearst Press that Mr. Daufeldt, as an executive in the foreign department of the SS, would be able and willing to help me. Mr. von Wiegand talked to Daufeldt and then informed me that Mr. Daufeldt was ready to see me in Berlin. I knew from long experience in Soviet Russia that organizations of this type often can be very useful to foreign correspondents. So I got in touch with Mr. Daufeldt and he said that he would try to secure permission for me to make these trips. I then discussed the matter with several friends in the American Embassy in Berlin, who said they could see no harm in accepting Mr. Daufeldt's assistance. Thereafter Mr. Daufeldt arranged permission for me to take several trips and I got the personal permission from him to send out several uncensored magazine articles during the next months.

In the process of making these arrangements, I had several rather long conversations with Mr. Daufeldt and - in view of his position in the SS - was astonished by many of the opinions he expressed. He told me he had originally been attracted to National Socialism by the social and economic benefits it seemed to promise, not alone to Germany, and had been distressed by its later excesses, particularly persecutions of Jews and other so-called inferior races. He said he had helped several Jewish friends either to leave the country or obtain decent employment in Germany.

At this time Nazi Germany was at the height of its power, and most Germans thought the war would soon be over. But Mr. Daufeldt was much more clear-sighted, and told me he was using all the influence he possessed to arrange a peace settlement with Britain,

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the only country then holding out against Germany. He expressed the opinion it would be a terrible tragedy for all concerned if it was not somehow settled soon, and he said he was therefore trying to persuade his associates that they should offer peace terms to Britain which all Englishmen could accept. Nazis at that period often hinted to foreigners that peace with England would free German hands for war against Russia, and I deliberately introduced Russia into the conversation to see what Mr. Daufeldt would say about this. In this respect too he was an unorthodox National Socialist. He said he saw no need to fight Russia and was anxious to prevent the war from spreading either east or west.

I have not heard what Mr. Daufeldt did after I last saw him in February, 1941, nor did I know even in 1940-41 exactly what position he held in the SS. But I do feel, from my experiences with him at that time, that he was a very exceptional German National Socialist.

He was free from the most unpleasant manifestations of Nazism and he correctly foresaw what it would mean to the world - including Germany - if the war spread to involve other great nations.

I really believe he was trying to do what he could to restrict the war within comparatively narrow limits and have it settled at all.

I got the impression that, despite his Nazi connections he was more free of such aberrations as anti-Semitism and less disposed to glorify war and conquest than many other persons I met during this period in other countries.

Paris, France
January 6, 1947

Associate Editor
The Saturday Evening Post

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