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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Excerpts from Hans Benecke's memoirs

The first measures determining membership in the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (RSK) [Reich Literature Chamber] and bookselling organizations were issued in 1934. At first, ownership of Jewish publishers and bookstores was decided. At the beginning of 1935, Jewish, part-Jewish and non-Aryan persons were excluded. Finally, with the passage of the Nuremberg Laws, an anxious vigil began for those affected. They waited to hear both how the new laws would be implemented and what would be done with the questionnaires that had been demanded of them earlier.

I had already received notification of my expulsion from the President of the Reich Literature Chamber on 28 August 1935 [see Document 3], which meant that I had to terminate these professional relationships by 31 December 1935. We immediately began an entire series of petitions to various offices, citing the tradition of the firm and its international connections. The decisions on these took an entire year. At that time, my father still tried to secure the assistance of an attorney to assist us in appealing the decision. Statements from friends supported these attempts. An old school friend – a Party member now – as well as my former *Pfadfinder* [Boy Scout] leader stood up for me, without thinking of any consequences for themselves due to these spurious testimonials. In order to fit the requirements, they claimed as a deception that I had an interest in the *nationale Gedankengut* [intellectual treasure of the nation] and a corresponding view of life.

In the midst of the fight for concessions on my behalf, my father was struck without warning by the

worst possible occupational blow fate could offer. On December 20, 1935, he was notified by the Association of German Booksellers that his resignation would soon be required [see Document 2]. The sale of our company had to be completed by 31 December 1935. At the same time our company name was stricken from the newest edition of the address directory of the German book trade. Carrying out this measure would have caused the complete destruction of our enterprise, since only those firms listed in this directory could receive deliveries. The allotted ten days was a mockery, and the [choice of a] Christmas deadline was cruel.

My father submitted extensive documents certifying the accomplishments of his ancestors and those of relatives still living in both his family and that of my mother. Among these, for example, were an officer in the wars of liberation against Napoleon, and another ancestor who had been head of the German community in Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century. My grandfather on my mother's side had assisted in the foundation of the Chinese navy, and my half-Jewish uncle had received numerous medals for distinguished service in the First World War. All of these submissions were dismissed in a letter with the laconic comment, "In this case, the papers of, say, your uncle are of no interest."

On 27 February 1936, after months of waiting, our company name was reinstated in the address directory and we were again permitted to receive book deliveries. Fortunately, neither any of the publishers nor our commissioner Volckmar in Leipzig had even considered cutting off deliveries to us in the interim – not even an inquiry from any of them reached us. We received a postponement, and I was then notified on 24 September 1936 that "for the time being," there was no reason to keep me from remaining in the Reich Literature Chamber.

My father was permitted to continue in business as well. However, this was in no way because of consideration of the reasons or references to the law we had given, but because of personal intervention by influential people, such as Mr. K.H. Bischoff (RSK Non-Aryan Advisor), Hans Hinkel (head of the Council on Jews in the Ministry of Propaganda) and Heinz Wismann (Acting President of the RSK). In order not to give the bureaucracy cause to accuse us of preference for non-Aryans, we were forced to terminate the contract of a Jewish employee, that of the executive secretary, who was married to a Jew, and that of a non-Aryan apprentice salesperson. As they were among our best employees, this was a serious loss for our company.

In:Hans Benecke: *Eine Buchhandlung in Berlin* [A Bookstore in Berlin], (Frankfurt: Fischer,

1995), pp. 112f.