



The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER AND ARCHIVES



GOOSE STEPPING In Long Island: Camp Siegfried

Exhibit curated and text written by: Rabbi Isidoro Aizenberg, Scholar-in-Residence



Arthur Flug, Ed.D., Executive Director The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives

The exhibit opened on October, 5, 2010 at The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives At Queensborough Community College

Acknowledgments:

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum The American Jewish Archives California State University, Urban Archives Center University of Southern California, Regional History Center Thomas R. Bayles Collection of the Longwood Public Library Patchogue-Medford Library, Local History Room Marvin. D. Miller, Author, *Wunderlich's Salute* Karen Mouzakes, historian, Yaphank Historical Society N THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA, his 2004 novel, Philip Roth imagines that it is 1940, and that, as incredible as it may seem, a Hitler ally rules in the White House. He also recalls how his father used to curse the existence of a beer garden in the middle of town. The beer garden, he writes, "had something to do with the German-American Bund, the German-American Bund had something to do with Hitler, and Hitler, as I hadn't been told, had everything to do with persecuting Jews" (p. 10).

Roth's imagined political plot was not entirely a fantasy. While in reality it was Franklin Delano Roosevelt who occupied the White House, the German-American Bund had organized in 1936, evolving from a number of nationwide German-American groups formed after World War I.

"Not surprisingly, the Bund (not to be confused with the Jewish socialist Bund) commanded its largest following in cities with large and influential Jewish populations and equally large German immigrant communities: for example, in New York, and across the Hudson River in New Jersey, in Union City, Passaic, North Bergen, Hackensack, Fairfield, and Newark" (Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States* 1924-1941, p. 234).

This exhibit tells its frightening story focusing on a German-American run summer camp in our own backyard in Yaphank, Long Island.

Nazism wasn't only a German story but an American one too.



DATED FEBRUARY 20, 1939, THIS IMAGE PORTRAYS ONE OF THE MASSIVE BUND GATHERINGS, THIS ONE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, WHERE IT HELD ITS 'PRO-AMERICAN' RALLIES. AMERICAN FLAGS AND A PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON FORM THE BACKDROP ON THE STAGE. OUTSIDE THE GARDEN POLICE RESTRAINED AN ESTIMATED EIGHTY THOUSAND ANTI-NAZI DEMONSTRATORS. MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN-AMERICAN BUND SALUTE THE NAZI STANDARD AS IT IS PARADED THROUGH THE HALL IN MADISON SQUARE GARDEN DURING THE BUND'S FEBRUARY 1939 'PRO-AMERICAN' RALLY.





THE BUND'S stronghold was in the northeast, but it had a geographic district or *Gaus*, with Los Angeles, California, as its headquarters, and Gauleiter (party leader of a regional branch) Hermann Schwinn.

Members of the German-American Bund are portrayed above celebrating Adolf Hitler's birthday at the Deutsches Haus (German House) in Los Angeles, April 20, 1935. Note the swastikas in the front, the German eagle on top of Hitler's portrait, and the honor guard.



USHMM/NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION, COLLEGE PARK

AT THE SAME TIME AND IN THE SAME YEAR A POSTER WAS DISTRIBUTED ADVERTISING THE UPCOMING CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF HITLER'S BIRTHDAY IN THE HEAVILY GERMAN YORKVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD OF MANHATTAN, SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE NEW GERMANY. EMBERS OF the German-American Bund hoist a large swastika above an outdoor display on the grounds of Hindenburg Park, in April 1936. The park, named after Germany's president Paul Von Hindenberg, was in La Crescenta, California, privately owned by the German-American League, an association of local organizations that eventually merged into the Bund.



CLOSE-UP OF a membership sticker for the German-American Bund placed on the dashboard of a high school student's car in Omaha, Nebraska, in November 1938.



COURTESY CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERS

SERMAN-AMERICAN BUND activities were not limited to massive gatherings and street marches. Street posters such as the one shown here from as early as 1934 were produced as anti-Jewish propaganda. Entitled "Heil! Heil", it called on all "Germans and Aryans of Pure Nordic Blood." The announcement advocated the boycott of theaters screening films with Jewish actors, and the elimination of Jews from all industry and it also urged new members to join the 'Legion', probably the German-American Bund.

HEIL! HEIL!

All Germans and Aryans of Pure Nordic Blood!

We Have the JEWS on the Run! Let Us Keep Up the Good Work!

DO NOT ATTEND

Any Theater showing pictures with any of these Jews or Jew Lovers:

Claudette Colbert is married to a Jew; Norma Shearer was married to a Jew; Margaret Sullivan was married to a Jew; Eddie Cantor is a Jew; Al Jolson is a jew; Sylvia Sydney is a Jew; Ruby Keeler is married to a Jew; and Ricardo Cortez is a Jew.

This is only the Beginning to an End: WATCH ALL FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Join any one of our country wide organizations and clubs chartered for the purpose of eliminating the enemy- the JEW from all Industry!

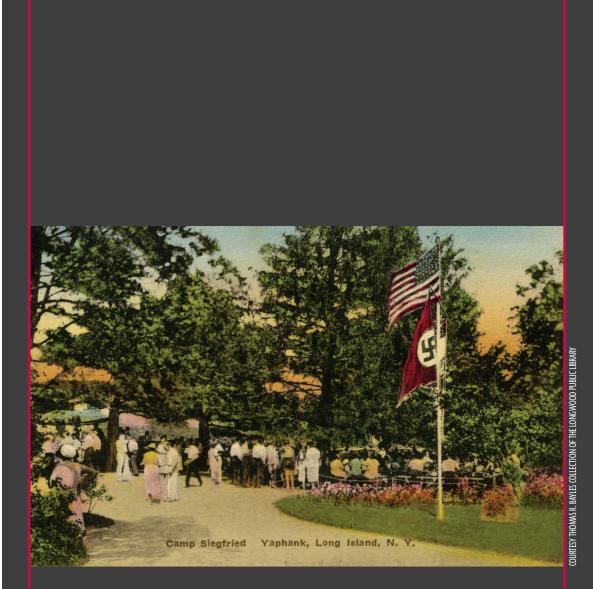
Become a member of this Legion to make this great country of ours safe from the Jew and Russia.

HEADQUARTERS: San Francisco, California Charter No. 12 The CCC Camps would make good Concentration Camps for the Jews!



IN ADDITION to these countrywide activities, one of the Bund's most successful enterprises was the running of about 15 Nazi summer camps nationwide. One of them was Camp Nordland in Andover, New Jersey, and the crown jewel of them all, Camp Siegfried in Yaphank, Long Island, New York. Opened in 1935, the 54-acre campsite was set in the woods on the shores of Upper Yaphank Lake, just a few miles away from today's exit 67 on the Long Island Expressway. Named after the blond Aryan hero from Wagnerian opera, Camp Siegfried came particularly to life on summer Sundays. It was then that a specially reserved Long Island Rail Road train leaving from the Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, station, the "Siegfried Special," would fill up to capacity with excited campers, family members, and supporters.

Upon arrival at the Yaphank station, the visitors were welcomed by stiff-armed *heil* saluting young, all-male uniformed Siegfrieders. Sunday departures on the same "Siegfried Special" was a candlelight procession more gleeful than the arrival.



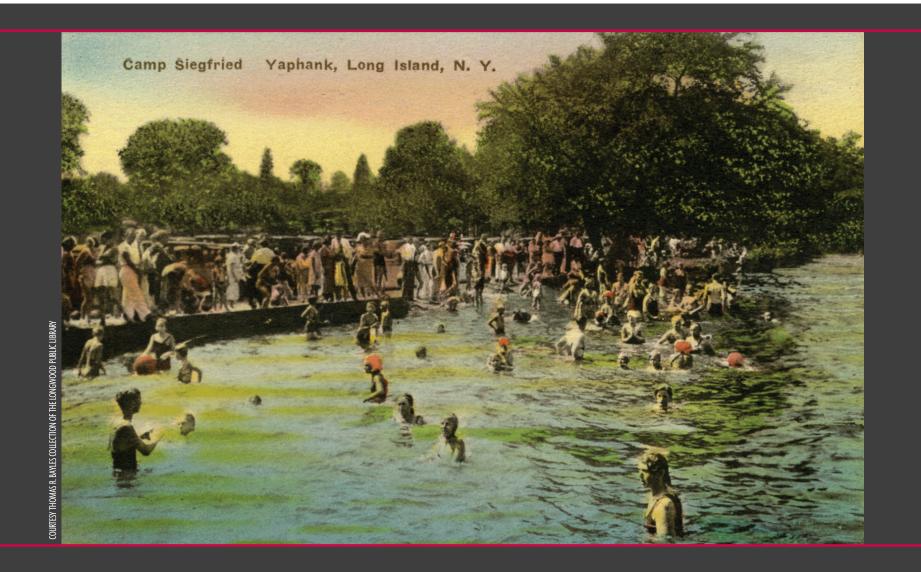
THE CAMP'S leadership encouraged sympathizers to join. One such invitation read:

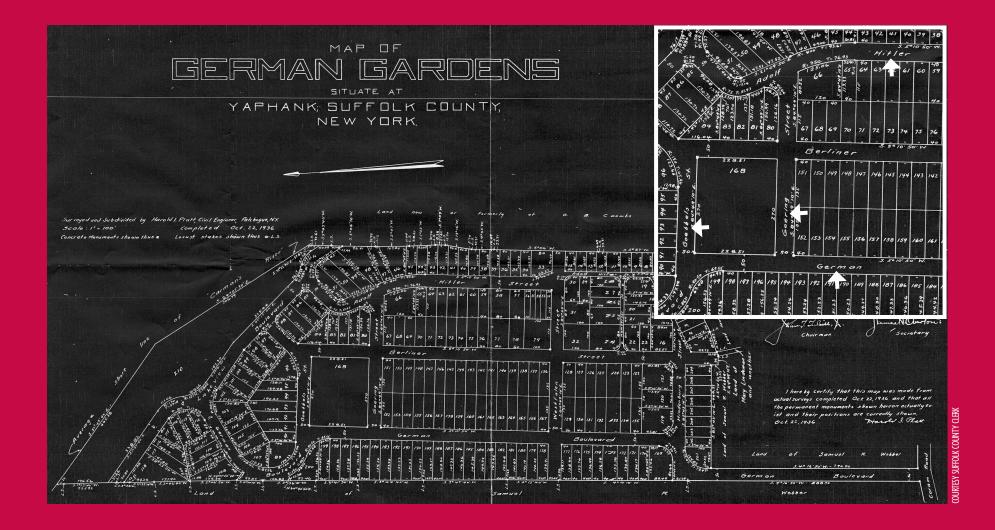
When the weekend approaches, we are just longing to leave the pavements, the crowded thoroughfares, the dust, the noise of the city behind us to find peace and health restoring recreation at some quiet retreat among people whose friendship we treasure.

"Camp Siegfried" at Yaphank, L.I. is just that! Located along the picturesque banks of the Mill River, surrounded by shady woodlands, on hilly ground...it is a spot as beautiful as you would wish to see...For at the camp you will meet people that think as you do...cheerful people, honest and sincere, law abiding!

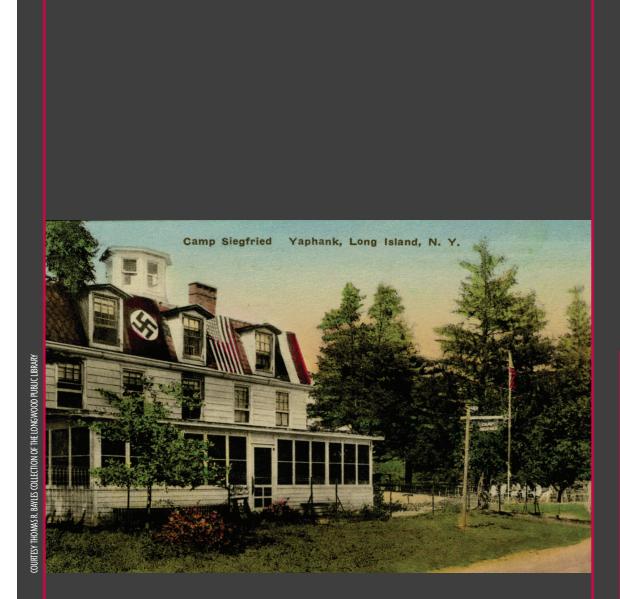
The invitation was signed by Ernst Mueller, the German-American Settlement League president (*Wunderlich's Salute*, p. 1).

Indeed, as a Camp Siegfried postcard of the time recorded, the bucolic scenery looked inviting: people milling around one of the houses on the camp's grounds, and others around picnic tables, while an American stars and stripes fluttered above a Nazi swastika flag. ANOTHER POSTCARD of Camp Siegfried looked inviting on a hot summer day. Most of its visitors were German-Americans immigrants who had arrived to the United States following World War I. The activity on the campgrounds was not limited to adults. The German-American youth groups were located on tented platforms, segregated by sex and age.



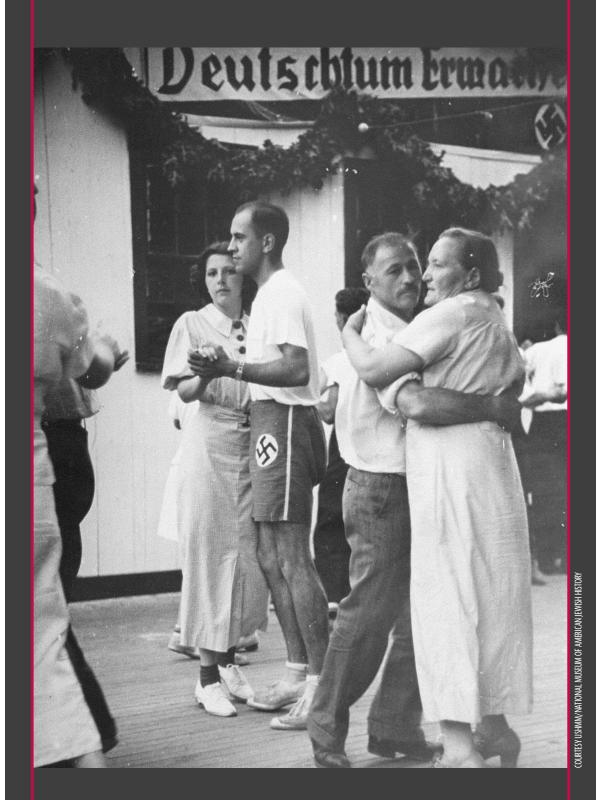


THE CAMP'S organizers provided entertainment and other amenities that would keep visitors coming again and again. While the *beil* welcoming ceremony at the Yaphank train station was already an indication of Camp Siegfried's agenda, it became more pronounced as one entered the camp. Not only was a Nazi flag fluttering at the camp's entrance, but the streets also were named after the foremost Nazi leaders: Adolf Hitler Street, Goebbels Street, and Goering Street. On the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II a dispute arose in Yaphank: whether or not to keep the old names of the Nazi leaders that "showed up in parentheses next to the newer names when newcomers [bought] into the neighborhood and [received] maps of their lots" (*Newsday*, 5/14/1995, p. A8). The decision was that the old maps would be kept as an historical document while the new maps would be printed with the updated names only.



THE MAIN inn and restaurant building also made sure that no one missed Camp Siegfried's underlying message, with a swastika emblazoned at its entrance. Another house on the grounds had the swastika worked into the stone masonry above its main entrance





UNDER A Nazi banner bearing the slogan "German [people] Awake," Siegfrieders danced to the strains of German folk music. Not only was the swastika displayed under the banner, but one of the male dancers also had one sewn on his shorts.



FOR BOTH the young people and its older visitors, Camp Siegfried often displayed and resembled the formations and marches that had become a distinctive signature mark of Nazi Germany. Teenagers, sons, and daughters of Bund adherents were indoctrinated with Nazi thinking and the incessant display of Nazi symbols.

In this 1937 image, teenagers, members of the German-American Bund go through their drill at the Camp Siegfried encampment. The formations are separated by gender, all wear a similar uniform, and display the swastika on a flag. Very often, both the young and the adults sung the *Horst Wessel Lied*, "Nazidom's other national anthem, which was sung in German":

The flag sinks before dead men who still live, The S.A. [*Sturmabtleitung*, Storm Troops or Brownshirts] swears with clenched fist Some time the day will come, Then retribution will be paid and no forgiveness When Heil [Hail] and Sieg [Victory] resound throughout the fatherland.

(Wunderlich's Salute, p. 2)

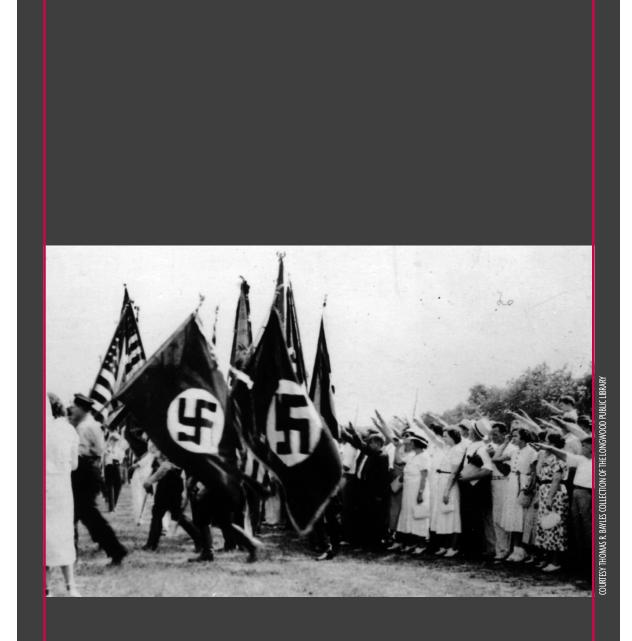
This song also included the chilling lines: "When Jewish blood drips from the knife, Then will the German people prosper."



ORE OMINOUS than the teenagers' formations were those of the adults. In this 1937 Camp Siegfried image, Nazi and fascist sympathizers give the Nazi salute at a joint assembly of the German-American Bund and an association of Italian-American fascists. All the participants in the pseudomilitary formation wear black pants, gray shirts, black ties, garrison caps, and Sam Browne belts.



THE MILITARY MARCHES were part of the rituals performed at Camp Siegfried, as was the case when "German Day in Long Island" was celebrated. In this image adult Siegfrieders dressed in Nazi regalia march to the tunes of a band, while an elegantly dressed audience of men and women watch the parade. A TONE POINT in the parade, the participants passed by the audience carrying flags emblazoned with swastikas and American flags, prompting the attending audience to stretch their arms out in the classic Nazi *heil* salute.

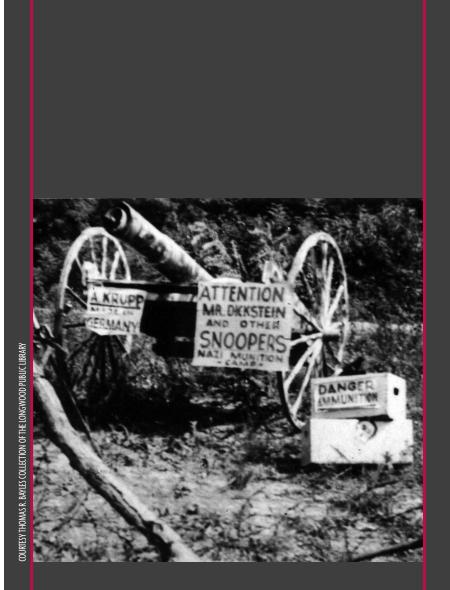




HIS PHOTO shows a mass gathering in front of a grandiose stage in celebration of the 1937 "German Day in Long Island." The German text of "German Day" was inscribed in large bold letters on the column erected behind the speaker's stand; on top of it was a spread-winged German eagle, flanked yet again by Nazi and American flags. Although not seen on the photo, there was yet another large-lettered phrase below the speaker's stand. It read: "Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern," that is, "We want to be one exclusive people of brothers." Speakers often included well-known Bund leaders, including the Nazi-American Führer himself, Fritz Kuhn.



BUND AND CAMP SIEGFRIED ACTIVITIES were supported not only by the visitors who were asked to contribute to the Nazi cause, but also by the campers' parents, by businesses owned or managed by German-Americans and by others who did not oppose the organization's agenda, or weren't aware of the Bund's true intentions. Among these were the Hamburg-Amerika Linie ship company, the German Railroads Information Office (then located on 665 5th Ave. in Manhattan), and the Munich-based beer brewery Löwenbräu (meaning lion's brew), owned today by the Belgian company Anheuser-Busch InBev. (*Ameríkadeutlcher Volksbund*, 1938 yearbook. Courtesy Marvin D. Miller). Other advertisers included the Gulf-Texaco gas station, the Sinclair gasoline station and Rankin's Grocery, all located in Yaphank (from *Ein Sommertag in Camp Siegfried* [A Summer Day in Camp Siegfried] pamphlet, p. 60). The Löwenbräu advertisement card was issued to coincide with the commemoration of "German Day" at Camp Siegfried.

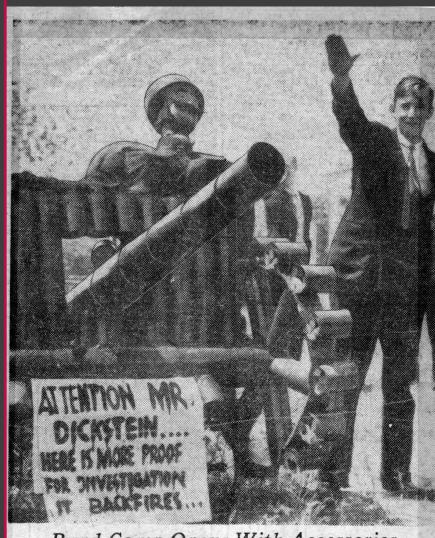


TNITIALLY, AFTER the German American Settlement League bought the Yaphank property in 1935 and started making preparations for opening the camp, the merchants in the neighborhood viewed its establishment as an economic boon for the entire community. One neighboring farmer turned his fields into a parking lot for 500 cars, at 25 cents a car.

Among the camp's supporters was also Gustave Neuss Sr., a Brookhaven town board member and a judge from 1934-37. He spoke German fluently and became a Siegfried friend. "As they [the Siegfrieders] displayed their pro-Hitler, anti-Semitic leanings he became their nemesis," deciding to identify as many of them as possible and bring them to the attention of the federal government (paper by Gustave Neuss, November 2002, "The German American Bund"). Neuss's local opposition to the Bund was matched nationally by N.Y. Democratic Representative—or as Bund publications made sure to underline *des jüdishen Kongressmannes*, "the Jewish Congressman—" Samuel Dickstein, who was part of a committee investigating un-American activities, including those of the Bund.

In response to Dickstein's relentless anti Bund campaign, Camp Siegfried counter-attacked in the press and through other media. It also set up a mock Dickstein Cannon near the Camp Siegfried Willkomen banner sometime in 1937.

A postcard image of a second Dickstein Cannon set up in 1939 includes the sign "Attention Mr. Dickstein and other Snoopers, Nazi munition camp." To the right of the cannon another sign reads "Danger, ammunition," and to the left a third sign reads "A. Krupp, Made in Germany," making reference to the famous German steel, ammunitions, and armaments factory. A NEW YORK TIMES article and photo showed further mocking of Representative Dickstein's efforts. A *heil* saluting young man stands near the cannon where another poster proclaims "Attention Mr. Dickstein...Here is more proof for investigation. It backfires..."



Bund Camp Opens With Accessories

This mock cannon made from tin cans, intended as a jibe at Representative Samuel Dickstein, was the first thing that greeted visitors to Camp Siegfriend at Yaphank, L. I., Sunday, the German-American Settlement league's new outing ground. Dickstein has made repeated proposals for investigation of alleged nazi activity by members of the bund.—AP Wirephoto.

Gesture of contempt of . U.S. Government

COURTESY AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

GERMAN AMERICANS! ALL AMERICANS! STAND UP AGAINST PERSECUTION!

Help Fight the Mad, Infamous Hounding of Fritz Kuhn by the Hate-Blinded, Desperate International Jew and His Politician-Slaves!

The war-mongering international Jew and his creatures are enraged that the members and sympathizers of the Fighting Movement of the German-blooded Americans have so wonderfully expressed their faith in their Leader and their supreme contempt for his persecutors as to put up the tremendous sum of FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS, to cover the outrageous bail under which he is being held!

And that in the face of the almighty Dewey's charge that Fritz Kuhn "stole" some fourteen thousand dollars from these very members and sympathizers! Isn't it heart-rending to see the unsolicited "concern" being shown by the Deweys of Jew York for the safety of the German American Bund's money?!

The Bund and its members have absolute faith that ALL of Fritz Kuhn's acts and expenditures have been undertaken in the best interests of the organization and within the powers granted him in 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939 and specifically reaffirmed each year, despite the insolent charges of meddling politicians with an axe to grind! Fritz Kuhn is the Bund! The "chosen" defenders of the "only true Democracy and Americanism" will be ranting and

The "chosen" defenders of the "only true Democracy and Americanism" will be ranting and tearing their hair at the thought that their intended victim is free again to properly prepare his defense; they will be trembling in their boots to find him again free to carry forward the Bund's battle for a CHRISTIAN, NATIONALISTIC and FREE U.S.A., a CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC TRULY INDE-PENDENT OF EUROPE, in which the Bill of Rights will apply for the German Element as well as for others! They live in deadly fear of the force of Fritz Kuhn's arguments before the American People! They and the cheap politicians at their beck and call want him and his co-fighters behind bars, regardless of how this may be achieved! They want him destroyed and his organization blasted!

Counter-arguments and other honorable methods being unavailing to silence him, Fritz Kuhn's bail may be increased beyond the unheard of sum already set, the increase again being the result of a Jewish assistant district attorney's whispering in a judge's ear! His assistants may be arrested and placed under bond as 'material witnesses' or what not (insofar as this has not already been done), so as to further hinder his organized support! We can prepare for everything conceivable which could serve to place an impossible financial load upon his defense!

Bonding firms apparently NOT being free to act in THIS case, CASH must be held available for bail! The entire weight of a political machine apparently being mobilized against the Bund, excellent and capable counsel must be retained! It is a matter of honor for American Freemen and particularly for the German Element to CONFOUND FRITZ KUHN'S ENEMIES!

GRANT US LOANS TO COVER BAIL BONDS! CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIGHTING FUND TO COVER DEFENSE COSTS! MOVE YOUR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES TO DO LIKEWISE!

Telegraph Funds to: WILHELM KUNZE, City Hall Tavern Hall, 754 Palisade Ave., Sel Union City, New Jersey, or deliver them to any Unit Leader of the German American Bund!

FRITZ KUHN PERSONIFIES THE PERSECUTED GERMAN ELEMENT! HE SHALL WIN!

Free America! German American Bund

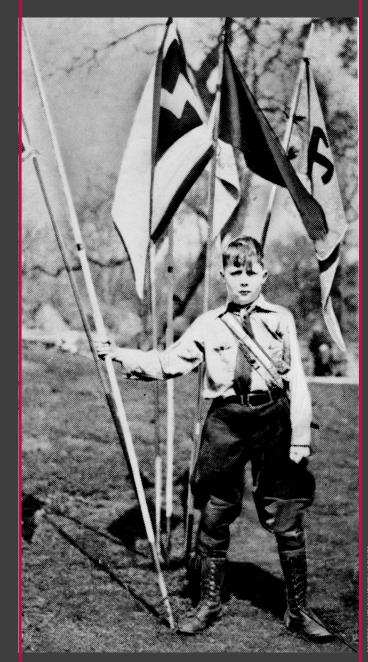
Wilhelm Kunze, National Vice-Leader August Klapprott, Eastern Department Leader, George Froboese, Midwestern Department Leader Hermann Schwinn, Western Department Leader James Wheeler-Hill, National Secretary Gustav J. Elmer, National Organizing Director Willy Luedtke, National Economics Director

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Read the "DEUTSCHER WECKRUF UND BEOBACHTER and THE FREE AMERICAN" for truth !

HEN FRITZ KUHN was accused by the U.S. government in 1939 of stealing funds from the German American Bund itself, he still had followers who defended him. They issued an announcement requesting donations to support his defense. Not surprisingly, it accused the "International Jew" together with their "Politician-Slaves" of a conspiracy against Kuhn. In the end, Kuhn was disgraced as a thief. Just before the war, he was convicted of grand larceny. He was eventually stripped of his citizenship, and spent the war in a detention camp with about 40 Siegfrieders. In 1945 he was deported to West Germany and sentenced to 10 years in prison for his prewar Nazi activities. He died in Munich in 1951.

AMP SIEGFRIED'S 1937-8 glory days were epitomized by the image of the very young Theodore Dinkelacher Jr., U.S. Youth Führer in full Nazi regalia standing at attention in Camp Siegfried on July 4, 1937, holding a flag, and another swastika flag behind him.



WHILE REP. Dickstein made reference to two hundred thousand Bund followers and Fritz Kuhn agreed with this number, a more conservative estimate placed the number at less than twenty thousand. But the fact that the number existed at all should not surprise us. The German-American Bund flourished at a time when the Ku Klux Klan reportedly included "one out of every seven people in Suffolk," by the beginning of 1924 (David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism, The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan: 1865 to the Present*, p. 256) and marched hooded in many other American cities; Henry Ford, author of *The International Jew*, was awarded the highest medal Nazi Germany could bestow on a foreigner, the Cross of the German Eagle, in honor of his 75th birthday; Roman Catholic Father Charles Edward Coughlin spewed anti-Semitism through his weekly radio broadcast; and the Jim Crow Laws were still in full force targeting African-Americans' segregation in buses, restaurants, and schools.

It was Paul Berman who published a review in the *New York Times Sunday Book Review* (Oct. 3, 2004) of Philip Roth's *A Plot Against America*. He wrote: "The novel is sinister, vivid, dreamlike, preposterous and, at the same time, creepily plausible." This exhibit raises the question of how a Camp Siegfried existed, and whether anything similar in our own backyard is still fearsomely possible.

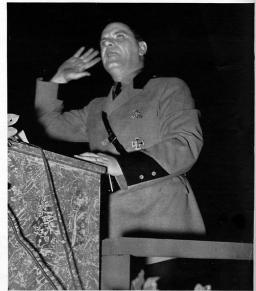
American Nazi Fritz Kuhn wearing a new German-American League uniform, modeled on that of the American Legion is shown at right.

LIFE ON THE AMERICAN NEWSFRONT: THE "AMERICAN NAZIS" CLAIM 200,000 MEMBERS

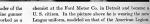
The name-calling context between New York's Mayor Ladiuardia and Adulf Hitler was widened on March 13 to include General Hugh S. Johnson and the "American Nazix". At an anti-Nazi mass meeting in Madison Square Garlen, the General stormed: "Nazis loast that 10,000 storm troopers are already enrolled in this country. We even have Nazi youth camps where little uniformed Nazi cheruhs learn to goose-step and see how far they can horn into the Boy Scouts."

The Naci organization in the U. S. is the Germanformiran Large, formerly known as the Friends of the New Germany. Its leader (filther) is the squarejowd carto at the right, a former elemist name Fritz Kuhn. Far from denying General Johnson's charge, Filther Kuhn amplified it by declaring that his League numbers 200,000 members. It has bacdquarters in Detroit but its stronghold is the Yorkville section of Manhattan. During the past three years the League has made news chiefly through the rowdiness of its meetings, which are always "disciplication" by squared 60 *dramangilata* or atom troopers. The League's declared objectives are fighting Commission, Lews and the American Jewish boycott d German goods. Presumably it is also in favor of an American Pascii dictatorishy, To its members the League offers fiery speeches, atirning song, commedability, beer and petzels—aldear to the German heart. In the summer it runs emphs, not only for youth but for all League members. One of these its Camp Singfrid, on Long Jand, where some of the pictures on these pages verse made.

The American Nazis have no more bitter enemies in the U. S. than non-Nazi Germans. The day after General Johnson's speech the couusel for the anti-Nazi German-American League for Culture obtained a court warrant for Kohn on a charge that his League had failed to file a statement of its purposes, in accordance with New York State law. Apparently welcoming publicity, Führer Kuhn sought more by decreeing a new uniform for his storm troopers. Instead of white shirts and black trousers, the troopers will heneforth ware uniforms like the one which Kuhn is wearing at right.



No. 1 American Nazi is Fritz Kuhn, national leader of the German-American League. Kuhn was a machine gunner in the War. He came to the U. S. in 1933, worked as a League





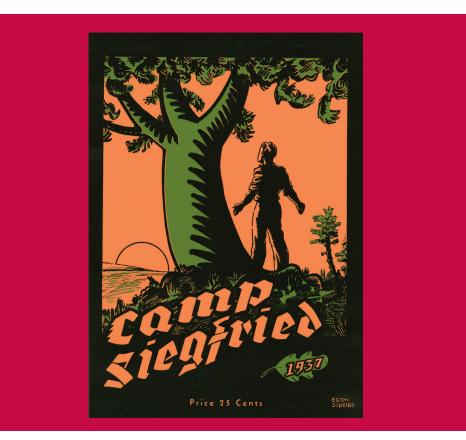
SUGGESTED READINGS

Sander A. Diamond, The Nazi Movement in the United States 1924-1941.

This volume is not only a history of the Nazi movement in the United States—its origins, leaders, members, and ideology—but also a study of the ideas that prompted Germany to embark on its ill-fated adventures in the United States.

Marvin D. Miller, Wunderlich's Salute.

This is the only and most comprehensive history of Camp Siegfried detailing its activity and relationship with the German-American Bund.



A POSTER OF THE TIME advertising Camp Siegfried had a young man looking with confidence into the future as a rising light (probably Nazism) shined on his face.

In spite of this optimism, Camp Siegfried's lifespan was no more than three years. By the summer of 1939 it had lost its liquor license and many of its followers. When the Nazis invaded Poland in September, the woodland campground was shut down, deserted, and put out of business.

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