

Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei

Gauleitung

Hessen-Nassau

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Before the Tribunal: The Investigation of Friedrich Kellner

On three occasions the local leaders of the Nazi Party in Laubach, and the leaders of the Party in the headquarters in Giessen warned Friedrich about his attitude and threatened to send him and his wife to a concentration camp. To protect his wife, and to continue to be able to record his observations in his diary, Friedrich limited his overt anti-Nazi activities.

Incident 3: (continued) The Laubach Inquest

Friedrich would not find out until after the war how close he had been to losing his life. In the files of the Nazi leader Otto Pott was a letter from an official named Mönnig that questioned Friedrich's loyalties and made a chilling suggestion:

“Kellner's attitude exerts a bad influence on the population, and in our view he should be made to disappear from Laubach.”

But a letter from Political Director Hermann Engst sent to Regional Director Pott just a few days before the interrogation in the mayor's office, advised Pott and Mayor Högy of the current limitations of their investigation against Friedrich:

“At this point punishment by the state is not feasible. People of Kellner's type are too intelligent to allow themselves to be easily caught off guard. Only after these kinds of people have expressed their opinions or behaved in a way that the Gestapo can get something on them is there a possibility of charging them so that they can be turned over to the secret police; then they are subject to party discipline, and with the approval of a representative of the Führer can be sent to a concentration camp. If we want to catch people such as this character Kellner we will have to entice them out of their hiding-place and allow them to become self-incriminating. At present there is no other way open to us. The time is not yet ripe to take arbitrary measures against our own officials similar to those now being taken against the Jews. That can occur after the war. Therefore, I expect the regional director to come up with a corresponding report as he thinks this through.”