

37/10/47

~~SECRET~~

Detective Office, Auckland.

6 th May 1940.

Report of Detective E.A.Stevenson, No.2627.

relative to alleged German Club of which the Auckland City Council Treasurer is said to be the Secretary.

I respectfully report that the allegations contained in the first few lines of the attached letter have little relation to actual fact.

The person referred to - the City Treasurer - is Mr T.W.M.Ashby.. I have known him for over 6 years past.. He was one of the foundation members of the German Club in Auckland in August 1932.. For a little over a year the club was a genuine foreign social club but towards the end of 1933 a different executive gained control of the club and it soon became enthusiastically pro-Nazi in guiding principles.. Several members of this executive are now interned.

This changed policy resulted in many of the original members resigning from the club because they considered that this changed policy might tend to become inimical to either the letter or the spirit of the laws of New Zealand.

Mr Ashby was one of those who resigned. The following quotation is from my first report on German Club activities, dated 12 th February 1934 :-

" This reason for the resignation of so many of the members is well expressed in the following passage of the letter of resignation of Mr T.W.M.Ashby, who is a solicitor employed in the Town Clerk's office at the Town Hall. Mr Ashby was one of the original members and was the Hon.Auditor for the Club ... In his letter Mr Ashby says, inter alia ... "It is however, now apparent that the club "is now being conducted with a political bias, and the "policy being dictated is one that is not only pro-German "but which must ultimately, in my opinion, be anti-British. "It will of course, be obvious to you that I am quite "unable to associate myself, either directly or indirectly, "with activities of this description, or with any "activities which are subversive to, or in any way inimical "to the Government or laws of the Dominion of New Zealand "or the British constitution.."

From my subsequent knowledge of, and contact with, Mr Ashby I am satisfied that the foregoing correctly expresses his attitude towards the German Club and pro-Nazi activities. I know that he has not at any time been Secretary of the German Club.

The German Club, Auckland finally ceased its activities in October 1939 and despite occasional rumours to the contrary it has not since recommenced operations in any way.

To my knowledge Mr Ashby has taken no part

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in the club's activities since he resigned from it in 1934.

However, both before and since that time Mr Ashby has been prominent in a body called the Associated Council of Foreign Clubs in Auckland.

Possibly this may have given rise to some misunderstanding.

In 1934 and 1935 the German Club, through Kurt Wilhelm Schmidt its leading member, made more than one effort to link up with the Council of Foreign Clubs.. However, the German Club's application was not accepted, mainly because Ashby told Schmidt that the Club could not be accepted until it ceased to be a political organisation.

Since I first commenced a watch on German Club activities I have never seen or heard of anything to suggest that Ashby has anti-British or pro-German sympathies.

I have seen Mrs O'Hagan the writer of the attached letter. She had no information that would assist in supporting her allegations. She says the matter is talked of by City Council employees; she could offer no names.. She makes a hobby of attending all meetings of the Auckland City Council.. She means well but she is not reliable.. For instance she told me that Sir Ernest Davis, the Mayor of Auckland gets for himself 1% of all the city rates collected and that this year he has received £20,000 from this source alone.

E. Stevenson.

Detective.

I have omitted to state that Ashby is quite British and that his interest in the German Club was merely that of many other loyal British members at that time, that was, a desire to assist towards a closer understanding between Britain and Germany.

E. Stevenson.

Insp Ward.

*S. O. Ball
exhib.
7. 5. 40.*

For to the Supt

*R. Ward
Supt*

*The Commissioner
8/5/40
J. Cunningham
Superintendent
8 5 40*

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A.

29th April, 1940.

Dear Mrs. O'Hagan,

I have received your letter of April 25, mentioning the existence of a German Club in Auckland of which, you state, the City Treasurer is Secretary.

I am bringing the matters you have represented to the notice of the Minister in Charge of the Police Department for consideration.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. M. R. O'Hagan,
No. 1, Garnett Road,
Westmere Estate,
AUCKLAND.

Hon. Mr. Fraser,
Minister in Charge of Police Department.
Referred.

30 APR 1940

W.F.
29.4.40.

The Commissioner of Police,

The Superintendent of Police,
AUCKLAND.

Wellington.

What is behind this please?

Stammings J.

Commissioner of Police,
1-5-40.

in 30/4/40

new Stevenson.

Chief of Stammings

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*Referred
3. 5. 40*

*The Ch. Det.
Report attached.
E. Stevenson.*

*S. Hall
E. Hall
3. 5. 40*

7-5-40. Det.

No. 1 Garnett Rd
Westmere Estate
Westmere
Auckland.

Mrs M. R. O'Hagan

4. (25). 40.

Hon. J. E. Parry

Dear Sir

I wish to draw your attention to matter that is causing a lot of anxiety in Auckland that is the City Treasurer of City Council is Secretary to German Club in Auckland his wife who is German also and all there sympathies lies with Germany business men tell me he is not to be trusted he is just in the position to give the desired information there are lot of (spies) in Auckland while he is there men will not volunteer or enlist. The City Council staff are has no time for him much less the Rate payers.

I am told on good authority the Mayor of Auckland is no better he has sent his two sons home to America so as they would not enlist; He has been sending money home supposed to be for Refugees it's going to a Jews firm in England to bring wealthy Jews over to England from Germany, and they are clearing their money in England until after the war, coming over here as refugees. No mystery to everyone how they pass the Customs. Auckland is full of them Levy's big boarding house in Liverpool St. here is full of them

Mr. Levy has informed some of his boarders
 that he has to keep them and the Mayor is paying
 for them too. Rate payers are well pleased to keep them
 The Mayor takes 15 hundred a year out of the
 rate payer money as well as the £500 that he gets
 for the Chair that is £2000 per year. Drawn from
 City Council alone; then the men are sacked every
 week and the streets and foot paths are disgraceful;
 every one complaining all the past Mayor of City was
 satisfied with £2000 per year for entering purpose as
 soon as Mr. Dani came into Chair he voted himself
 another £100 per year straight-away first meeting for.
 I attend all of them. It does not like the present
 Chairman of Auck. Hospital because he wants to lower
 Rates and Mayor wants to keep them up. Early
 in 1939 of last year in one of the late Press
 mentions to me when so many people were complaining
 of Rates he said that Government would take over
 City Council this year also Auckland Power Board
 I hope that is not going to be lost sight of
 for every one is looking for it hoping it will come
 to pass and very soon. I expect the Government
 has plenty to do present time; yet it would be
 one good turn to public the Government should know
 where all the money is going. The Security Act should
 keep hospital without Rate payer loaded with such heavy
 Rates trusting something will be done. I am
 yours respectfully
 M. R. Haynes