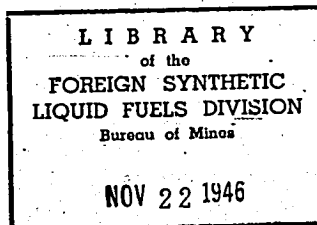


**INTERROGATION OF
DR. C. H. N. BENSMANN
OCTOBER 10th, 1945.**



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BRITISH INTELLIGENCE OBJECTIVES SUB-COMMITTEE

LONDON-H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE

INTERROGATION OF DR. C.H.N. BENSCHMANN

OCTOBER 10th, 1945.

Reported by:

W.H. Thomas, British, Ministry of Fuel and Power.
W.F. Faragher, U.S. Petroleum Administration for War.

B.I.O.S. Target Number : C30/456

Fuels and Lubricants.

British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee,
32, Bryanston Square,
LONDON, W.1.

1. SUMMARY

2. INTRODUCTION

3. ACCOUNT OF THE INTERVIEW

PERSONNEL OF TEAM.

W.F. Faragher, U.S. Petroleum Administration for War.

W.H. Thomas, British, Ministry of Fuel and Power.

Dr. Bensmann was interviewed with regard to his present contacts with the Texas Company of America on Wednesday, 10th October, 1945 at Internment Camp O. 31, Nienburg.

Dr. Bensmann, a Doctor of Laws, is the proprietor of United Oils Patents Co. of Bremen. He has had practical refinery experience in Roumania and is a Patent Agent. Prior to the War, he was a member of the Reichstag and a Free Mason but during the war he served in the Intelligence Sections of the German Air Force and Navy but apparently had ample time to carry on his normal occupation of Patent Agent.

Dr. Bensmann provided an account of his contacts and business with the Texas Company and showed how the licensing of the Gray process in Europe was effected. He also gave a review of the events which led to the Texas Company being appointed agent for the Fischer-Tropsch process in the United States.

2. INTRODUCTION.

Dr. Bensmann had intimated to the authorities in charge of Internment Camp O. 31 - Nienburg that he wished to consult a member of the United States Control Commission with regard to certain business which prior to the war had been handled by him on behalf of the Texas Company of America.

It was known that a party of British and American technical investigators would be working in the Hamburg area during the month of October 1945 and it was therefore arranged that two of the members thereof (one American and one British) should visit Dr. Bensmann for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of the communication which he wished to make.

The present report gives an account of the conversations which took place on that occasion.

3. ACCOUNT OF THE INTERVIEW.

Dr. Bensmann was interviewed by Dr. W.F. Faragher (U.S.A.) and Major W.H. Thomas (Br.) on Wednesday October 10, 1945 at Internment Camp O. 31, Nienburg. The following is an account of the interrogation which took place.

Dr. Bensmann worked and resided in his office at Bremen. He had an office staff of 10 and prior to the War was a member of the Reich Patent Office. During the War he served in the munitions section of the German Air Force and Navy but apparently had ample time to carry on his normal occupation of Patent Agent.

He is the proprietor of a firm originally known as "Universal Oils Patents Co.", Bremen, the title of which was changed in 1939, at the suggestion of the Texas Co. to "United Oils Patents Co.". The funds of the latter were held by the Deutsche Bank Filiale, Bremen.

Dr. Bensmann is a Doctor of Laws - Leipzig 1924; he has had practical refinery experience in Roumania Creditul and is now Patent Agent. His father was Hermann Bensmann who marketed American Fullers Earth (Floridan) in the Eastern Hemisphere.

In 1927 contact was made with the Texas Co., with reference to the Gray process and interviews were effected between Dr. Bensmann and Mr. T.T. Gray, R.J. Deerborn and W.F. Moore.

In 1931 the patent side of the Bensmann business was sufficient to warrant the formation of a separate Company (Universal Oils Patents Co.) to cover the main contacts the Texas Co., and Ruhr Chemie. The Gray process was taken over by the Texas Co., in 1933 and Dr. Bensmann then started to handle the Texas Co. patents in the German Patents Office but some of the work was done by a German Attorney (Kuhl of Berlin). The Texas Company covered the European patent work for a variety of firms (Standard, Phillips, Sun, Union, Shell, Pure, Humble and Bataafsche) on clay treatment, thermal cracking and vapour phase refining. Isomerisation was to be included but not polymerisation.

In 1935 Dr. Bensmann handled processes other than the Gray for the Texas Co. and solvent refining and dewaxing were included. Further contact with Ruhr Chemie was made in 1937 when a Gray license was sold to Fischer-Tropsch and the Gray plant was subsequently erected at Holten Oberhausen-Sterkrade.

In 1938 the Texas Co. was appointed agent for the Fischer-Tropsch process in U.S.A. and all countries outside Germany. Subsequently negotiations took place for the erection of a Fischer-Tropsch plant in the U.S.A. and four engineers (two from the Texas Co., and two from the Standard of Indiana) spent two months at Holten in examining the process. R.J. Deerborn visited Germany in May 1938 and again in September 1938 and as a result, the Standard of Indiana,

in order to avoid duplication, decided against purchase. The Texas Co. took a license and agency rights, the agreement for which was signed during September 1938.

In March 1939 Dr. Bensmann went with Prof. Martin and Dr. Fromm of Ruhr Chemie (then of Fischer process and now with Dr. Otto) to New York to sell the Ruhr Chemie patent rights in the U.S.A. to the Texas Co. and he exchanged with the latter certain rights in Germany; both contracts were independent. Payment to the Texas Co. was to be spread over 5 years; one and a quarter million dollars in cash and the remainder over 5 years.

Dr. Bensmann received a sale fee in addition to his charges as the Texas Co. representative and stated that during the War he had successfully protected the patents from seizure by the Nazi Party. He moreover maintained the patents and borrowed money from Ruhr Chemie to pay the patent fees.

He considers that infringement of these patents has probably occurred by order of the German Government and he has been unable to check refinery through-puts with the firms concerned. He observed that Gray treatment was essential in Germany because of shortage of sulphuric acid.

Dr. Bensmann sold six licenses to Still (Rechtlinhausen) and Wilke (Braunschweig) as a result of patent litigation and received payment on behalf of the Texas Co., of R.M. 60,000 then R.M. 15,000 and the remainder is still to be paid. During the War he was in touch with M. Legrand of La Gironde Cie., six or seven times in Paris and was last there in June 1944. Legrand paid no money to Dr. Bensmann but advised the latter to maintain the Texas patents. Dr. Bensmann stated that he had attempted to communicate with the U.S.A. via Sweden but with no success. He is hoping to make contact with the Texas Co. as soon as possible, but this will depend on his period and type of internment.