

Notes on a first interview of Frau Blanka Elisabeth Bentler
(formerly Frau HEWEL) at her home at Heepen bei BIELEFELD,
8-10 p.m. 8 December 1970.

1. Frau Bentler gave me "zu treuen Händen" her husband's black DIN A5 diary for 1941. She had been aware of its existence all along, and had read it several times (the last pages are "particularly revealing") but she had never felt any compulsion to let any other author know of its existence. There may be further similar documents of whose importance she is unaware; she has odd bric-à-brac collected by H., for example table menus with jokes by Hitler scribbled on them, and she undertook to let me see them next time I call.
2. She married Walther Hewel at Schloss Klessheim on 12 July 1944. He had been an intimate of Hitler's since before 1923; as a student of 19 he had marched with Hitler on the Feldherrnhalle, and Hitler had presented to him an autographed photograph commemorating the period they shared in Landsberg prison (originally Hewel was punished with "Bewährung"). Frau B still has the photograph, and many others, including a white plate colour photograph of Hitler and Hewel, and photographs during the Munich discussions in 1938, and one showing Hitler

... Hitler/

Cupping an ear to listen to the radio.

3. She is certain that many documents were stolen or destroyed by "Gaulist" troops at Berchtesgaden ⁱⁿ 1945. She managed to save what she did by hiding it in a box in a childhood hiding place in her house, which was later the billet of a British officer.
4. She characterised Walter Hewel at length - much as others already have - stressing his Rheinland wit, his charm, his constant good-humour. She referred to the inevitable strains imposed on him as liaison officer between two men such as Hitler and v. Ribbentrop (on whom she reserved her opinion, although it may not have been unfavourable; v. Ri's son lives near Bielefeld.)
5. Hewel did discuss war matters with her, including some which were past history. He stressed the lack of any physical coercion of Staehle in 1939, but had commented on the appalling impression if Staehle had succumbed to his (very real) heart attack in the Reichskammer.
6. He also mentioned the various peace feelers put out abroad; she will need time to rationalise her recollections of these.
7. She was still (!) unaware of the proof of Hewel's suicide. I factually told her, and left her Otto Günsche's address. She found it entirely in keeping with his nature that when the man who had meant so much to him deceased, he too should want to follow.

d. 9.xii.1970.