

Gordon Hall:

I'd like to be in this interview, Mr. Von Sienno, simply by getting some idea of your own background, for example: your age, if you're a native of this country - I notice you have a trace of a very pleasant sounding accent - and some idea of the kind of work that you do.

Von Sienno:

Thank you. Well I have been born – I'm 41 years old and I was born in what is not considered Poland, but at the time it was East Prussia. It was in the vicinity of Danzig. I came to the United States in 1945 – '46. And I went to college here, Princeton University, and I got a degree, B.A., from Chemistry. I'm now employed as a chemist in a textile firm here.

Gordon Hall:

I see. Do you – generally – are you generally happy that you came to the United States, would you say?

Von Sienno:

Well I would say that considering the post-world – post-war world, I am, yes. This is the only country which I think has a future in – in this world right now. Europe is pretty much gone, as far as I'm concerned, and this – this is the only country left.

Gordon Hall:

How did you happen, and at what point did you happen, to become identified with the National Renaissance Party? Which of course is the way that we met, through the rallies that they hold in public schools and the counter-demonstrations on the streets.

Von Sienno:

Well, I was – I feel that my political convictions have been pretty much the same for a great number of years. I always sympathized with the fascist philosophy, National Socialism. That does not mean necessarily that I was a pro-German during the war; however, in my stay in New York I heard about the National Renaissance Party and I did a little studying and I found that perhaps this would be the best vehicle to identify myself with – as a – to spread the ideas of Nationalism and racial Nationalism here. That is why I – I joined this group.

Gordon Hall:

How did you first hear about it? Was it through a [leaflet? 00:02:34], demonstration, or...?

Von Sienno:

No, no actually I'll tell you. I went to the public library and I was looking through various political organizations in this country and especially New York. And I found one of these – I found, at that time, the American Nazi Party with Rockwell and I found that New – in New York City there was a group called the National Renaissance Party. I went over and read the bulletin that the public library has on file and I found that that group had many ideas with which I agreed.

And I subsequently attended some meetings, which they were holding. I mean on the street. I wasn't, at that time – I mean, Mr. Madole didn't know me or anything like that, I just listened to what was happening

and in that – in that way I got in touch with him and I wrote – wrote a note that I would be interested in talking with him. And subsequently I – I joined that group.

Gordon Hall:

How long ago was that?

Von Sienna:

Well I – that would be about – about close to two – close to two years now.

Gordon Hall:

Oh then you're relatively new to...

Von Sienna:

Very, yeah. Yes.

Gordon Hall:

Oh I see. I – I thought you may have been around longer only because Mr. Madole and others have referred to you, in my presence, as kind of the, for one of the better terms, a resident philosopher of the National Renaissance Party. I want to come to that subsequently, but I – I thought because they refer to you so affectionately I thought you perhaps had begun – had begun with the Party or had been in it for a good – a good long while.

Von Sienna:

Well, shall we say I was with the party *physically* only two years. Spiritually, I probably was with that Party since its beginning, although I didn't know them personally. In other words I read a great deal about the philosophies of Niche and Spengler, and Hegel, and so forth, and consequently I identified myself with that - what we would now be called, the radical right. And I'm sure that if I had known these people at that time, I would have joined them.

Gordon Hall:

Do you find anything, when you were at the library in the materials of the American Nazi Party, did you find any materials there that you thought were interesting or, shall I say, attractive?

Von Sienna:

You mean, is that attractive to me as a philosopher?

Gordon Hall:

Yes, attractive to you personally.

Von Sienna:

Well I must confess that the type of philosophy that the American Nazi Party [espoused? 00:05:20] is not exactly the same as – as I believe in. In other words, the philosophy of the American Nazi Party was more on the, well shall we say, propaganda type. I mean, "Kill all the Jews, deport all the Negroes," and so forth;

which may appeal to a segment of the population, which I don't think it is a serious way of expressing one's opinions. I mean I – I don't believe in that.

To me, National Socialism and Fascism is actually the expression of a deep love of one's country, of one's people, and not for hatred of – of a certain group. I mean you – you - certainly, we do believe that Negroes or Jews should be members of our culture, however we do not hate them because they are Jews or because they have Negroes, we simply hate them to the extent that they impinge, or infringe, upon our culture. That they try to mix in it and try to change it; this is why we do not like them.

Gordon Hall:

Now would you say that the rather blatant propaganda [thrust? 00:06:30] of the American Nazi Party is different, then, from the propaganda thrust of the National Renaissance Party?

Von Sienna:

Yes I think it is. I think that the National Renaissance Party is trying more to, at least it is attempting, to try to get at the grassroots of the American people rather than in, well, in things like Rockwell used to do. I mean for instance bursting into a synagogue and trying to – to throw Nazi literature in there, or trying to, you know, have these very boisterous meetings and so forth. We – we are trying more to mold the young people to a certain way of thinking, and then have this ideology spring out of their own heart and out of their own personalities rather than win the masses or – like Rockwell did.

Gordon Hall:

Well I think there are some fundamental differences between the – the two groups, myself. I was curious to how you would describe it because I've read the bulletins in the NRP, of course, and the Nazi Party literature. Did you ever meet Rockwell in the course of your journeys around the radical fringes?

Von Sienna:

Well I have. At one time I went to Arlington to Washington, D.C., and at that time I met him very briefly. We went there...

Gordon Hall:

Because he was – he's entirely different kind of a leader than James Madole.

Von Sienna:

Yes he was a very flamboyant person.

Gordon Hall:

Flamboyant and physically attractive with a full head of hair, which of course Mr. Madole lacks, and I was just curious to how he personally responded to him. Well could you tell me just briefly after having been there, and of course now you had a chance to compare two parties, why you went with the NRP and placed your talents at their disposal?

Von Sienna:

Why I joined the NRP?

Gordon Hall:

Well as opposed to...

Von Sienna:

Yes.

Gordon Hall:

The other, which you also had some contact with?

Von Sienna:

Well first of all the American Nazi Party's headquarters were in Arlington, not here, and I am a resident of New York. Number two, I don't think that the American people, or it would be appealing to the American people to, identify oneself with a foreign – with a group that actually bears the sign of a foreign country. I mean, the swastika and the flags of the American Nazi Party, they are definitely foreign. I mean this – this to me is not in harmony with the very philosophy of nationalism. If nationalism is rooted in the country and in the people, then certainly National Socialism of the type that Rockwell espoused would be good in Germany but not in America. America should rather – or if National Socialism should grow as an American ideology, it must identify itself with Americanism more than with copying a – a Party or a philosophers, philosophy I wouldn't say, but as a group that has actually been defeated in war and doesn't exist anymore.

Certainly it's a foreign country, it's a – it's a – it's a – I mean, there's no appeal at all for the Americans to wear swastikas. I mean this – this is not – not – wrong; it is wrong. We should – and that is why I joined the NRP: because the NRP does not identify itself with [Nordic? 00:10:13] supremacy, or with Germanic culture, specifically. The National Renaissance Party, on the contrary, tried to identify its aims as white racial nationalism, the preservation of all the white races, their culture, their tradition, their way of life. Whether they are German, Slavic, whether they are Latin, of Latin descent, this of course does not matter as long as they have that common white ancestry. And that is why I found that this Party, this group here, is more likely to be successful in the future.

Gordon Hall:

I have to ask you this question that may seem slightly obvious, but I think it's important. I was at the rally last night, although I arrived late at public school 169, and several references were made to Jews in the sense, this is largely I might add in the audience, heckling between people in the audience with a group of people opposed to the party. And references were made to the fact that Jews really are not part of the white race. Do you yourself consider Jews as part of this common white ancestry or not?

Von Sienna:

Well I – no I don't, actually. What we call today "Jews" are probably a mixture racially of Oriental or Armenoid races that originally lived in the East Mediterranean and Phoenicia and that - that part. They were rather – they were not black, of course, but they are – I do not identify them as being part of our Western white heritage. They are – I mean, most Jews today would say that, "Well, I'm just as white as you are, in fact I am blonde and you are – you have dark hair. I'm even whiter than you are." Well, race is not all. There is also sort a thing as cultural heritage. Now culturally, certainly they are oriental. As such, I would exclude them from participating in the growth of our Western culture.

Gordon Hall:

What post do you presently hold with the Party?

Von Sienzo:

I am the National Secretary of the NRP.

Gordon Hall:

Could you give me some idea of what your duties entail as – as National Secretary?

Von Sienzo:

Well we do a great deal of correspondence, in other words when we hold meetings I send press releases to various TV and radio stations and newspapers. I occasionally, if we have a street meeting and there are TV stations or – or radio stations, I give interviews to the – to the reporters as the Secretary of the Party. Then there's some correspondence with new applications that come in for membership; I handle those.

Gordon Hall:

When you send out the releases to radio and TV in connection with any Party function here in Manhattan as other parties do, let's say Democrats and Republicans, is there a way in which the press can then contact you – I ask this only in terms of a matter of strategy. Many grandiose movements in this country, and left-wing groups for that matter, send releases to the press and there's no way in which a city editor can then get back in touch with the person if they want to clarify a point or find out who the name of the guest speaker is going to be or something; is there any way that people can reach you or is it done to the post office box?

Von Sienzo:

Well you have hit a very nail on the head here. I leave the name of Mr. Madole to be contacted. I mean I have – I sign my name, Mr. VonSienzo, as the National Secretary, but I leave Mr. Madole's name and leave his telephone number in case the press or the radio would like to contact and have some clarification as to things.

Gordon Hall:

Oh then there is - there is a way of reaching you?

Von Sienzo:

Yes.

Gordon Hall:

I see.

Von Sienzo:

Yes. There is a way, certainly.

Gordon Hall:

At least we can tell [inaudible 00:14:47]

Von Sienna:

Well otherwise it would be rather pointless. I mean...

Gordon Hall:

It would indeed be, except that Mr. Madole has an unlisted telephone, which he's given to the media.

Von Sienna:

Well he has given me permission to – to give it to the – to the TV and – and radio stations.

Gordon Hall:

You normally – I get the New York Times, even though I'm from Boston I get the New York Times every day, and only occasionally do I see a story about the National Renaissance Party's meetings, unless it's a street demonstration where street fighting breaks out on both sides or at least perhaps just on the part of the hecklers. Do you normally get response to your press releases or not?

Von Sienna:

Yes we do. We do get some attendance. I mean, we get CBS or NBC or sometimes both of these radio networks or TV networks attend the meetings, certainly. Of course the press is a little – it's a little more difficult here. There seems to be a curtain of silence that usually seems to descend on all right wing movements. Unless, of course, there is a fight or something happened which could present this party in a negative view; then, of course, we get the publicity.

Gordon Hall:

You say that you – you also have the task of processing application forms. What actually constitutes a member of the National Renaissance Party?

Von Sienna:

Well a member of the – a member of the National Renaissance Party will not be taken off the street just like that when he says "I would like to be a member," you see? That – that is – that – when we're considering a, shall we say, potential member we give him usually three months time to prove that he is interested in some ways, that he understands the principles, and that he can, you know, pay the dues of the Party. Then we have an oath-taking ceremony, which takes an oath that he will obey the rules of the party and pre – be – I mean and present himself – I mean be a presentable person, I mean, who will not indulge in any writing or anything like that. We – we do have this oath.

Gordon Hall:

Of course this was [inaudible 00:17:12] to people living here in New York, how would you process an application of a man, let's say, who's state of Illinois who wanted to identify with the Party?

Von Sienna:

Well this is more difficult. We – we have members – we have actual members in these towns, I mean – in Los Angeles or – or Chicago and so forth. And if we get an application from that town, we then refer that

person to the – to our members who are there who contacts him and act as a, well, somebody who – a guarantor. Somebody that will tell us that this man is actually of sound character and will – will – I mean that will – we can actually take him as a member.

Gordon Hall:

That's a very complicated process then.

Von Sienna:

Yes it is; it is. Unfortunately we have not developed yet to the point where we can have small offices in various towns which would process that. I mean...

Gordon Hall:

Would it be fair to ask you what your estimate is, as Party secretary, of the current national membership, would – would you give us a figure?

Von Sienna:

Well, we don't disclose exact figures of that and that, I imagine, is within 3,000 members on the national basis.

Gordon Hall:

And would you say the largest number would be here in the east or...?

Von Sienna:

Yes, yes. Here in East – in New York City and then we have in California, probably, a big [next? 00:18:51], and then some – somewhere around Chicago would be the third most dense population of the NRP. But of course it's scattered all over, too. We have in the south; we have quite a great deal of people that are [inaudible 00:19:05] supported.

Gordon Hall:

Now the business of being the resident intellectual, how, how did this come about, generally; was it because you actually did some serious writing for the National Renaissance Party bulletin that the idea grew up that Mr. VonSienna would really be in a sense the – the man to whom the Party turns, or philosophy and – and the rest?

I – I'm curious about that because you're – you're very unique in – in [by this? 00:19:40] movement in the sense that normally to the leader of the group, like the leader of the American Nazi Party George – the late George Lincoln Rockwell, kind of was a resident philosopher, too. He really set the tone for everything. Here you have a leader Mr. Madole and he also has, by his own admission, a man at his side who – whom he turns to for guidance, inspiration and [loyalty ideas? 00:20:03]

Von Sienna:

Well it's indeed very flattering of you to say so. I am sure that Mr. Madole is quite competent as to the philosophy of the national socialism and racial socialists; however, I was – I have a great deal – I've done a great deal of reading, you see, of various 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophers (Niche, and Spengler, Trechke). And in my writings here I used to write to *Western Destiny*, perhaps you are familiar with

Gordon Hall:

Yes. In fact you've written for *Western Destiny*

Von Sienna:

For *Western Destiny*, yes at the time. And then I wrote into the bulletin of the National Renaissance Party and, of course, that sort of fell into the idea that I was rather competent in my interpretation of Fascism and radical right here. And that is why Mr. Madole and I very often have discussions as to what – how to present certain ideologies of the – of Fascism in the framework of today's world. I mean after all, we cannot – we cannot today preach Fascism the way Mussolini or Hitler was preaching it at the time because times have changed and people's opinions and so forth are different.

And in today's world it's the same idea of – of ra – preservation of racial purity or qualities of moral character that we try to foster; however, they have to be presented in a modern way, in a modern framework. And that is, of course, quite a problem today because, well, you have to do it in such a way that you – without diverging from the very goal of this – I mean the goal is the oldest of all. I mean after all this Fascism, National Socialist, it's nothing new. It's – it's not something that was invented by Mussolini or Hitler or any of these people. I believe that it is the basic urge of the human being of – to identify himself with his own species, with his own race, with his own tradition and culture, and to survive as such - as such a unit, without becoming mixed or without becoming degraded by mixing himself with other races.

That does not mean that we – we have contempt for anybody, but we are proud of our own. We want to continue as such. We think that we can best grow in an environment which is harmonious with our mental, physical, and spiritual faculties. I mean we – we – that is why we believe that our race and heritage should be kept intact. And that is all that Fascism and National Socialism is. Now the concentration camps, persecutions, firing squads and all this, this could have been just the same in a Liberal society, in a Communist society, or anywhere else because this simply shows that within each group of people there are sadists, there are people who are criminals and so forth. And if these people come into power, they will do this. And that's precisely what would happen anywhere else. The – certainly the Americans, the English or any – anyone else have done the same things during the wars as the Germans have done.

The only difference is that the Germans have lost a war; the Americans have won a war. That is why they condemn them. They condemn the system and they pin down the fact that it is a system of National Socialism that created – let these people get into power; I don't believe so. I believe that, on the contrary, National Socialism and Fascism strive towards something beautiful and great. Unfortunately they – I mean there are human beings everywhere and they have been also – they have allowed certain people to get into positions of power, which have – they actually have done things that they should be ashamed of. But that is not the fault of National Socialism. I mean just for instance take the Catholic religion. I mean take the Popes.

Are you going to condemn the Catholic religion because, at a certain time, there were Popes who have killed or poisoned people and so forth? Certainly not. I mean you may be a Christian, you may be a Catholic, the religion is pure if the religion is good by itself; it's the people sometimes who do – do harm to it. But that – that is on the human.

Gordon Hall:

Are you Catholic [inaudible 00:25:05] religious?

Von Sienna:

Yes. I am Catholic by birth.

Gordon Hall:

Are many members of the NRP Roman Catholics, would you say?

Von Sienna:

Well I don't think so. I believe that most of them are not; most of them have no – no religious affiliations.

Gordon Hall:

That would have been my guess as far as – in so far as the ones that I've spoken with thus far seem to be not identified with anything in particular religion. Now you were – you are – you are now 41 did you say?

Von Sienna:

Forty-one, yes.

Gordon Hall:

And you are old enough to remember the war, World War II, or almost.

Von Sienna:

Yes. Yes.

Gordon Hall:

Well do you – do you have any memory to how you felt in relationship to the alignment of the big powers? You have the Axis Powers, so called Germany, Japan and – and Italy, and then you have the Western Alliance of the USSR, Great Britain and the United States. Did you have views even as a very young man?

Von Sienna:

I certainly did, yes. Oh yes I think – I – I don't remember a time where I didn't have views on these things, they're very strange. I was very perturbed at the – the time because...

Gordon Hall:

Now you were living in what country then?

Von Sienna:

During the war I – well I was in France.

Gordon Hall:

I see.

Von Sienna:

At the time. The time of the Vichy regime, in other words in '40 – in – from '41 to, well, '45; I was in south of France at that time. And I sympathized very strongly with Pétain and that group in that they tried to save France in – in – in cooperating, perhaps, with them to [inaudible 00:26:58] the Germans. My – well of course I – I was hoping at – at the time that Germany would win the war. And I was – when – when that – when that – when they all – when the opposite happened, when France was ultimately overrun by de Gaulle, a very appalling, I mean, liberation because there was over 105,000 people shot within a period of, I believe, three of four weeks.

Well if you consider that to be really liberation and, well that which people expected to be whereas the Germans were so cruel and so bloody, and here we have de Gualle and his liberators in France and started shooting over 110,000 people because simply they found – they cooperated with the Vichy authorities. Of course that happened in every – in every country in Europe, at the time. When – when the – it's not so much the Americans or the English who were doing that there. No they were not doing this – it's the local population who took revenge on those who were of opposite views and made a blood bath.

But I was – my views were always on the right. For some reason I found – I identified myself with the – the desire to look high towards the stars and not towards, what you would call, the common man.

Gordon Hall:

I see. Then actually you were - you were – you were then in France during the occupation.

Von Sienna:

Yes. Yes, yeah definitely.

Gordon Hall:

Did you find a reasonably happy arrangement in so far as any war time arrangement can be happy?

Von Sienna:

Well, in that I – I – I was rather indifferent as to that because, I mean, I was a very young, young boy at the time. And I was – you mean arrangement in what way? Politically? You mean weather it was...

Gordon Hall:

Well since you wanted, as you say, you hoped Germany would win the war and here you were living in a country that, in effect, was German occupied?

Von Sienna:

Yes, but you see the press – the public were quite sympathetic with the Vichy regime. In fact, I – I don't think there was any manifest opposition to it. The – the so-called "Resistance" where the Communist, or Communist-led, or people that were hiding somewhere and trying to wait time and the Germans would go out of the country and then take over; but the – the country was very peaceful until the very end, of course. Then – then it was they started to throw bombs and shoot and so forth in the street at variety.

Gordon Hall:

How did you happen to be in France that particular time?

Von Sienna:

Well, this is a – a rather personal thing. I in – in '39 I was going to, with my mother and I went, to France just for a vacation, you know. And I was a couple of months - I was in school, my first, second year, I don't remember. And we just went over to France in – in August and decided to stay and – and the war broke out, of course, September 1<sup>st</sup>. We could not go back anymore, I mean it was Germany and all the other countries were in a state of war so we decided to wait out and see what happens. Of course that...

Gordon Hall:

How many languages do you now speak?

Von Sienna:

Well let's see now, four or five, I guess five. English, French, Polish, German, and Italian.

Gordon Hall:

You handle them all very well, do you? Or reasonably well?

Von Sienna:

French – French, Polish, and German, and English I know reasonably well. Italian I – I can make myself understood, I mean a little bit with hands and a little bit with talking, but anyway.

Gordon Hall:

And your Princeton background, Princeton being a great Ivy League University of course, generally, I think, can be considered to be a – a liberal institution of higher learning.

Von Sienna:

Most definitely.

Gordon Hall:

Were – were you happy during your – did you go for four – the full four years?

Von Sienna:

Yes, yes I did yeah. Was I happy there, you mean? Well, I was not happy in – in – in the – my relationship with the – with the professors and instructors and that kind of thing.

Gordon Hall:

What years would – would these have been then, 19...?

Von Sienna:

Well let's see. It was from 1940 – '46 to 1950.

Gordon Hall:

Right.

Von Sienna:

I was – well I had a group of people there, students, who were mostly foreigners, let's say some Greeks and some Frenchmen and so forth. And we sort of had a close circle of people and I was pretty happy that way. But my relation with the University [governing body? 00:32:11] was not particularly good. That was...

Gordon Hall:

I raise the question only because you say that, in so far as you can remember, your views have always been on – on the right and ...

Von Sienna:

Right. And the intellectuals who come from this country always lean toward the left. Or at least very, very liberal with few exceptions. But Princeton of course, at that time, was perhaps not as much liberal as it is now.

Gordon Hall:

No it's changed. So I – I would say it was less liberal, or still generally pretty liberal even in the '46 to '50 period.

Von Sienna:

Yes, the – most colleges, I think, are in this country; I mean except perhaps the – some southern colleges, which would not be that, I believe. But Princeton was, and that respect I – I was a little bit at odds with their views.