AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Berlin, Germany, September 9, 1933.

SUBJECT: Attendance and business at the Leipzig Fair reported to be considerably below previous levels.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON.

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my confidential despatch No. 1501 of August 10, 1933, with reference to the Leipzig Fair, in which I stated that the Fair authorities had made it known that Jewish exhibitors and visitors would not be excluded. In spite of the unusual publicity given to the Fair, the reports now available indicate that the attendance and the business done at the Fair have been considerably below previous levels. The number of foreign exhibitors was considerably less than in previous years, and foreign purchasers were considerably less in evidence. The total of German exhibitors was also less, and the business reported all around was unsatisfactory. The results of the Fair are therefore significant from two points of view; first, that foreigners have shown their disapproval of what is taking place in Germany, in a concrete way by either refraining
refraining from exhibiting or attending the Fair; and second, the Fair business done generally is an indication that the economic situation in Germany itself has not improved in spite of the publicity which one sees constantly in the controlled press as to the improvement in various branches of industry.

The Leipzig Fair, as the Department knows, is known throughout the world and is one of Germany's oldest institutions. From the publicity which was given to the Fair during the months previous to its opening one gathered the impression that this was the first real Fair that was being held at Leipzig, since it was to be dominated by the National-Socialist spirit. The newspapers carried long articles practically every other day with regard to the Fair, emphasizing particularly the so-called "Braune Messe" (Brown Fair), where the smaller tradesmen and manufacturers alone were to be permitted to exhibit and from which all Jewish exhibitors were to be shut out.

It is quite clear that the original intention of the authorities was to prevent Jews from exhibiting at the Fair. It was found that in view of the international character of the Fair this would seriously interfere with its success, and therefore in the news items which appeared with regard to the Fair special emphasis was placed on the fact that Jewish exhibitors and visitors would be welcome. In the "Berliner Tageblatt" of August 22 a long article written by the director of the Leipzig Messeamt contained the following statement:

"The
The attention of the foreign business world has been, particularly since the revolution, directed towards the Leipzig Fair. The international reputation of the Fair will make it a measure of the success of the new Government in the business field. In spite of the atrocity and hatred propaganda of the last few months in the outside world a good attendance from foreign countries may be expected. The Fair has a history running through 700 years, and for the last 650 years there is documentary evidence that the Leipzig Fair has greeted every foreign visitor in a cordial way. Nothing has changed up to this day in this friendly attitude towards foreign visitors to the Fair and will not in the future change in the slightest way. Leipzig will greet most heartily all visitors from within and from without Germany.

The "Berliner Tageblatt" of August 26 carried a full two-column article on the Fair which was intended as propaganda to stimulate exhibitors and attendance. The same paper of August 29 carried an article which closed with a statement by the Saxon Minister President, von Killinger, to the effect that "every foreigner of whatever race may come to the Leipzig Fair with the absolute assurance that he will be treated as a respected guest. Foreign countries must know that order and safety reign in Germany, but nevertheless special orders have been given to the police that during the period of the Fair the police force must be reinforced". After the opening of the Fair itself the newspaper accounts with regard to it ceased almost entirely. The attendance and the business done so obviously fell below the records of previous years that even the controlled press found it difficult to find much to say. In the "Berliner Tageblatt" of August 31 there appeared a three-quarters column article which spoke of the success of the Fair and contained the following statement.
"In the last few days it has been possible to see that foreign countries are appearing more strongly than heretofore. By this the international character of the Fair is brought out, not only through the attendance of buyers from European states, but also from South and Central America, Persia, India and Asia."

In order to have a really correct picture of the Fair, the Consulate General asked the Consulate at Leipzig to give a confidential report, and I am indebted to Consul Busser for the following information, which is interesting:

The Leipzig Fair office states officially that the total number of exhibitors at the Leipzig Fair Sample Fair, the Building and Home Equipment Fair and the so-called Braune Nesse, amounted to 5,655. In this figure are included 687 exhibitors who entered displays at the Braune Nesse. As this latter fair is of no significance whatever, the number of real exhibitors was about 4,966. Analyzing this figure further, Consul Busser comes to the conclusion that the real number of exhibitors at the Fall Fair excluding the Brown Fair was approximately 4,000. As the official figure for the 1932 Fall Fair, which was undoubtedly correct, was given as 5,302 there has been therefore a decrease of real exhibitors this year of about 1,300 firms. This represents a decrease of about 25% over last year. The Fair office states that the total number of foreign exhibitors at this year's Fall Fair was 318, but Mr. Busser is of the opinion that it is doubtful whether the number of foreign firms exhibiting exceeded
exceeded 200. This is considerably less than in previous years, but I am not able to make any definite statement as to the decreased foreign participation.

With respect to the number of visitors to the Fair, the official figures Mr. Busser states are of little significance. Only a small minority of the people who visited the Fair, were buyers. According to the best information he could get, the number of visitors to the Fall Fair this year was at least 40 per cent less than last year. He estimates that some 64,000 persons visited the Fair last year who for the most part were potentially or primarily buyers. The official figures for the attendance at this year's Fair have not yet been issued, but have been provisionally indicated as approximately 100,000 domestic visitors and 3,500 foreigners. A considerable number of these 100,000 visited only the Braume Messe which had no real significance.

Mr. Busser closes his confidential report to the Consulate General with the following paragraph:

"It was apparent that the number of foreigners attending the Fall Fair this year was much less than the number attending the 1932 Fall Sample Fair. While many exhibitors attributed the great falling off in attendance and orders of foreign buyers to the depression, some were quite frank in stating that foreigners stayed away from this Fair on account of present political conditions in Germany and of the boycott of German goods in various foreign countries. While, according to the official figures, there were more than 3,000 foreign business visitors at the Fall Fair 1932, it is estimated that the foreign attendance at the Fall Fair 1933 fell off at least 66 per cent."
to the effect that every endeavor was made by the authorities to keep up the number of exhibitors and visitors to the Fair. Firms which have not previously exhibited at the Leipzig Fair because their business is not such that it would be worth-while to exhibit there, were practically forced to take space this year. It is known that persons who have had no interest whatever in going to the Fair in previous years and who could under no circumstances be buyers, were forced to attend. The so-called Brown Fair, which was fostered by the National-Socialist party and by the Kampfbund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes, was practically a complete failure and did not even interest the public. Many of the articles displayed could not be sold at a sample fair. The unfavorable results of the Brown Fair at Leipzig will probably dampen considerably the enthusiasm of those who have been encouraging the holding of so-called Brown Fairs all over Germany to stimulate the demand for the goods of small manufacturers and handworkers.

There are several conclusions which can be drawn from the reports available? The number of German exhibitors was less than in previous years and the number of bona fide exhibitors very much less. The number of foreign exhibitors, foreign buyers and visitors was very much less than in previous years. The exhibitors who were interviewed, without exception indicated that the business they were doing was unsatisfactory and below previous levels. In this con-
nsection therefore it is interesting to note the statement made by the director of the Leipzig Messe-
amt already quoted in this despatch, that this Fair would be a measure of the success of the new Government in the economic field. It seems that he was a better prophet than he could have hoped to be. According to the press publicity previous to the Fair this was to be the first real Leipzig Fair in the 700 years' history of the Fair because it was to be held in the National-Socialist spirit. The best information available indicates that, even considering the depression, the Fair has been one of the least successful for many years.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.