TO.

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

Berlin, Germany, November 1, 1933.

SUBJECT: With reference to the propaganda activities of the German Government.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to my previous despatches on the propaganda activities of the German Government, with particular reference to the United States. There is much evidence to the effect that the German plans for propaganda in the United States have matured considerably in the last few months and that this propaganda may assume very undesirable and even dangerous forms.

As the Department is aware, the leaders of the German revolution in the days immediately following March 5, felt that they could do what they pleased in Germany and that it was no concern of the rest of the world what they did. They did not hesitate to express this view openly as well as in private conversation. When the force of public opinion in the rest of the world made itself at least to some degree felt, these same leaders had become aware that they could not disregard it, but they satisfied their people by saying that
that there was too much to be done in Germany for Germany to concern itself with what the outside world thought about it; but as soon as they were no longer so busy within Germany, they could concern themselves with outside opinion. Just as it is true that the leaders of the National Socialist movement in the first months after March 5 really felt that what they did was no business of the rest of the world, just so is it true that they now feel that this unfavorable public opinion which they have aroused throughout practically the whole world, is a grave danger to them. Although in some respects they still have as much to do at home as before and have far from cleared up the situation in Germany, they are now deeply concerning themselves with public opinion in other countries.

As a fundamental factor in this question of German propaganda abroad, it is necessary to bear in mind that the National Socialist leaders from Mr. Hitler on down, have always considered their movement as an export product and hoped to build up National Socialist movements in other countries. They hoped to avail themselves of the disturbed economic and social conditions in other countries as the basis for National Socialist movements in those countries which would feel the natural sympathy for the movement in Germany as the parent and therefore be the means of counter-acting unfavorable public sentiment generally aroused
by acts of the revolution which had shocked the world.
Mr. Hitler likes to think of National Socialism in
Germany as the movement which will make Fascism and
authoritative Government the popular and actual form
throughout the world. He has been deeply hurt in his
personal pride, which is no little factor in his make-
up, by the unfavorable comparisons which are being made
between him and Mussolini and between German National
Socialism and Italian Fascism. It is known for instance,
that in a recent interview which he had with the Italian
Ambassador when the Ambassador gave him certain messages
on behalf of Mussolini indicating particularly that
Italy feared the extravagant and radical measures of
National Socialism in Germany and the consequences of
her withdrawal from the League and the Disarmament
Conference, the Chancellor went into one of his frenzies
and is said to have actually wept, stating that Mussol-
ini had abandoned him because he was jealous of the
place that German National Socialism was getting in
the world and that after all, although Fascism had
done a great deal for Italy, it was German National
Socialism which was beginning to be the salvation not
only of its own country, but of the world.

In the speeches of Hitler, Goebbels, Goering and
other important leaders of the Party during the first
months of the revolution and until quite recently,
there was no concealment of the idea which they held
that National Socialism was an export product and that
Germany was not only saving the world from Bolshevism but giving it a form of Government suited to modern conditions. From the outset of the revolution all sorts of people in the Party have been studying propaganda methods and possibilities in other countries, not only for the purpose of justifying what has been done during the revolution in Germany, but also to strengthen incipient movements of discontent in foreign countries and to turn them into National Socialist movements which would look towards Germany.

The recent developments in the international situation, however, and particularly the withdrawal of Germany from the League and the Disarmament Conference and perhaps more concretely the dissatisfaction shown by various Governments with the activity of German agents and propaganda methods, have brought about a complete change of front openly by leaders of the Party in Germany. Mr. Hitler and Mr. Goebbels and other Party leaders, in their recent speeches have been emphasizing that National Socialism is not an export product; that it is intended to regenerate German life and to make it into a new nation; and they disclaim specifically any intention of aiding or building up National Socialist movements in other countries. All this must be taken with a grain of salt, in fact with many grains of salt, because in private conversations with leaders of the Party I have the real conviction that they are interested as much as ever in National Socialism.
Socialism as an export product and this is something that we shall have to recognize in spite of any protestations which the German authorities and Party leaders may make.

There is transmitted herewith as an indication of the material which is being fed to the German people, a clipping from the "Berliner Tageblatt" of October 23 entitled: "Japanese National Socialism".

It is known that various people within the Party have been studying carefully propaganda methods which may be usefully employed in the rest of the world. I have in a previous dispatch called attention to a meeting which was held by the "Ausländer Institut" in Stuttgart, at which were present Germans residing in practically all parts of the world and at which were discussed propaganda methods. England and her colonies and the United States have, however, from the beginning been among the main objectives of the propaganda movement.

On various occasions when leaders of the Party have discussed with me their concern over the unfavorable public opinion in the United States and how it may be overcome and have emphasized what they believe the importance of active propaganda on their part, I have tried to point out to them the dangers which lie in their plans. I have told them that the American people are in no mood for propaganda from an outside source. I have pointed out the special danger which lies in their idea that they can use the Germans in America or those of German
German origin for propaganda purposes and that they are very wrong in their belief that these people in the United States can be turned readily into a servile instrument on their account and as against the best interests of their adopted country. I have tried to make it clear that the constructive accomplishments of their movement have so far been so few and so intangible and of a nature so little to appeal to our own people, that I believe that they have nothing sufficiently concrete to put forward as favorable indications of what they have done. It is known that one of the very few constructive things that the Government has done here is to bring about greater centralization of power and the laying of the foundation for the elimination of state governments. I have told them that while this may be a good thing in Germany, it would not be considered by us a good thing for the United States and that therefore the one constructive thing which they may have done would not appeal to us. Even such a well-balanced and in many ways fine personality as Dr. Curtius, in a speech which he made introducing Ambassador Dodd to the members of the conservative "Deutscher Klub", and who presumably knows something of our country, at least more than most Germans in public life, said that the German program for the elimination of states would undoubtedly be followed by us. I have tried to indicate in these conversations that American public opinion is very definitely informed concerning the action which the Government has taken in Germany against Jews and all opponents of the regime.
regime, and of the radical and drastic social and economic measures which have been taken often in discrimination of the most fundamental rights of persons and not infrequently in violation of long-standing international practice. I have said that until Germany can show that these things are no longer taking place and can offer concrete constructive acts as a justification of the new Government, they can make no worth while propaganda in the United States and that anything that they do undertake for the present, may do them more harm than good.

In spite of this, however, the Department is aware of what has been done both here and in the United States. I have in previous despatches indicated to the Department the machinery which exists here for taking in hand important Americans and other foreigners as they come here. During the first months, I believe we can say for the first six months of the revolution, practically all distinguished Americans who came to Germany called at the Embassy and the Consulate. In more recent months these people are calling less and less at our Government establishments, for the simple reason that they are taken hold of as soon as they arrive by representatives of various Ministries and are given a round of entertainment and are filled up with engagements and propaganda. The results of this have already been seen in interviews which these persons have given to the German press, to the American press in Paris and
to our own press on their arrival at home. These people can get no proper idea of what is passing in the country by a short stay and only by contacting with the people to whom they are led by the German authorities. That this well-organized machinery for taking care of Americans and other foreigners in Germany exists, is certain; and I am getting through confidential sources increasing evidence that Americans are being steered away from their own Government officials by these propaganda agents and in some cases by higher ranking officers of the Government, on the ground that we are prejudiced and that there is no use seeing us. That this sort of thing can be done with intelligent and well-meaning Americans is no compliment to American understanding and penetration; but that it is being done in certain cases successfully, is evident.

I am not able to speak with any definiteness about German propaganda action in the United States. The Department has more definite and accurate information on this point than we have; but that the propaganda in the United States has received active stimulus and support from the authorities and the Party organization here, is quite clear from the admissions in private conversations which I have had. I am sure that the Ambassador has brought to the attention of the Department that a certain well-known publicity agent in the United States is almost certainly in the employ of the German Government and that his son is in Berlin for purposes
purposes of contact. I will not go into this further as I believe the Ambassador has already reported on it to the Department. An American woman, formerly a professor at Vassar, is now in the employ of the Party here in connection with American propaganda methods.

Mr. Geist of my staff, who attended a luncheon yesterday of the American Chamber of Commerce addressed by Count Luckner, tells me that during the conversation which he had with Count Luckner the latter showed him a telegram which he had received from a "Col. Emerson" in New York to the following effect: "The Party here is broken up terribly and needs a leader". The rest of the telegram went on to ask whether Luckner would not be willing to come and to assume leadership. I do not know what information Congressman Dickstein's committee may have been able to get, but I think that the information which we have had from time to time here in personal conversations indicates that there is an active interest in the Party here in the development of National Socialist organizations in the United States. If we were to attempt anything of this kind in the way of propaganda in Germany, those who indulged in it would be arrested at once for high treason. On the other hand Germany hopes to and believes that she can carry on such propaganda methods and activities in the United States freely and without hindrance.

That the authorities here are disturbed by the information which some of us have been giving them concerning
their propaganda in the United States and by the recent newspaper developments in the United States exposing some of their activities, is made startlingly clear this morning by the appearance in the "Berliner Tageblatt" of an article which is transmitted herewith and which is headed: "Hitler to the United States, Against National Socialist Propaganda in Foreign Countries". The article goes on to say that the Chancellor received yesterday Karl von Wiegand of the Hearst Press and made a categoric denial that the Party was interested in propaganda in foreign countries for the building-up of National Socialist organizations. The Chancellor is said to have stated in the interview that it is strictly forbidden for Party members in foreign countries to undertake National Socialist propaganda. It is characteristic, however, that the Chancellor's statement itself admits that there are "party members" in other countries. I do not wish to make remarks which seem to be disparaging of such an important officer of a foreign state as its Chancellor; but I believe that it is essential that we realize, as I am sure the Department does, and more essential that public opinion in the United States realize, which is not so certain, that these statements of responsible heads of the German Government and of the National Socialist Party are often insincere. Admissions of the leaders of the Party in private conversation in recent weeks, have indicated just as great an interest as ever in
organizations of the Party in foreign countries as well as the active necessity of support from Germany for such organizations. The Chancellor's statement, therefore, to the Hearst Press, must I think be looked upon merely as an endeavor to appease public opinion and not as representing the real situation so far as German intentions are concerned. I think we must look forward to continued activity and even on a larger scale, of German agents in the United States. I believe that such activities must be suppressed by us with the same energy as any foreign propaganda activities would be suppressed in Germany. The present German Government will understand only one attitude on our part with respect to these propaganda measures. If we repress them decidedly and call them what they are, that is, unwarranted interference in American public life and opinion and a distinctly unfriendly act, and take active measures against the leaders in the United States, the German Government will thoroughly understand and may be influenced; but any too quiet or too easy action against these propaganda measures in our country will encourage the German authorities to renewed and greater efforts; and in view of the unscrupulous measures which we know have been employed here, there is every reason to believe that such propaganda might be extremely undesirable in our country.

I think in this connection it will be interesting for the Department to know that I have learned that Dr. Ilgner
Ilgner, whose trip to the United States has been somewhat postponed, will probably be leaving in a month. He is a nephew of Dr. Schmidt, one of the big men of the I.G. Farben. I have known Ilgner for about three years and before March 5 he was the contact man of Dr. Schmidt and the I.G. Farben, with the National Socialist movement. I recall a number of conversations with him before March 5 in which he showed his active interest in the National Socialist movement, and while expressing complete disapproval of its economic program, he at the same time expressed the conviction that the leading industrialists and financiers of Germany would be called in to aid the Party after it came into power and that they would control the movement. The opinion was often expressed to him by others in my presence, that it was all very well for the leading industrialists and financiers to believe that the movement which they were assisting to get into power might need them but that this was a very different thing from the movement actually using them and that if such a radical movement would permit conservative business men to control its economic policy from the outset, it was the first time that this would have happened in history. Dr. Ilgner always expressed directly and by implication his belief that those of whom he was speaking were supermen and that there was no question but that they would control things when the Party came into power. The first six months of the revolution were a great disappointment to these
these self-termed "super" men, although it is also quite evident that the I.G. Farben was much less molested than some of the other important concerns by the revolution. Dr. Ilgner has within recent months been practically released from all duty with the I.G. Farben and has become a very important man in the Party. He is to be their propaganda adviser and I believe particularly for the United States.

He was present at a luncheon of the Carl Schurz Vereinigung the other day which was given in honor of Ambassador Dodd, and he was given a seat better than that of the regular Government officials of the German Government present. I learned after the luncheon that he is to be the new head of the Carl Schurz Vereinigung. He is young, conceited and entirely self-satisfied and believes himself to be one of Germany's supernmen. He is intelligent and in some respect well-informed, but his arrogance and conceit make him in some respects a dangerous person. He is I believe a person who in propaganda activities would be absolutely unscrupulous. He is flattered by the position which has been given him in the Party and has become an absolutely servile instrument. He had planned to go to the United States some time ago and I think his trip was delayed because of the exposure in the United States of National Socialist propaganda methods. According to his latest plans, however, he will probably be there in December or January. Through the I.G. Farben connections and
through the connections which he himself has made on previous trips to the United States on business, he is assured of a hearing in certain circles which I do not believe he deserves now. If he comes to the United States he should be handled as the sort of person which he really is and I believe that no dependance whatever can be placed in his statements with regard to the present Government, its acts and its intentions, and that it must be recognized that he is a servile and unscrupulous instrument. By this I do not mean to imply that Dr. Ilgner is so definitely fundamentally unscrupulous, but merely that he has become a servile Party instrument.

I have endeavored in this despatch to bring out that from the information which I have been able to gather here, National Socialism is considered by Party leaders as an export product; that the Party is interested in and is fostering National Socialist movements in other countries; and that any protestations to the contrary must be accepted not at their face, but at their real value. In this matter of propaganda and declarations with regard thereto, the attitude of the National Socialist Party and of the German Government must be judged by its acts and not by any declarations which may be made by Party or Governmental leaders.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

Enclosures: 2 clippings.