Vienna, November 15, 1936.

No. 609

Subject: WITH REFERENCE TO AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES TO BE HELD IN BERLIN IN 1936.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit to the Department the following considerations which may be of interest to it in connection with the discussions now in progress in the United States over the question of American participation in the Olympic Games. It appears that a meeting of the Amateur Athletic Union is to be held in New York in the early part of December to again discuss the question as to
as to whether the various athletic associations connected with it shall participate in the Olympic Games. Very considerable importance must be attached to the decision which this organization will take, for it may have a decisive effect on the extent and nature of American participation. For this reason it would appear of primary importance that this organization have accurate information with regard to the actual situation in Germany and the conditions under which the American athletes would participate.

The question of American participation in the Olympic Games arose already several years ago when I was still Consul General in Berlin. I felt at that time that the circumstances were such that American athletic organizations could not properly participate in the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936, and I believe that it is desirable that I should say that nothing that has happened in these two years has changed this view, but, on the other hand, everything that has happened has been in the direction of showing that American participation is undesirable.

When the present Government in Germany came into power and began its program of discrimination, not only on the basis of race and religion, but directed against all persons who were not in accord with National Socialist political, social, and economic doctrines, there was a very definite feeling in sporting and athletic circles in the United States, as well as in other countries, that under the conditions prevailing in Germany and which were likely to continue to exist there, it would be undesirable for the Olympic Games to be held in Berlin. There was
a very general conviction that the principles and actions of National Socialism were so contrary to the principles of sports and so opposed to the Olympic idea that it would be an anachronism to hold the Olympic Games in Germany under these conditions.

Immediately upon its coming into power, the National Socialist Government publicly declared that all public opinion forming means must be coordinated into and controlled by the State and be used as an instrument by the Party for consolidating its hold on the German people. The press, the theater, the church, the films, sports, the universities, schools, and all other organizations must be definitely controlled by the State and the Party and become its instruments in carrying through its policy and will. This declared program, of which no concealment whatever has been made, has been carried through during the past two years with a definiteness of purpose and with an effectiveness which would have been possible in practically no other country. The carrying through of this program has involved persecution of organizations and individuals, and their elimination from participation in German life.

Now complete this coordination of the public opinion forming means has been, it is not necessary to go into here, for the Department has such ample and detailed information on this subject. It is only necessary to note here that the persecution has been carried through irrespective of race and religion, and has been directed against all those who did not submit to complete coordination into the Party program. While the action of the Party was particularly directed towards the
elimination of the Jews from German life, the record
shows how clearly the action has been directed also
against the Protestant and Catholic Churches and against
professors, artists, industrialists, and persons in every
category of political and social activity.

It is pertinent to note here that the same action
which has been taken in other aspects of German life
has been applied to the field of sport. Sport as an
activity, particularly of youth, was one of the major
aspects of German life which must be coordinated into
and definitely controlled by the Party. All German
sport is today directly controlled by the Government
and is professedly an instrument of the Party for the
shaping of youth into National Socialist ideology.
There is no tolerance and no freedom in sport, but
absolute and definite control by the State. Not only
is it controlled by the State, but it is considered by
the State and Party as one of those activities of German
life to be most definitely organized and controlled by
the State. Sport has therefore become a political
mater, and sport organizations and activities must be
recognized as a political activity of the German State.
The authority of the leader of German sports, Fickاخر
von Osten, is complete.

Already in the first months of the coming into
power of the National Socialist Government it laid great
stress on the Olympic Games being held in Berlin in 1936.
As the Party bases its appeal very largely to the youth
of the country, it was recognized at the outset that an
instrument the Olympic Games could become in consolidating
the position of the Party among the youth of Germany.
When the discriminatory measures against the Jews and the Church in particular aroused such widespread resentment and comment outside of Germany, and when Jews were excluded from participation in German sports, it was realized that this might bring about action in various countries, particularly in the United States and England and in Scandinavia, leading to non-participation in the 1936 Games. It was recognized at the outset also that the decision of the American Olympic Committee would play a predominant part in determining to what degree there would be foreign participation in the Games.

Every endeavor was therefore made to convince the American Olympic Committee that there was no discrimination in Germany, particularly that there was no discrimination against Jews. In order to put the best face on the German situation, Dr. von Leewald, who is partly Jewish, was permitted to remain as the nominal head of the German Olympic Committee. Dr. von Leewald had been the head of the German Olympic Committee during the Los Angeles Games. He is a man well on in years and has a distinguished career of usefulness in various fields behind him. By virtue of his personality he had become decidedly persona grata to the Americans and other members of the International Olympic Committee. He was therefore retained by the German Government as a facade, but actually had all real power in German sports taken from him. When the American Olympic Committee met in Washington, now almost several years ago, to discuss the question of the attitude it should take towards representation in Berlin in 1936 in view of developments
developments in Germany, a telegram was addressed by
the Committee to Dr. von Leewald requesting confirmation
or denial of the reports of discrimination which had
reached the American Committee. Dr. von Leewald
replied to this telegram stating that he could assure
the American Committee that Jews were permitted to
compete freely in Germany and that there was no
discrimination. Largely on the basis of this telegram,
the American Committee voted favorably on participation
in Berlin.

For the Department's information, I may say that
I have known Dr. von Leewald well and held him in very
high regard. When I asked him what reply he had made
to the American Committee, he told me, with tears in
his eyes, that he had replied that there was no
discrimination. Then, as a friend, I reproached him
for in this way misusing the confidence which his
American friends put in him, he replied that I must
know that the consequences would be to him if he had
made any other reply. To this, I merely remarked that
there were times when, in order to maintain one's self-
respect and the confidence of one's friends, one must
accept the consequences which come from doing right.

Since that time the increasing difficulties of the
present government in Germany have only increased its
interest in the Olympic Games. It is the opinion of
objective observers that the base of power of the Party
in Germany is constantly growing narrower. The older
Generation, which for the greater part was never in
sympathy with the present Government, has now lost all
confidence in it. The people of middle age, who for a
time looked upon the Party as the savior of German honor and German economy, are increasingly of the conviction that the political, economic, and financial policy of the Government, as well as its social program, are bringing disaster to the country, and the support of the Party in this group has correspondingly become weaker. The main support of the Party from the outset has been principally among the youth, and today its actual base of power is practically confined to them. This, together with the increasing difficulties of the régime, explains the really enormous interest which the Party has in the Olympic Games being held in Berlin. The youth of Germany believe that National Socialist ideology is being rapidly accepted in other countries. The Party, through its controlled press and other propaganda means, has definitely instilled this idea into the minds of the young people of Germany. To the Party and to the youth of Germany, the holding of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 has become the symbol of the conquest of the world by National Socialist doctrine. Should the Games not be held in Berlin, it would be one of the most serious blows which National Socialist prestige could suffer within an awakening Germany and one of the most effective ways in which the world outside has of showing to the youth of Germany its opinion of National Socialist doctrine.

In order to convince the outside world that there is no discrimination, a few athletes of Jewish origin have been permitted so far to train for the Olympic Games. These few exceptions, which, so far as I can learn, do not number more than four or five out of a people of sixty-five.
sixty-five millions, are presented to the world as proof that there is no discrimination against the Jews. The rules of German sport organizations, which are a matter of record, nevertheless prescribe that only German citizens can compete for Germany in any national or international event. As the Jews under the Nuremberg laws are not first class German citizens, there is no longer any doubt that all persons with any strain of Jewish blood, no matter how attenuated, will not be permitted to compete for Germany. The question, however, is really a much broader and much wider one, for under the strictly state controlled sports which are the rule in Germany today, all the principles of fair-play which sport stands for are disregarded and replaced by those of National Socialist doctrine and discipline.

In view of the ample data which are available with regard to discrimination in Germany, not only against Jews, and of the well known fact that sport in Germany is a state controlled institution, which is professedly an instrument of the Party, it is clear that no evidence need be adduced to the American Olympic Committee or to that in any other country to show that sport in Germany is a political and state controlled institution, subject to rules, conditions, and procedure which do not prevail in any of the other countries participating in the Olympic Games. In view of this situation, it is inconceivable that the American Olympic Committee should continue its stand that sport in Germany is non-political, that there is no discrimination, and that therefore American athletes should compete in Berlin in 1936. In face of all the information which is available and which is so notoriously clear
clear, the American Committee could not, without 
sincerely stultifying itself and without betraying its 
obligations toward American athletic organizations and 
American youth, maintain its present attitude.

The German Government places special value on 
American participation, for our contingent has always 
been since the War the most numerous. The American 
participation has been predominant at all the Olympic 
Games since the War, and the American Committee has 
played a correspondingly predominant role. There has 
been a very real movement in many countries against 
participation, and individual athletic organizations in 
a number of European countries, in spite of the attitude 
of their national committee, voted not to participate. 
The national committees in several countries, however, 
have refrained from taking an attitude against participation 
in view of the strong position taken by the American 
Olympic Committee. They feel that if the American 
Committee takes this attitude and there is consequent 
strong American participation, the Games will be, from 
the point of view of representation, a success, and it 
would therefore be useless for them to vote for abstention. 
I am informed reliably that there is a wide hope in other 
national committees that the American Committee may take 
a more realistic position with respect to the situation 
in Germany and change its present attitude, which is so 
strongly for participation. The probabilities are that if 
the American Committee frankly recognizes the situation 
which prevails in Germany, American athletic organizations 
will not participate and that this lead will be followed 
immediately in many countries.

I have
I have noticed recently in our press declarations by prominent members of the American Committee that the Olympic Games are not a political matter and that American athletes cannot be brought into a political problem, and that, therefore, our participation should be as numerous as usual in Berlin. It is true that the Olympic Games are not political and should remain non-political, but it is exactly this situation which seems to be ignored by the American Committee. At least several of the members of the American Committee have been in Germany recently and must know with what definiteness German sport is controlled by the State and how clearly it is considered a political instrument. They must recognize what value the present German Government places upon the Olympic Games being held in Berlin in 1936, and how definitely it hopes to use them, not only as a political instrument within Germany, but also as a propaganda instrument throughout the world.

For the very reason therefore which these members of the American Committee advance for participation, we should refrain from participation in order to prevent decent, well-thinking, and fair-play loving American youth, devoted to the fundamental principles of sport and to the Olympic idea, from being used by another Government as a political instrument.

There is very little that we in the United States can do to influence developments outside. There is, perhaps, very little that we want to do in certain directions. The Olympic Games with us are a purely non-political matter, in which our Government and the Department of State take no direct action. In view, however
however, of the fact that the National Socialist Government in Germany is deliberately endeavoring to use the Games as a political instrument, in view of the definite state control of sport in Germany, and in view of the misleading information which has been given through the German Olympic Committee, which is state controlled, to the American Committee, it is, I believe, a matter of concern to us that the sport loving young people of America may not be used as a political instrument by another state. It would seem that we cannot permit that the ideals of sport in the United States, which mean so much to us, should be misused and that our fine young people at home should be misled for the purpose of serving the ends of a political party in another country and to further its size for political expansion and prestige. This is the situation with which we are faced today, and I feel that a heavy responsibility rests on the American Olympic Committee for the attitude which, in face of the facts, it has up to now assumed. It would seem to be the plain duty of the American Committee to make clear to the American universities and colleges and athletic organizations what the real situation is, and then leave it to the individual organizations to take their own action. There seems little question of what that action would be.

It is not improbable that the real significance of the attitude of the American Committee and of its far-reaching implications may have escaped the attention of the members of the Committee. There are many wise and well informed observers in Europe who believe that the holding or the non-holding of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936
in 1936 will play an important part in determining political developments in Europe. I believe that this view of the importance of the Olympic Games being held in Berlin in 1936 is not exaggerated. My reasons, however, for having addressed the Department at this length on this subject, are entirely aside from these considerations. As one who is familiar with the situation in Germany, with the discrimination existing there, and with the definite use of sport as a political instrument of the State, I am of the opinion that the American Olympic Committee in taking the stand which it has, has failed in its duty towards the young people of our country. I believe that our dignity and prestige and our adherence to the ideals of fair-play and the non-political character of sport make it necessary and imperative that the American Olympic Committee revise its attitude and make it clear what the real position is in Germany, leaving it to individual athletic organizations in the United States to take the action which they may see fit with regard to participation.

As of interest in this connection I transmit herewith a translation of an article which appeared in a Vienna newspaper of November 12th. I am also transmitting herewith an article which appeared in the London TIMES of November 8th, entitled "The Jews in Germany", as well as an editorial from the same issue entitled "Persecution without Profit." I am transmitting these letters as they show so definitely how unfounded the German assertions with regard
with regard to lack of discrimination are.

Respectfully yours,

File No. 940.6

Enclosures:
1. Article from TELEGRAPH, November 12, 1956.
2. Article and editorial from London TIMES, Nov. 9, 1956.