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NO. 1539

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

Berlin, Germany, September 16, 1933.

SUBJECT: Speech of Minister Goebbels before the officers of the Berlin district of the National Socialist Party on September 13, and certain observations in connection therewith.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

SIR:

I have the honor to inform the Department that on September 13 the Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, made a speech before the officers of the various organizations of the National Socialist Party in the district of Berlin, which had considerable significance and of which I believe it will be of interest to bring certain parts to the attention of the Department as they are interesting and indicative of certain aspects of the National Socialist movement in Germany as it stands today.

In a previous despatch I endeavored to give to the Department a character sketch of Dr. Goebbels and since writing that despatch some months ago there has been no reason to change the opinions expressed therein. He remains the principal popular spokesman of the National Socialist Party and the one who has, through his addresses, the greatest appeal to the masses. The Department is

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aware that he is the principal support of the Chancellor, Mr. Hitler, in his anti-Semitic program and that it is the influence of the Chancellor and of Dr. Goebbels combined which has made impossible even such slight moderations in the anti-Semitic program which are favored and deemed advisable for the sake of the future of the Party and of the country by certain other high leaders of the movement. Dr. Goebbels remains the rallying point of the most radical elements in the Party and although his influence has been somewhat on the wane since his address at Hamburg in early July when he stated that the revolution was just beginning and when the Chancellor a few days later found it necessary to state that the revolution had ended and the period of evolution had begun, his usefulness to the Party is still so great that the plans to relegate him to a secondary plane seem to have been for the time being, abandoned. For some time after his unfortunate speech at Hamburg in early July, his public addresses were much less frequent and much milder and he was obviously, so far as his addressees were concerned, under a certain amount of control. The Party celebration at Nuremberg, however, brought him again into the limelight and his speeches and those of the Chancellor there were carefully coordinated and bore principally on racial problems. It is unquestionable that Dr. Goebbels has an extraordinary gift of speech which has its appeal to the prejudices and the feelings of the masses; and the situation in which Germany finds itself and the problems

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facing the Party are so serious that it is apparent from more recent happenings that Dr. Goebbels' gift of speech will again be used more freely. He similarly has an extraordinary capacity for organisation of spectacles and for arousing mass opinion, and this is again being brought into use by the Party.

In his speech of September 13 under reference, he said in resume as follows:

"If one makes a careful examination of what has happened during the past seven months, it is difficult to say which acts of the new Government have been the most decisive and the most important. However, everything that we National Socialists dreamed of in the past years with respect to political reforms and to decisive changes in our inward and outward life, has practically become a reality.

If one enters into the question of what is then the most significant, the most prominent and the historical of the acts of the last months, one can say that it is that there is now a central leadership in Germany. Now the whole question is brought together in the iron front of the National Socialist organization and this organization will take over for the whole future the guarantee that Germany shall be united and unbroken.

The men who today under Adolf Hitler determine the fate of Germany, have only one ambition, - to bring into fulfillment acts which will figure in history. The danger of a Communist "Putsch" can now be spoken of as completely eliminated.

Worse than the Communist danger is the hatred which is being built up against us beyond our borders. When some days ago there fell into my hands the so-called "Brown Book" and I saw in it that the burning of the Reichstag was a plan worked out in my head which had been carried out in practice by Minister President Goering, I could only say: God forgive them, for they know not what they do! I do not believe that the foreign countries take these things seriously. The German people put aside such pamphlets with a shrug of the shoulder.

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The working people of Germany measure by our successes the justice of our course.

If the revolution was brought to a close some weeks ago and a new period of evolution begun, so I can assure you that we are now standing at the beginning of a new epoch in which the National Socialist movement and the State have become one.

THE POWER IS IN OUR HANDS. WE NOT ONLY POSSESS THE POWER BUT WE POSSESS THE PEOPLE, OF WHICH I MAY SAY WE HAVE ALMOST MUCH TOO MANY.

There are those who say that the National Socialist movement can only celebrate holidays. If this were so, even then it would be something, for the republic could not even do this. Indeed we do know how to hold celebrations, but we do not hold them without a reason and every celebration has its object and after each celebration there follows some action that was only made possible through it.

If for example the German people on the 21st of March in Potsdam went through a new national birth, it was through this celebration that it was possible a few days later for the Hitler regime to get from the Reichstag an overwhelming vote of confidence. If the German people on the first of May on the Tempelhof Field lived through their new social rebirth, then it was only because of this celebration that it was possible on the second of May for us to occupy the offices and houses of the trades unions. If in Nuremberg recently we brought ourselves together into one German nation, then it is only because of this celebration that it is possible today to appeal to this nation to fight against the hunger and cold of the coming winter."

It was then after these preliminaries that Dr. Goebbels reached his main theme and that is, the campaign which is being launched by him and the Chancellor against "hunger and cold". He referred to the statements that unemployment has been reduced by the National Socialist Party by two millions; but that there are still four millions of unemployed and that it is the duty of the Party and the nation, the two now being one, to see that no one suffers from hunger and cold. Dr. Goebbels is well aware that the unemployed have not been reduced by two millions as the

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censored press and the various State Presidents claim. He is aware that the number of unemployed is in reality as great as when the National Socialist Party came into power. He knows that the possibilities of caring for those who are in need are less than when the Party came into power. He is keenly aware, as are his associates in the leadership of the Party, that hunger and cold not only among the unemployed but also among the many millions of Germans whose means of existence are extremely limited, present a serious danger to the future of the Party and the present Government. The actual probability of suffering among a great mass of the German people during the coming winter, is well known to leaders of the movement as one of the rocks on which the Party may founder.

This speech of Dr. Goebbels, together with that of the Chancellor, has launched a movement which is to raise funds with which hunger and cold can be fought during the coming winter. The plans which have been announced for raising the money are characteristic of the organizing activities and methods of Dr. Goebbels. On the first Sunday of every month all Germans are to limit their meals in homes or in restaurants to a cost of 50 pfennigs and the remainder which would ordinarily be spent by them on meals, is to be contributed to the fund. Monthly collections are to be made on the streets and from house to house. In rural districts food collections are to take the place of money contributions. Wholesale provision merchants, *coal* and wood dealers, shall contribute monthly

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to the fund and endeavor to reduce their prices to those in distress. A national relief lottery, the price of the tickets being 50 pfennigs, is to be launched. All workers are to give the equivalent of one hour's work per month to the fund. Relief stamps are to be sold and theatres are to give benefit performances.

More characteristic than the foregoing, however, is the announcement of Dr. Goebbels that with the authorization of the leader of the Party he has issued an order that from the first of October there is to begin a propaganda movement all over Germany, instituted by the National Socialist Party, to gather funds for the winter relief. Every speaker who is designated who holds a high position in the Government, is required in the two months following October 1 to address fifteen gatherings and if he holds no office, he is required to make twenty-five such speeches. Dr. Goebbels goes on to say that in two months, therefore, the Party will hold one hundred fifty thousand public meetings and that "the Party shall know that it is the bearer of the power".

In addition to the methods above recited, all kinds of pressure is to be brought to bear upon business and banking establishments and upon those who still have some means, to make large contributions to the fund. The "Berliner Tageblatt" of September 14 carries a notice to the effect that within three hours after the speeches of Dr. Goebbels and the Chancellor, important contributions

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had already been received. It is quite significant to note that among those published in the first list are district organizations of the National Socialist Party, the money of which of course comes from the Party members.

It so happened that on the late afternoon of September 13 I was making a call upon Dr. Funk who is the State Secretary in the Ministry of Propaganda and the close adjutant of Dr. Goebbels. He spoke of the campaign which they had launched and the satisfactory results which they had already had in the way of contributions. He said: "You must admit that we have a wonderful capacity for organization", to which I replied that they did have an undoubted capacity for organization, but no amount of organization could, out of the mere framework or organization, extract money. I indicated that in view of the poor position in which industries and those who formerly could contribute to such funds found themselves, it might be difficult for them to get any real amount of money for the fund. I gathered the distinct impression then from Dr. Funk, that the main dependence is to be placed upon this campaign of public speeches which is to influence the great mass of the German population which already is living on very slender income, to make the sacrifices for the Party coffers and for the relief fund. During the course of our conversation he was interrupted by a telephone call which obviously came from a Jew whom he was assisting to get a passport to leave the country.

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He said over the telephone: "The question of the passport is arranged. I wonder whether you have heard of the fund we are raising against "Hunger und Not"?" The person at the other end of the wire evidently inquired how much he was expected to contribute, and Dr. Funk gave him to understand that a liberal contribution would be expected. He turned to me and said: "You see, I do not allow one opportunity to go by to get a good contribution".

I mention this as it is significant of the naive and almost childlike attitude which is taken by some of the higher officials towards this campaign. In recent despatches I have brought to the attention of the Department the fact that the response to the various funds which have been started with so much publicity since the National Socialist Party came into power, has been very poor. They have been launched with tremendous publicity which continued for some days and then no more mention was made of them. Inquiry as to the actual amount which has been paid into the funds shows that it is difficult to get any definite data; but sufficient information is available to show that the response was extraordinarily small. The method, however, is characteristic of the National Socialist Party. A fund for the relief of the public is launched with nation-wide publicity, and attention is directed to the fact that it is the National Socialist Party and the new Government which are concerning themselves, as if for the first time, with the situation of a ^{certain} section of the population.

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This method has been followed with respect to the present campaign to relieve hunger and cold during the coming winter; but in this case the situation is a much more real one. A fund launched to take care of the widows and children of workers who died in factories and in the mines, does not arouse much public comment if the contributions to it are inadequate. However, the problem of hunger and cold during the coming winter may be a very real one, and the stomachs of the German people, even the most fanatical Party members, will not be satisfied with the one hundred fifty thousand speeches which are to be made during the two months following October 1.

It will be noted that in the speech of Dr. Goebbels on September 13 under reference, he refers to the "hatred which is being built up against Germany beyond her borders". This has been a characteristic theme of Dr. Goebbels since the accession of the new Government to power. The "Berliner Tageblatt" of September 15 carries a speech of Dr. Frank who is the Minister of Justice of the Reich, in which he said: "The world must recognize that the work of Hitler serves the development of all mankind". In the same speech Dr. Frank attacks the so-called "hatred propaganda" being carried on in other countries. This is a common theme as the Department knows, among all the National Socialist speakers and leaders, and in this connection the Department will be interested to know that on the afternoon of September 13 when I saw Dr. Funk, he was most communicative and pleasant and wished

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to talk about all sorts of things. He said that he was glad that the American press had already considerably changed its tone towards Germany and that the press and the people were beginning to realize what was really happening in Germany and estimating it at its true value. He asked me whether this were not so. I said that I could only reply to him in all frankness and tell him what the situation was as I knew it. I said that I could not conceive of public opinion being more unfavorable in the United States to Germany than it now is and that if anything, it was steadily growing more unfavorable, and with reason. I said that if he had been informed that public opinion was becoming more favorable, it would be well for him to check upon his informants as it was exceedingly dangerous for him to have any misapprehensions and that so far as I was able to tell, the information which he had did not agree with what I was able to learn myself. I brought to his attention the fact that the recent attacks on Americans on the streets of Berlin, had brought about a very serious situation and that instead of public opinion being more favorable it was constantly becoming more clear to people in the United States that it might not be safe for them to come to Germany as foreigners were not safe on the streets and were not provided adequate protection. Dr. Funk then went on to belittle the attack which had been made on Mr. Kaltenborn's son, trying to place the responsibility on the Kaltenborns for having turned their backs to the street and for having looked
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into a show-window. I told him that no matter how they might wish to explain the attack on Mr. Kaltenborn's son to themselves, these explanations would not be of any significance to the people of the United States who could only see that an unprovoked attack was made upon a young American on the streets of Berlin in broad daylight, and that when the father attempted to take the assailant to the nearest policeman, the attitude of the crowd was so threatening that he had to desist out of fear of injury which might be inflicted upon his wife and daughter who also accompanied him. I said to Dr. Funk that he must realize what the effect of such incidents on public opinion in any country will be and that the German Government cannot expect favorable news in the foreign press, particularly our own, as long as such incidents are allowed to take place.

Dr. Funk also referred to the attack on a young student whom he did not mention by name, but I assumed that he referred to Mr. Bessard, and he stated that this young man left Germany quite satisfied that everything was all right here. He said that before the young man left here he was taken to Potsdam and shown the city and given an opportunity to see what the situation really was and that it had a good effect on him. I did not ask him any questions but gathered the distinct impression that after the attack on Mr. Bessard in some way or other the Propaganda Ministry had got in touch with him and shown him various attentions.

I told him that in my opinion what was as serious as the actual taking place of the incidents, was the fact that

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the German Government was slow to take any real and prompt action towards punishing the offenders. I told him that in the case of Dr. Mulvihill the S.A. man had been arrested but we had no indication when he would be tried. I pointed out that the two policemen who had witnessed the attack on Bossard and who had done nothing, had not so far as we were informed, been punished in any way. I said that as long as the German press did not carry any news with regard to these attacks on foreigners and the specific indication as to the adequate punishment which had been meted out to the offenders, the Government could hardly expect these attacks and incidents to cease. As long as the German people did not know through their own press that the Government did not wish these things to take place and would punish those who committed such attacks, they must be under the impression that they had at least the tacit approval of the Government. I pointed out that when Gruppenfuehrer Ernst called upon the Ambassador to express regrets over the attack on Dr. Mulvihill, the publication of this in the German press would have had an excellent effect on the S.A. and on the population, a much better effect than the most stringent orders issued to the S.A. as a body. This statement particularly, and the other comment which I had made, seemed to impress Dr. Funk and he said that he would be very glad to bring to the Minister's attention the observations which I had made, and also to the attention of Mr. Hess, the personal representative of the Chancellor, as it might now be possible to take some action along the lines I suggested.

Dr. Funk

Dr. Funk expressed appreciation of the frankness with which I had talked with him and said that it would be very helpful. I believe it will be helpful if he conveys at least some of the observations to the Minister, Dr. Goebbels. One of the characteristics of Dr. Goebbels is that he is exceedingly proud and cannot bear criticism or cannot bear to hear anything unpleasant or critical of the present Government and of the Party, even though the criticism and the comment may be of a constructive nature. He therefore shut himself off from all persons from whom he believes he would hear anything unpleasant. He continues, as from the beginning, the dangerous and the most difficult member of the present Government.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

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A true copy of
the signed original.
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