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NO. 1188

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
Berlin, Germany, March 14, 1933.

SUBJECT: Establishment of Ministry for public
enlightenment and propaganda, and plans
for radio broadcasts to the United States.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

Much Improved

I have the honor to inform the Department that in the German press of today is announced the appointment of Dr. Goebbels as the "Reichsminister fuer Volksaufklaerung und Propaganda" which literally translated is "Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda". As the Department knows, Dr. Goebbels was born in 1897 and is one of the youngest of the leaders of the National Socialist movement. He has been for some time the editor of the "Angriff" which is the leading paper of the party and has been the director of National Socialist propaganda. He is a clear, incisive, effective speaker and in this respect is listened to with more eagerness and with more responsiveness than the Chancellor, Mr. Hitler. Although short and slight physically, he is a man of strong personality and imposes himself on his audience. He does not make clear, connected speeches but delivers incisive, strong sentences, every one of which has a direct appeal to a prejudice of his hearers.

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He is intelligent and supple and knows how to fit his propaganda and his news for those to whom he has seen fit to appeal. He has been largely responsible for the anti-Jewish propaganda as one of the strong popular weapons of the National Socialist propaganda. It has been claimed by apparently well-informed persons that he is himself of Jewish origin but in the "Angriff" of March 14 herewith transmitted and in which the announcement of his appointment is made, it has been deemed worth while to point out that he is not of Jewish origin. This question, however, has according to well-informed people not been definitely cleared up.

In making Dr. Goebbels the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, the National Socialist party has chosen the one among its members the best suited and the most capable to make the propaganda of the type it evidently desires to engage in. According to the article herewith transmitted "he has all the qualities which one could wish in a German propaganda Minister. If he will in the future control the German press then we know that he knows the press from the bottom up, and if the German radio will be placed under his direction, then we need only remember how in the last five weeks Dr. Goebbels has shown how one can use the radio as a propaganda instrument in the service of the uplift of the public and for the national revolution".

It has been known for some time that it was the

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intention of the National Socialists if they arrived at power, to establish a Ministry of Propaganda and for public education. The object of this Ministry would be to control not only the press throughout Germany and the radio, but to control so far as possible the news sent out of Germany both by the foreign correspondents and over the radio. If the word of well-informed and influential National Socialists can be taken at its face value, the schools, the newspapers, the radio and every possible means of publication are to be controlled by the Government in order to spread National Socialist propaganda and to practically make impossible the dissemination of news which does not meet its purposes.

In this connection it is interesting to note that after the fire in the Reichstag, the guilt of which was placed upon the Communists and an attempt made to make it appear that even the Social Democrats in Germany were associated with it, a holiday was declared for the school children immediately following the election on March 5. This holiday was availed of for the purpose of having school children march from early morning until late afternoon through the Reichstag building so that they could see "what the Communists had done to their capitol". So far as it can be learned, leaders of the National Socialist movement do not attempt to conceal the fact that they intend to use every possible form of propaganda under

Dr. Goebbels,

Dr. Goebbels, for the purpose of making every one in Germany a National Socialist, and as one has very frankly informed me, enlightening the German people means converting them to National Socialism.

The time available before the closing of the pouch does not make it possible to go into this matter thoroughly and it will be reverted to in a later despatch from this Consulate General. The object in sending this despatch at this time is to inform the Department that through a representative of the official press bureau of the Government it has become known today that it is the intention of the authorities to broadcast a cultural and news program every day in English and in German for the benefit of German-Americans in the United States. It is stated that a program has been broadcast three times a week for some time over the short wave sender on the supposition that the majority of the Germans in the United States have a radio which can receive this German short wave broadcast. It has been naively stated, however, that these broadcasts which have been made have not been "satisfactory" which it is assumed to mean have not properly pictured conditions in Germany from the point of view of the present Government. The program to be broadcast every day, therefore, is to be of a "cultural" character to be supplemented by brief news items. One has only to know the aims of the National Socialist leaders and spokesmen to realize what their object is in this radio broadcasting intended for the United States.

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It is primarily to counteract the news which may reach the United States from press correspondents in Germany and in Europe and to place before the American people the news from the party point of view. It is quite clear too, that the object is not only to reach the German-Americans, but also a larger audience, as the program is to be broadcast in both English and German.

I have endeavored to get further details with regard to the plans for the radio broadcasts and will have them within a short time when more complete information will be transmitted to the Department. Our Government may not be able to take any steps with respect to this propaganda over the radio as it is to be broadcasted directly from Germany without the intervention of an American broadcasting company and any one who wishes to listen in and who has an adequate receiver, can do so. In carrying out this radio propaganda program now contemplated, the National Socialist propaganda service seems to be copying directly the methods which Moscow has been following and which are so well known here.

The National Socialist party may have been somewhat influenced in its propaganda measures by the steps which France has recently taken to organize a propaganda bureau particularly to be made effective in the United States and certain other countries. ~~But~~ The Department has undoubtedly seen the article

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which appeared in the Christian Science Monitor of February 28, 1933 entitled "France answers the Middle West" by one Mallory Browne. Such an article can only be paid French propaganda. If the German plans with regard to the radio and the French plans for the press, etc., are indicative of the wave of propaganda which will pass over the United States, the circumstances are such that they cannot be entirely ignored by our Government and may make necessary formal or informal representations to the effect that such propaganda is unwelcome and cannot continue.

It has been said that the German people never learn from experience. This may be true but if it is it is only a little bit more true of the Germans than it is of all people, for it seems to be generally admitted that none of us learn by experience. One of the great mistakes of the German people has been that they will not realize that Germans who go to other countries may become good Americans, Brazilians, Argentinians or Venezuelans and do not always stay Germans. The experience of the war and our loyal German-Americans has not taught the Germans anything in this respect.

The Carl Schurz Vereinigung is the strongest organization in Germany tending to strengthen the bonds between the United States and Germany. But it is interested in reality only in strengthening the bonds of the United States with Germany rather than in

a reciprocal exchange of information and culture and a reciprocal tightening of the bonds which might tie Germany to the United States. At a recent luncheon at which former Governor La Follette of Wisconsin spoke to a highly representative gathering, he took the occasion to tell the Carl Schurz Vereinigung that the Germans in the United States are really Americans in spite of their German names and that Germans must cease trying to make ill-considered propaganda with the so-called German-Americans. He made it clear that the majority of the propaganda which had been undertaken was most unwise and ineffective. His speech made a strong impression but was a great disappointment to many important Germans who were there gathered and it undoubtedly has something to do with the renewed interests of the National Socialists in propaganda over the radio in the United States.

The present Government lays great stress upon American public opinion and desires to have a favorable press and favorable opinion in the United States. This radio propaganda which is to be undertaken is to work towards this end. It may be that there are no direct steps which we can take but this Consulate General believes that it is important that our Government should be kept advised with what is actually done in this direction and will not fail to endeavor to do so. If the propaganda methods and material so far used by the National Socialist party and movement are any indication of the type of material to be used in the United States,

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it is not the sort of material which we wish our people to have, as it will be of a frankly propaganda nature. Any further details with regard to the radio program propaganda will be transmitted to the Department as rapidly as it becomes available.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

Enclosures:

Clippings from "Der Angriff"
and Christian Science Monitor.

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GSN:P

A true copy of
the signed orig-
inal. *JMS*