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AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

Berlin, Germany, August 10, 1933.

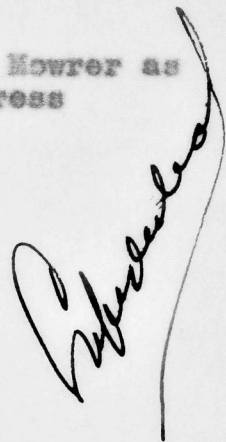
SUBJECT:

Resignation of Mr. Edgar Ansel Mowrer as
the President of the Foreign Press
Association in Berlin.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON.



SIR:

I have the honor to make the following report regarding the circumstances surrounding the resignation of Mr. Edgar Ansel Mowrer as the President of the Foreign Press Association in Berlin, as it presents features which I believe will be of interest.

Mr. Mowrer, who, as the Department knows, is a well-known correspondent and very highly considered and an American citizen, has been the correspondent of the "Chicago Daily News" in Berlin for some years. About a year ago he was chosen by the foreign correspondents in Berlin as the President of their association. When the new Government came into power after March 5, it was rapidly apparent that he was persona non grata. The ostensible reason for his being in disfavor was given as his book "Germany Sets the Clock Back". In reality, however, the reasons are to be sought more largely in the fact that he did not hesitate in his articles to

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picture the situation in Germany under the new Government since March 5, as he saw it.

The foreign correspondents in Berlin give once a year a dinner, usually towards the end of the year, to which the leading officials of the German Government are invited as well as the diplomatic representatives of foreign Governments in the city. This gathering is rather a well-known one in Berlin and considerable publicity is usually given to it when it is held. The President of the association presides at the dinner, and it is also through the President that matters in connection with the foreign correspondents are usually taken up with the press sections of the various Government departments. Highly placed persons in the party and in the Government let it be known that Mr. Mowrer was personally objectionable as President of the association and that they could have nothing officially to do with the association as long as Mr. Mowrer remained its President. As this lack of official contact could present serious inconveniences at this time when the foreign correspondents feel their position less secure than previously, Mr. Mowrer felt it his duty to take up this matter with the association. A meeting was therefore held which was very well attended by the foreign correspondents, and Mr. Mowrer stated that he would be willing to resign in view of the circumstances if a majority of the correspondents indicated that they believed it in the best interests of the association.

A vote was taken which showed by a large majority that the correspondents felt that Mr. Mowrer could not resign under pressure. Some of them felt that it would be better if a solution could be found in some way through Mr. Mowrer's retirement, but even the majority of these were of the opinion that a principle was at stake and that Mr. Mowrer should not resign under pressure.

The situation did not become more acute, but it was evident that the authorities would not change their attitude towards Mr. Mowrer and as the time for the annual banquet approached, the situation would become more acute. Mr. Mowrer himself felt that some way out of the situation should be found and recently it was decided by his principals in Chicago that he should proceed to ~~Calcutta~~ as the representative of his paper in the Far East. This decision, however, was not made public and Mr. Mowrer was not to leave for some weeks longer.

The newspapers of August 4 carried a notice to the effect that several correspondents of German newspapers in Vienna had been arrested. This case did not tend to decrease the tension between Germany and Austria, and retaliation for the Austrian action was awaited. This was not slow to come. Dr. Paul Goldmann, who is a German citizen, but the correspondent in Berlin of the "Neue Freie Presse" of Vienna, was arrested as a retaliatory measure. Dr. Goldmann is a well-known journalist, advanced in years and in poor health, and formerly a President of the Foreign Press Association

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Berlin. His arrest caused great indignation among the foreign correspondents who could see no rhyme or reason in this form of retaliation. It was therefore suggested by Mr. Mowrer to the appropriate German authorities that if they would release Dr. Goldmann he would resign as President of the association. This proposition was made to the appropriate German authorities by one of the leading American correspondents in Berlin and it was accepted. Mr. Mowrer felt that neither he nor the other foreign correspondents were sacrificing a principle in taking this action as he was going to resign anyway in about two weeks, his departure for Tokyo following shortly thereafter. The German authorities agreed, but Mr. Mowrer insisted that if this arrangement were made a representative of his would have to collaborate with the German authorities in the press release to be issued by them. The following is a free translation of the press release which appeared in the Berlin papers of August 8:

" Foreign Press Association: The Conti-Service announces: The correspondent of the "Neue Freie Presse", Vienna, Dr. Paul Goldmann, a German member, one of its founders, and formerly President of the Foreign Press Association, was arrested in Berlin last Friday. In order to aid the efforts which the Foreign Press Association was making to bring about the release of Dr. Goldmann, the present President of the Association, Mr. Edgar A. Mowrer, stated that in case Dr. Goldmann was released, he was prepared to resign as President. Dr. Goldmann was therefore released on Saturday. Mr. Mowrer has in consequence declared to-day his retirement as President of the Foreign Press Association. "

The incident shows a state of mind and a manner of procedure which I thought would be interesting to

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249

the Department. The Department will also be interested to know that when the correspondents on behalf of the association proposed the above solution to the German press officials, he made a preliminary proposal which he knew would not be accepted, but I give it below as indicating how the correspondents feel with regard to the various press sections they have to deal with in the Government departments. It was first proposed by the correspondent that as Dr. Goldmann was advanced in years and in poor health and as others of the foreign correspondents were very much attached to him, they would be willing each to take a turn in jail in place of Dr. Goldmann until the time of his imprisonment^{imposed} by the German authorities was completed.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

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GSM:HP.

A true copy of
the signed origi-
nal.