

A-M

February 12, 1938.

PA/D - Mr. Dunn

Eu - Mr. Moffat

VD - Mr. Warren

I think despatch No. 1914 of January 7, 1938 from the American Consulate General in Berlin on National Socialist Students who are being sent to the United States by the German Government is of sufficient importance, aside from the question of the type of visa to be granted, to be of particular interest to us in connection with the general problem of German propaganda in this country to which we are giving attention.

The Consulate General has raised the question of the type of visa to be granted to these students and has pointed out important considerations indicating that this is not the ordinary exchange of students between American and German schools. In this instance it appears that the German students have been in what may be entirely Government-supported Party schools in Germany and are being sent to this country at the expense of the German Government. It seems that for every one of these German students coming over from these Government-supported German Schools, an American student is going over to one of these same schools in Germany. It is obvious,

obvious, however, that in our case the students must be going at their own expense or at least not at Government expense.

The Visa Division had drafted a telegram to the Consulate General at Berlin to elicit further facts before indicating to the Consulate General what type of visa this Department believes is the proper one under the law. As the first lot of students, according to Berlin's despatch, has already been granted visas and may be on their way to or already in this country and as the next lot of students is not to proceed until the fall, I have suggested to the Visa Division that it would be preferable not to send this telegram but to send a confidential instruction going into the whole matter and giving Berlin for its background and guidance some discussion of the problems which the procedure raises in our mind here. As there is no urgency, I think it would be helpful to get further information from Berlin before we decide what type of visa seems to be the appropriate one.

It does seem clear, however, that if the expenses of these students and their transportation are paid by the German Government that a 3(1) visa is practically the only one which could properly be granted, that is, a visa as an employ or agent of the German Government. If this turns out to be the case, then the German Government can be held

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responsible for the conduct of these students in this country.

It might seem to some far-fetched to consider boys between 15 and 18 as potential propagandists in this country but I cannot help but feel that this move on the part of the German Government is a distinct part of its propaganda program in this country. These Party schools are conducted on well defined lines. The students in them are chosen with particular care. Without going into detail here it is sufficient to say that informed persons know the type of instruction given in these schools to young people concerning conditions in other countries. They are taught, for example, that there is vast unemployment in the United States when there is none in Germany, that German workers are housed immeasurably better than American workers, that German cities and towns and villages look much better than those in the United States and in this respect they are shown pictures showing the dilapidated outskirts of some of our towns and cities. When these German boys in our schools over here can tell their associates about these things in Germany and can draw attention to certain things which do exist in this country, the surface comparison can have great effect on thoughtless young people. This is just one aspect of the matter.

I cannot quite understand how schools such as Lawrenceville, Kent, Peddie and a few others listed on page five of the despatch could lend themselves to such an exchange of students. I doubt if they have given thought to all of the implications. I believe it would be well for us to go into the nature of the activities of this W. Huston Lillard of the "International Schoolboy Fellowship for Better Understanding", and who seems to be an instructor at Tabor Academy in Marion, Massachusetts. I would not hesitate to suggest that we go so far as to have the postal authorities control his correspondence for a month or two. The chances are that we would find him in very close touch with National Socialist circles in this country and in Germany. He may, of course, be an entirely innocent but misguided person.

It occurs to me that we ought to know just how these German boys who have been brought over to these preparatory schools in the United States are conducting themselves. We could get in touch with the head masters at some of these schools and go into the situation with them. They would, I am sure, be willing to come to Washington at their convenience where we could give them the background in confidence and I believe we could depend on their cooperation.

Mr. Geist's despatch does not indicate whether any American has gone abroad to have general oversight over  
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these American boys in the German schools. I think we could ask him to get discreetly what information he may be able to elicit along this line. The personality and background of this man might give us a further clue.

I would not wish to appear to be exaggerating the importance of this matter but the evidence already in the possession of the Department is sufficient to show that we cannot let information of this kind come to us without giving it most careful thought and attention.

G.S.M.

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