

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

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*Ny-51-0P-26
Doc # 358*

File

TO: Mr. John C. Hughes

DATE: February 5, 1944.

FROM: Emmy C. Rado

E.C.R.

SUBJECT: Prof. F. W. Foerster's campaign against
Ex-Chancellor Joseph Wirth.

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*Sum - (D) 4/19/44 - 1944
Annual Report*

On January 15, 1944 the magazine "Commonweal" carried an article by Prof. F. W. Foerster on Germany's future. In his attempt to discredit all Germans as Pan-Germans (with the exception of himself) he quoted an article which supposedly appeared in a Swiss paper, "LUZERNER TAGEBLATT", on August 27, 1937:

"As to German rearmament, Hitler simply continued the work which was begun by the Weimar Republic. The great difficulty was that our efforts had to be concealed from the Entente. I always had to appear polite and harmless... The Treaty of Rapallo permitted us military experiments on Russian territory. When Hitler came to power, he had to occupy himself only with the quantity of the army. The quality was due to our work, since the real military reorganization had been brought about by the Weimar Republic."

In a meeting of the New World Club in New York City in which Foerster and Emil Ludwig spoke, the same quotation was read to the audience. It has already been taken up by other publications.

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In the Fall of 1939 the Agence Havas (French official news agency) published a News-Letter "Frontière Allemande". The same accusation as the above one was made against Wirth. Only it was not quoted from a newspaper, but it was supposed to be the gist of a conversation which allegedly had taken place in the lobby of a hotel in Luzerne in August, 1939. The News-Letter stated furthermore that Wirth still received a pension from the German Government and that he was a regular visitor at the German Legation in Berne.

The French authorities who had known Chancellor Wirth quite well were alarmed by this report and decided to make an "enquête". This was done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Jean Giraudoux, the Minister of Information.

Mr. Manfred Simon, then press attaché of the French Embassy in Berne, (now with the Free French Delegation in London) and Mr. Ernest Pezet, Deputé of Morbihan, and Paul Vignaux were designated to study this accusation. The following facts were established:

In August 1939 Rev. Otto Karrer, a former member of the Jesuite Order, residing in Lucerne, organized a meeting of Mr. Wirth with

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representatives of the Swiss liberal Catholic newspaper "ENTSCHEIDUNG" (Decision) which had been criticized by Joseph Wirth because of its negative judgment of the Weimar Republic. After this meeting one of the editors of "ENTSCHEIDUNG" informed the French Consulate in Zurich via Prof. Foerster that Joseph Wirth had made the above mentioned utterances. This information was taken up by the News-Letter "Frontière Allemande". Mr. Wirth denied energetically and Mr. Karrer, who had witnessed the meeting, also stated that Mr. Wirth was completely misinterpreted and misquoted. In the last days of December 1939 or the first days of January 1940 Mr. Wirth published a denial in the BASLER NATIONALZEITUNG. He also sent a long letter to Mr. Peset refuting the accusations of the News-Letter one by one. (This letter of Mr. Wirth filed with the French Foreign Ministry and a memorandum from Dr. Thormann to Mr. Giraudoux and filed with the French Ministry of Information fell into the hands of the Gestapo after the occupation of Paris.)

The following facts were established:

- 1) The Nazi government did not pay any pension to Mr. Wirth since the month of October 1933. The decision to discontinue the payment was announced to Mr. Wirth by an official letter of Mr. Frick, German Minister of the Interior.
- 2) Joseph Wirth did all in his power to prevent the "Anschluss". He not only warned the Austrian authorities repeatedly and urgently, he also tried to provoke the intervention of the French Government at an early stage in order to avoid the break between the Austrian Government and the Social Democrats. The fascist-minded Austrian Vice-Chancellor, Prince Starhemberg, had Mr. Wirth expelled from Austria, an order revoked by the Chancellor, v. Schuschnigg, whom Wirth warned vainly against the conclusion of his pact of non-aggression and friendship with Nazi Germany.
- 3) Despite his work for the "fourth partition" of Poland, Joseph Wirth also tried to prevent Poland's isolation and defeat. Twice he went to Poland (with the backing of the French Government) in order to convince Polish Catholics and Polish government officials that the policy of friendship with the Third Reich and the anti-Semitic attitude of Polish officialdom would lead to a catastrophe.
- 4) Wirth never had any contacts with the German Legation in Berne. He carried up to 1938 an Austrian, and since the occupation of Austria a Swiss, Titre d'Identité in lieu of a passport.
- 5) Wirth and v. Papen were bitter enemies.
- 6) Wirth's utterances about German rearmament were completely mistaken by Prof. Foerster's friends. He criticized Hitler's rearmament stating that it was illegal and that any measure in the field of revision of the Treaty of Versailles had to be taken in agreement with the victorious powers.

The French authorities decided that the accusations against Wirth were unjustified. In April 1940 Wirth was given a French visa in order

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to come to Paris for discussions with French officials. Mr. Giraudoux advised the French censorship to suppress any articles directed against Mr. Wirth.

Mr. Wirth never gave interviews to newspapers and never wrote any articles in order to avoid contact with the Gestapo. He was used by governments of other countries for half-political missions, and he tried not to attract any attention.

Mr. Wirth is on best terms with the editors of the Catholic newspaper of Lucerne "VATERLAND". He would never have given an interview to an anti-Catholic newspaper like the "LUZERNER TAGEBLATT".

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