

NEW ZEALAND POLICE

[Police—100A.]

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37/10/25
POLICE DEPT. HEAD OFFICE~~SECRET~~

Police-station: HEADQUARTERS

Date: 2 nd June 1938, 193

REPORT of Detective A. M. Harding, No. 2645

relative to German activities within New Zealand.

~~SECRET~~ 37/10/25

I respectfully submit, supplementary to my report of 15-6-37, the following information with reference to Nazi activities in New Zealand since that date. The report is based on information received from secret but reliable sources. As the activities within this country are based on those existing overseas the position there as it is known at this office should first be explained.

It is reported that during the past several months various organisations sponsored, though in some cases secretly, by the German Government have been pursuing a well defined policy in disseminating Nazi propaganda and cultivating a feeling of goodwill in the minds of the English people towards the German race. It is hoped to thus divert the British foreign policy in a sense favourable to Germany. The title of one such organisation being the "Anglo-German Fellowship" under the chairmanship of a prominent member of the British peerage, its members including many executives of important British firms. This organisation is the counterpart of the Deutsche-Englische Gesellschaft in Berlin.

It is considered by a well informed source that Germany is inclined to exaggerate her success in this direction, but nevertheless feels so encouraged as to extend her activities on the same lines to the Dominions and Colonies, bringing into being various organisations, each under a different name, the general object being not for a development of a mutual understanding between the two races, but to render an English acceptance of the German viewpoint.

It is reported in the "Dominion" of 10-6-38 that in Canada Nazis are organising social clubs under directions from Berlin. That is consistent with the position here.

There is no evidence of the recent formation in New Zealand of any organisation for the dissemination of propaganda, but it is becoming increasingly evident that the office of the German Consul and the German Club at Auckland function in that direction. Two clubs are known to exist in New Zealand, one in Wellington, the functions of which are almost negligible, and that at Auckland and which has a present membership of 84 persons, the majority of whom are British subjects.

Superficially the club is non political, which is a reversal to its original policy, it having been found that the introduction of politics in to the normal functions of the Club was driving away the person they most desire, the English guest on whom to make a favourable impression in furtherance of the purpose behind the present propaganda.

It is known however that among selected persons Nazi pamphlets are distributed, some of which I have perused. They are anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic but in regard to Britain are silent. It is evident that a method is thus being used of bringing before selected people in a foreign land the official German view of a situation other than by way of the foreign press.

On the occasion of the Nazi occupation of Austria one notable club member in Auckland made the following statement; "We Germans of Auckland must support Germany and our Fuhrer in the present troublous times - not to believe that Austria was being conquered - but that the Austrians are actually German people and desire German nationality. We must not believe the lies in the newspapers."

Dr Hellenthal, German Consul in New Zealand, returned to Germany on extended leave in April last. It is generally considered he will

not return to New Zealand. His consular office is at present filled by his former deputy, Herr H. Kessells, a member of the Auslands Organisation.

It has been reported that for sometime past one of the German nationals in Auckland has been compiling secret data under Consular directions relative to the identity of the directorate of various commercial institutions in New Zealand having dealings with Germany, with particular reference to the presence therein of any of the Jewish fraternity, who apparently will be penalised wherever possible even in this country. The person who originally undertook this work is about to hand it over to another as there was some dissatisfaction with the progress he was making.

It has been stated since Dr Hellenthal left New Zealand that he anticipates a future appointment as Governor in Samoa, he having stated in confidence that the return of that Colony to Germany was much nearer being an accomplished fact as a result of present negotiations than the public realise.

With reference to the recent visit of Count Von Luckner in the course of a world tour it has been authoritatively reported that there was at least one member of the "Gestapo" (German Secret Police) among the crew. This matter received attention during the Count's visit. It is also reported that the Count's tour has been partly financed by the German Minister for Propaganda.

I think it fitting that some reference should be made herein to an article which appeared in the "Standard" on 9-6-38, a copy of which is attached. Firstly it is stated that it is known that two members of the German Secret Police were travelling on Count Von Luckner's yacht when he visited New Zealand recently. That is a fact referred to above, but the matter was viewed with secrecy by this Department, in fairness to which it should be observed that

the information was officially received by sources other than the Police.

A further matter referred to in the press report is a meeting advertised in the "Evening Post" on 28-5-38 of the N.Z. Nazi League, an organisation which is quite unknown at this office. Immediate inquiries were made, and are still in progress. There is reason to believe the advertisement is a hoax. Publicity has been given the matter by the "Standard" and "Workers Weekly" which is unfortunate, as if the thing was a hoax there remained a better opportunity of tracing the perpetrator while the press remained silent.

Considerable detailed information regarding these matters generally has been received, but I think the activities of the past twelve months are covered by this report. Briefly it can be said that N.Z. is receiving its share of the intense dissemination of Nazi propaganda in all English speaking countries, but nothing calling for direct action has been observed and every effort is being made to keep the Department fully informed of the situation.

The Commissioner of Police

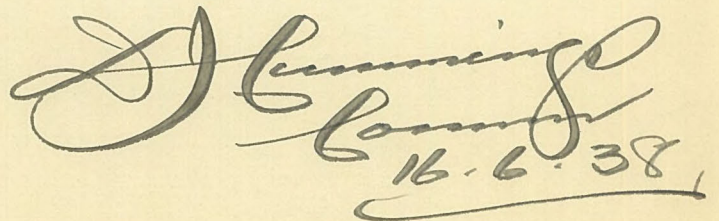
WELLINGTON



Detective 2645

The Hon. Ministers in Charge of Police

For your information


16.6.38

*Seen
of,*

17.6.38

Publicly released under the NZSIS Declassification Policy

NAZI ACTIVITY IN N.Z.

Secret Group Operating in Wellington

SPREADING its tentacles round the whole world, Nazism has now reached New Zealand, and German groups in this country are carrying on activities under direct orders from their principals in Germany. The existence of these Nazi groups is known to the authorities in New Zealand who are keeping a close watch on their activities, but so long as the movement is restricted to the handful of Germans in the Dominion there seems to be no reason to interfere with them.

The recent visit to New Zealand of Count Felix von Luckner is understood to have given a fresh stimulus to Nazi activities.

Although the Count denied that his visit had anything to do with politics it has become known that two members of the German secret police were travelling on his yacht, and that whatever may have been the count's motive in wanting to re-visit the places where he was imprisoned during the war, the secret police were certainly very interested in the German nationals in New Zealand.

Count von Luckner is a most accomplished showman and his manner is particularly charming. He made a favourable impression wherever he travelled in this country and was treated most hospitably.

But when he expressed a desire to make an inspection of Ripa Island, in Lyttelton Harbour, where he was imprisoned for a time, permission was refused by the defence authorities. The reason was that civilians are no longer permitted to visit the island and an exception could not be made in the case of the Count.

Whatever the purpose of the visit of the Count, it enabled a rallying of the Germans in this country to take place, and those in his party who were interested in the spread of Nazism were given wonderful opportunities for carrying on their activities.

Recently there appeared an advertisement in the Wellington "Evening Post," requesting members of the Wellington group of the New Zealand Nazi League to attend a rally at the home of Group Member 27.

There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of that notice. Nazi groups are in existence in Auckland and Wellington and they carry on their activities without undue secrecy.

These groups comprise Germans resident in New Zealand. Some of these Germans are naturalised British subjects who still have a passionate love for the Fatherland.

But Nazi groups do not exist purely for social purposes and for building up German culture among those who desire to take part in these activities.

It is understood that their activities have a certain sinister purpose as well. Hitler wishes to bring all Germans in every part of the world under his paternal wing; he does not like the idea of there being any Germans anywhere who prefer allegiance to a foreign flag rather than to the swastika, which is the emblem of German unity.

So in various parts of the world, Nazi "cells" have been established for the purpose of keeping a particularly close watch on the actions of Germans whether they happen to be naturalised subjects of another country or whether they still possess their German nationality.

The London "News-Chronicle," of April 7, contained a significant report that German secret police, working in Britain, were compiling a black list, not only of Germans and Austrians with anti-Nazi sympathies, but also of their British associates.

Activities of that nature are also taking place in many other parts of the world, and there is no reason to believe that there is not a similar black list being compiled in this Dominion. For instance, in the Commonwealth Parliament recently a member made an allegation that Australian firms with German agencies had been told that their agencies would be taken from them unless they were prepared to make room on their staffs for a number of Germans.

Hitler's methods are by now well known; he does not want conquest by war, but by a process of disintegration within a country, enabling him to step in on the plea of protecting his nationals.

It might seem fantastic to suggest that Nazi groups in this

country could have such an object in view, but what is happening in other countries can quite conceivably happen in the countries of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Both Germany and Italy have their agents throughout the world. Though it is a crime in either of those countries to hold political opinions that are not in line with those of the dictators, Hitler and Mussolini do not scruple to offer full encouragement to Nazism and Fascism in countries where democracies exist.

And New Zealand is one of the democracies where it is not a crime for a person to hold political opinions at variance with the Government.

Consequently, this Dominion is a fertile field for Nazi and Fascist activities, so long as no breach of the law is committed.

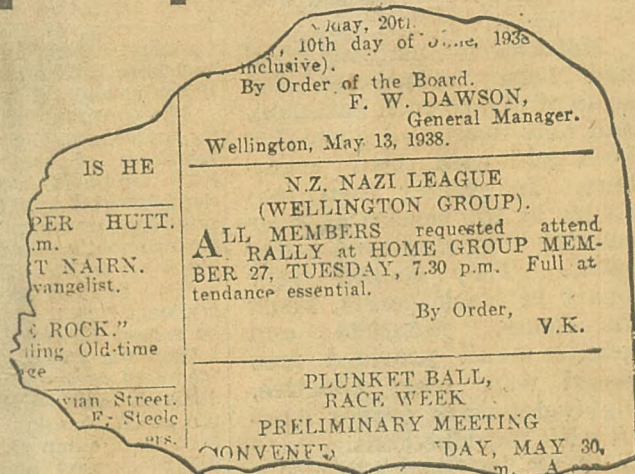
The European dictators are both credited with desiring world conquest by a process of peaceful penetration; the last thing either of them desires is to be involved in a large-scale war.

Their propaganda net has been cast round the whole world. In a few cases, such as that of Brazil, they have rather over-reached themselves, but one or two setbacks are all in the day's work.

New Zealand is a long way removed from the European turmoil, and to most people the activities of German or Italian groups would appear to be quite harmless.

That is probably the position at present.

Reasonable people would not object to people from a foreign country having their own clubs and groups so long as they refrain from taking part in the domestic politics of this country. But should these groups widen their ranks to admit New Zealanders and, as a further step, begin to interfere in the affairs of this Dominion, there will be a need for serious notice to be taken of their activities.



The secret nature of the Nazi organisation in New Zealand is indicated by this advertisement which appeared in the Wellington "Evening Post."