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POLICE DEPT. HEAD OFFICE

NEW ZEALAND POLICE.

[Police—100A.

Detective Office,  
Police-station: Wellington,

Date: 11th June, 1938

REPORT of Detective Sergeant P. Doyle, No. 1337

relative to German films recently screened by the Wellington Film Institute.

Vide attached.

I beg to report that the Acting German Consul, Mr Kessells recently received from Germany certain films depicting the physical youth of Germany and the system followed there for their physical advancement.

The National Council of Physical Welfare and Recreation, of whom the Hon. Minister in Charge of the Police Department and the Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs are members, became interested in the films which were brought under their notice by Mr Kessells and by arrangement a special screening took place on the 24th May at the Tourist Department, a special operator was hired for the occasion, and it was agreed that the films were of a high standard in regard to the physical training of youth, and that the system would greatly benefit the youth of this Dominion, if followed.

I am informed that Mr Kessell's action in allowing the National Council the use of the films is greatly appreciated by that body.

Following the private screening of the films on the 24th May, the Wellington Film Institute were allowed to screen the films that night at the Museum, at which the public were admitted free, but were requested to make a voluntary donation towards the expenses, which was done by at least some of those present.

The films were not submitted to the Censor before being exhibited as required by the Cinematograph Films Act, 1928, and so far have not been approved, but this was an oversight, and Mr Heenan, the Under Secretary accepts full responsibility for this, and the matter is now being attended to and no further screening will take place until the necessary certificate has been issued.

Mr Heenan informed me that from the point of view of physical training for youth the films are most valuable to his council, and no doubt the German system will be adopted to a very great extent in the Dominion.

There is nothing anti-British about the films, but it is not denied, however, that the production is of harmless Nazi propaganda nature.

The Japanese Consul recently submitted a film of the war in China and its origin, for approval by the Censor and I was permitted to be present at the screening.

If one were to believe what that film disclosed, the Japanese are the most humane people in the world, and are endeavouring to uplift the Chinese, who are a cruel race and not capable of taking care of themselves.

The film to my mind bears the hallmark of Japanese propaganda, manufactured for British consumption.

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The Sub Inspector,  
Detective Branch,  
Wellington.

Following the screening of this film was a Chinese film manufactured in America dealing with persecution of Chinese by the Japanese in the present trouble in China, and this conveyed the very opposite to that of the Japanese film, but the Censor informed me that he could find no reasons for rejecting either.

I ascertained that no German films apart from those referred to herein, dealing with the physical training of youth are in circulation in the city, but other films of German origin have in the past been submitted to the Censor by the German Consul but nothing of an objectionable nature was contained in any of them.

I have arranged with the Censor to be present at the censoring of any films submitted by the German and Japanese consuls in future.

Mr Kessells has been informed of the oversight in not submitting the films under discussion to the Censor and he is much concerned about it, but he is not aware that the Police are interested in the matter.

I have ascertained that the Wellington Film Institute only screen films of an educational nature, and these are invariably submitted to the Censor before screening, but in this case, as pointed out above, the responsibility for the oversight rests with Mr Heenan.

Mr J.J.S. Cornes of the Dominion Laboratory is honorary secretary to the Wellington Film Institute.

Detective Sergeant 1337.

*The Superintendent*  
*Carroll*

Sub-Inspector,  
Detective Branch.

13. 6. 38

*The Commissioner of Police,*

*H. J. Fraser*  
*Supt. of Police*  
*14. 6. 38*

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If any reply, please quote this number :

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

WELLINGTON, C.1. 7 th June 1938

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MEMORANDUM for

The Superintendent of Police,

WELLINGTON.

NAZI PROPAGANDA.

It is reported that by arrangement with the German Consul the Wellington Film Institute recently screened a series of films pertaining to German life. Please ascertain the nature of the films and the circumstances under which they were screened.

In 1933 the Wellington Film Society was convicted on charges of exhibiting uncensored films. Is this the same organisation?

The purpose of the inquiry is not directed so much towards eliciting a possible offence by the exhibitors as gauging the extent of Nazi propaganda in this Dominion, the dissemination of which in Great Britain has for some time been engaging the attention of authorities.

The propaganda which has so far come under notice is not anti-British in its expressions, but appears calculated to win the esteem of the English people. This, it is considered, is a subtle method of diverting British foreign policy. The propaganda almost invariably emanates from well equipped organisations secretly sponsored by the German Government.

*D. Cummins*

Commissioner of Police

*The Inspector*  
*J. J. Barry*  
*Supt. of Police*  
*7-6-38*

The Sub-Inspector,  
Detective Branch.

*J. J. Barry*  
INSPECTOR OF POLICE  
17 JUL 1938

*Det. Sgt Doyle*  
*Kennell*  
Sub-Inspector,  
Detective Branch.  
38/27  
7. 6. 38

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## Nazi Propaganda Films

### Shown to Wellington Audience

#### Youth Feeds Hitler's War Machine

Von Luckner landed in New Zealand and after a brief stay departed for Australia. Just recently the Wellington Film Institute screened "by courtesy of the German Consul," a series of 16mm non-sound films of German life. It would appear that Nazi-Fascist influence is almost imperceptibly making its appearance in the country.

The Wellington Film Institute, it should perhaps be stated, does not necessarily indicate its sympathies by screening the programme. It would probably be as glad to screen Soviet or any other type of film.

The fact is, however, that Nazi propaganda films have made their debut to a Wellington audience, and it is more than likely that others will be shown as time goes on. The nature of the films screened showed that good judgment had been displayed in their selection, propaganda being far from blatant. The films were no doubt calculated to make a fairly good impression on an uncertain, sensitive and dubious audience.

The fact that conversations and captions were in German was probably an advantage from this point of view. However, if the amount of applause is any fair indication of the enthusiasm aroused, the reception was mainly stone cold.

The following subjects were covered in the films: "Youth, Housing, Work and Recreation." The films dealing with the first subject contained some significant episodes. Youth were shown on hiking tours at different periods in the past, from 1900 up till about the third year of Hitler's rule. The purport of this scene was that the youth had greater opportunities for development, greater freedom allied with more discipline under Hitler. The organisation of the Youth Hostel Movement enables youth to go on long hiking journeys round Germany. Instead of the officious schoolmaster taking the class out for a brief and restricted ramble, young men take boys on long and interesting journeys over the country. This was the meaning intended to be conveyed. The boys march in formation and carry a flag and at each successive period the drums beat louder. Youth grows into manhood and in the course of time is the proud wearer of a soldier's uniform. An officer addresses them, and presumably tells them about Germany's historic mission to Nazify the world. One scene shows the troop suddenly finding their path barred by a long pole. A sentry is standing by and they ask him the why and wherefore. He points to a notice. The boys had arrived at the Polish Corridor and were compelled to turn back and travel to Pomerania by sea. A good piece of propaganda.

TRAINED FOR A PURPOSE

The films made it plain enough that youth was being trained for a purpose and that purpose was war. There was this motive behind the youngest children's games. The string obstacles under which children crawl are the future barbed wire entanglement, while young athletes throw objects resembling grenades.

Some of the shots are very good, but, of course, the films do not provide any answer to the question of what proportion of the population participates in the good things of National Socialism. From particular instances it is meant to be grasped that such is the general condition: joy, peace and well-being everywhere.

Military discipline has important uses in peace time as was brought out in the pictures of the Labour Front gangs at work. The gangs were lined up and marched off to work in regular military fashion, shouldering their shovels as if they were rifles. The picture of water flowing into newly-built irrigation channels is observed

with enthusiasm by the Nazi boss—and no doubt also by the local Junker upon whose estate the gang is working, and whose profits are thereby augmented.

The little human scenes of farm and home life, such as could be seen in any country, were well calculated to ensnare the sympathies of those who saw the film. A baby with a kitten is a pretty sight, but what happens to working-class babies whose parents are unemployed?

Hitler Germany can display fine examples of youthful strength and beauty. Notwithstanding this it cannot be forgotten that such youth feeds Hitler's voracious war machines and one day they may lie dead and wounded on some battlefield. Hitler means death to German youth—that is the other side of the medal.

These films seem to be relatively mild propaganda. But they are likely to be a prelude to more effective ones. From propaganda it is a step to agitation and incitement. No chance should be afforded Hitler's agents to repeat in New Zealand what has happened in Spain and is happening in the U.S.A. and Czechoslovakia. Nazi propaganda should be nipped in the bud.

Workers Weekly  
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