

# BORCHERS DENIES FREEDOM ATTACK

## German Consul General Says He Was Misquoted in Report of Turn Hall Speech

### 'CONCILIATION' INTENDED

## No Criticism of Institutions Here, He Asserts—Explains His Reference to Worship

Dr. Hans Borchers, German Consul General in New York, made a complete denial yesterday of published reports of a speech made Thursday night at Turn Hall, Lexington Avenue, and Eighty-fifth Street, in which he was quoted as having attacked the institutions of freedom of worship and freedom of the press.

"Declaring that he was 'completely misquoted' in what was intended to be a 'conciliatory speech,' Dr. Borchers said at his office at 17 Battery Place, that the 'misquotation' had been widely broadcast and published and was 'sufficient to raise a storm of protest in the United States.'"

"Instead of having served peace and understanding," Dr. Borchers said, "the system of free press, however unintentioned it might have been, as it was handled in this case, worked against understanding and into the hands of those who like to keep up the bad feeling between two nations which always, it is my belief, could and should get along very well."

### Letter Gives Translations

In a letter to THE NEW YORK TIMES, dated Friday, Dr. Borchers gave translations of the disputed parts of his speech as delivered in German. The letter follows in full:

"A note in THE NEW YORK TIMES index today reads: 'Dr. Borchers, German Consul General here, assails free press and freedom of worship.' On page 1 of your issue a reporter then summarizes my speech under the heading 'Borchers Assails Free Institutions.'"

"In response permit me to quote from my speech. I said:

Separation of church and school is not only an acute problem in Germany but is or has been, so also in other countries, inclusive of the so-called political antipodes of the totalitarian States, as France and England. France at the beginning of this century was engaged for years in far-reaching controversies with the Vatican regarding the delineation between politics and religion; yet where do you read in the United States that France is an unchristian country? Does it not mean using a double yardstick to call Germany unchristian when she was

almost forced to separate religion and politics by a history of a thousand years which is filled on almost every page with examples of the dire results of intermingling of religion and politics?

I say with all the emphasis and earnestness of my official capacity: Germany is a land, the whole character of which stamps her as one of the most religious people on earth, a nation whose present government has expressly incorporated in Point 24 of the National Socialist Statutes a confession to the Christian character of the State, yet to certain people she is merely a barbarian and heathen State.

"How could this statement ever be construed as a denial of the freedom of worship?

### The Free Press Issue

"As far as my remarks regarding the institution of a free press are concerned, I said in my speech that for twenty years after the war very little was published about the conglomerate character of Czechoslovakia, and that by personal experience I had found out that when the question of autonomy for the Sudeten Germans became acute people were very inadequately informed about the fact that this was an internal struggle on national rather than ideological lines.

"I added, in the light of examples such as these, may I ask my American friends whether experiences of this type do not explain why today a growing number of people, not only in the so-called totalitarian States but even to a large extent in the democracies, have gained the conviction that a free press could be, to express it politely, a two-sided problem?"

"The spirit of this remark hardly seems to me to justify such expressions as the headline on your front page 'Consul General Assails Free Institutions.'"

"As to my remarks about the elimination of Jewish influence I said this: 'Only the times and circumstances made it necessary to tackle the question of the elimination of Jewish influence, nothing else. How could it otherwise be explained that also in many other parts of the world where—relatively speaking—Jewish influence became too strong, opposing forces began to make themselves felt?'"

"At another part of my speech I said in regard to the campaign in the United States against German internal politics:

Nobody in Germany denies that certain measures must needs hurt painfully many individuals, but

practically all political measures and, in particular, new political tendencies are bound to be hard on some individual groups.

"I concluded by saying that the Pact of Munich had opened a view into a new future, and that over the door of this future was written the watchword 'Understanding and Peace.' 'This, beyond mere joy at the union with Sudetenland, is in a deeper sense the real motive behind this German thanksgiving celebration. It is my earnest hope that its voice and spirit might be heard and understood beyond this circle and might also contribute to pave the way for better understanding between the United States and Germany.'"

"In view of the foregoing I leave it to the judgment of the public whether the report which you published in your paper today about our meeting really meets the spirit expressed in my words."

In his statement to newspaper men yesterday Dr. Borchers, after declaring he had been in this country twelve years, said "it has always been my endeavor to work for better understanding between America and Germany."

He reiterated his reference to Point 24 of the National Socialist Statutes made in his letter, and after denying he had attacked freedom of worship, said:

"I have also been accused of attacking the American Constitution and American institutions. No such thing was done by me in my speech."

"Nowhere," he added, "did I attack the freedom of the press as such, but perhaps I may add again that I feel permitted to reflect upon this same problem in my own case again. Here I was standing trying to help understanding and friendship between 130,000,000 Americans and 80,000,000 Germans. On misquotation apparently taken up by other channels, the press, radio

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