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LNRB 12A

BRITISH RESIDENT'S OFFICE

LÜBBECKE B.A.O.R. 1

Foot 2/5

20 April 1950

From:- Mr. D. R. Cannon.

Dear Colonel Pye,

The inhabitants of this rural Kreis have not suffered to the same extent as those living in industrial areas, and so consequently many of them seem to have exaggerated ideas on their present difficulties. These are mainly in connection with refugee and accommodation problems. The number of properties requisitioned in the area provides a constant source of irritation, and the owners especially are always ready to cast aspersions at the Occupation Forces. Mr. Bevin's recent remarks in the House on Western Germany have been much criticised, and many people are said to be sceptical of the efforts of Great Britain to bring about a United Europe.

However, in spite of feelings of dissatisfaction with the present regime, there are no apparent indications that the current wave of Communist propaganda is meeting with much success. The middle classes remain firm and many of the refugees have already suffered much at the hands of the Communists. Fear of the East still remains. It is uppermost in many people's minds and they would take any steps to avoid another war. Most people realise that only a United Europe can provide an adequate bulwark of defence, and the general opinion is, that Germany should play her part in Western defence and be given equal rights of other nations.

There have been no public political meetings. Both the C.D.U. and S.P.D. are finding difficulty in selecting candidates for the forthcoming election. It looks as if the C.D.U. will nominate Herr Bückendorf, their chairman, instead of Professor Stier the present member. It is believed that efforts have been made to establish an extreme right wing party in the Kreis, but so far these efforts have not met with success. The same applies to National Front propaganda, which is looked upon with suspicion, and is recognised as being a Communist effort to direct the national feelings of Germans to Soviet interests. It is probable that efforts to form a right wing party will be renewed, as activities appear to be centred around Herr Kämper - Renkhausen. He is a well known farmer, and was formerly the leader of the Stahlhelm in this Kreis, and a member of the D.N.V.P.

Communist propaganda on unemployment conditions failed entirely. All Works Councils elections have been held and not a single Communist was elected. In every case the S.P.D. representative had an overwhelming majority.

Unemployment is declining slowly and the figures should be considerably reduced in the near future, owing to expansion of the local cigar industry and other industrial enterprises.

Peace Front activity had little effect on the general Public, nor amongst the refugees, but it is believed that most of the big firms and local shop keepers subscribed towards the funds for the "Promotion of Peace". I think that most subscribers look upon their donations as premiums of insurance against future developments.

There is no doubt that Communist infiltration is being more cleverly organised than formerly and trained intelligent men are now being placed by the Soviet even in rural Kreise. A case in point is that of Kunkel at Alswede. He is a product of the East and is reputed to be a plausible speaker. He is popular with his fellow workers and has recently been elected deputy Chairman of the local branch of the Gewerkschaft "Bau, Steine, Erden". It came as a surprise to the members to learn afterwards that he is the deputy Chairman of the K.P.D. in the Kreis. It will be interesting to see how they react.

The latest news to create a stir in Lübbecke is the return of Meiring the former Nazi Kreisleiter. He disappeared in 1945, and only returned a few days ago when he joined his wife and family, who are living in Espelkamp. It is said, that he was responsible for burning down the synagogue in Lübbecke, and also for local people being sent to Concentration Camps. The secretary of the C.D.U. came to seek my advice this morning, and I explained the legal position to him. It seems that although people allege that Meiring committed various crimes, no one has so far come forward willing to testify against him. Meiring seems pretty sure of himself. He was seen walking in the Hauptstrasse yesterday.

Yours sincerely

D. R. Lawrence.

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B.A.O.R.15