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XXVI. German Flag Incident

(Dept. of State Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 83, January 25, 1941)

The Secretary of State made public on January 21 the following exchange of notes with the German Embassy:

[Translation]

“THE GERMAN EMBASSY, II S. F.,
“*Washington, D. C., January 18, 1941.*

“MR. SECRETARY OF STATE:

“I have the honor to inform you of the following occurrence:

“As the day of the founding of the German Reich in the year 1871, January 18 was declared a German national holiday which is to be observed by the display of the German Reich flag by all German Reich offices in Germany as well as abroad. In conformity with the pertinent instructions issued by the German Reich Government the German Consul General in San Francisco today displayed the prescribed German Reich flag from his office.

“The German Consul General in San Francisco has just informed me that the German Reich flag placed by him on his office was today at noon forcibly taken down from its staff by unknown persons in the presence of a large shouting throng of people and was torn to pieces by the throng. The perpetrator or perpetrators appear to have climbed by the fire-escape up to the ninth floor of the office building housing the Consulate General, without being prevented from doing so by the local police.

“In the name of the German Reich Government I make the most emphatic protest against this act which represents a serious violation of the right, prescribed by treaty and recognized in international law, of the German Consul General in San Francisco to raise the German Reich flag over his office. I am permitted to express the expectation that

the Government of the United States will adopt all appropriate measures to bring the perpetrators to responsibility and to submit them to merited punishment and that the Government of the United States will also take all appropriate steps in order to prevent a repetition of occurrences of this nature.

"I request your Excellency to make it possible for me immediately to furnish my Government with a report in this regard.

"Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN"

"JANUARY 19, 1941.

"MY DEAR MR. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES :

"I have received your note of January 18, 1941 regarding a report reaching you from the German Consul General in San Francisco that the German Reich flag was forcibly taken down by unknown persons from the ninth floor of the office building housing the Consulate General.

"I hasten to express the regret of the Government of the United States at such an incident and have requested that the appropriate agencies of this Government should make an immediate investigation, after which I shall communicate with you again.

"I remain, Mr. Chargé d'Affaires,

"Very sincerely yours,

CORDELL HULL"