

TOP SECRET

MEMORANDUM BY FIELD MARSHAL MONTGOMERY

The Problem in Germany: February 1946

The Object

1. To change the heart, and the way of life, of the German people.
2. Unless we can achieve this within the next 10 years, everything else we are doing will be of no avail. It may take 10 years, it may well take much longer.

The Past 13 Years

3. Since 1933 the German people, with few exceptions, have been cut off from the outside world. During that time they have had nationalistic and dictatorial ideas pumped into their minds, without any outside influence to counteract it.

The authority and responsibility of the family has been deliberately minimized, in favour of the State. The influence of the Church has been reduced and, in some sects, actually used to glorify the State instead of the Christian concept.

There existed long before the Nazis a powerful, dictatorial, and centralized Civil Service. Since 1933 its powers, and the system, have been centralized even further.

4. And during the whole time, it has been a period of full employment, a high standard of living, and plenty of enjoyment. Now there is misery. But the Germans are a virile people with long traditions. After the winter there will be a resurgence of hope; they will remember the past, and the plenty it brought them.

The Present Situation

5. A large percentage (certainly 60% and possibly even 75%) of the German population are real out and out Nazis. They preferred the old regime with its prosperity, as against the present regime of misery and lack of hope for the future.

6. Adult opinion in the British zone is definitely hardening against the occupational power. There are definite signs that this is so, and that it is being communicated to the children.

7. We have quite recently discovered the first large, widespread, subversive organization in Germany. This was organized by the General Staff of the Hitler Youth Movement and was financed by Hitler Youth funds. It was cleverly linked to large commercial firms which were acceptable to our Military Government officers. A round-up of the leaders is now in progress and the organization will be crushed.

.../ but the

But the interesting point is that such a movement actually existed. It is quite clear that we can expect more of these organizations and that they will be increasingly dangerous.

8. We have now some 21 million Germans in the British Zone, and this number may well rise to 23 million.

There is no doubt whatever that our conflicts with these people lie ahead; at present they are quite docile; but there are troublesome times ahead, and it is vital to realize this.

We are desperately short of fertilizers and we cannot expect the crops in 1946 to be good; the food situation next winter may be critical.

Next winter, 1946/47, may well therefore be a very bad time: which will tend to increase the general misery, and to add fuel to the German hatred of us.

9. We have got, somehow, to influence for good the great mass of human material in the British Zone: now 21 million and increasing daily with refugees.

If we fail in this, then we fail in Germany.

The Main Categories Involved

10. This great mass of human material can be divided into three broad categories.

11. First come the children.

These should be fairly easy to deal with and normal sane education should achieve a great deal.

Those who are now 5, and 14, will be 15 and 24 in ten years' time. There is good and fertile soil here; we must get busy on it and must make no mistakes.

The great danger is that they will "suck in poison" in their own homes: from their elder brothers, and sisters, and parents; if we can eradicate this danger we should get a good dividend by our work on the children.

12. Next come the age groups 18 to 25

These are very dangerous groups and will be hard to deal with. They have been steeped in Nazi doctrines from their earliest childhood.

Children who were 5 years old in 1933 are now 18; those who were 14 are now 27; and probably have families of their own. They have known only Nazi teaching from their youth up.

These groups represent a very grave problem.

.../ 13. Lastly come ..

13. Lastly come the parents and older folk.

These are hard bitten Germans; but there are probably some sane influences in this group who have had previous experience of a more liberal regime; these would help us if the opportunity is given. We must provide the opportunity.

Unless we can get this group on our side, it could undo much of the good we hope to do ourselves in our work on the younger generation.

The Foundation of the Solution: the Economic Line of Attack

14. The foundation of the solution must be to give to the millions of Germans that we have, some hope for the future. They must know what is to be the future of their country; they must know that they will have a reasonable standard of living and a "worth-while" future; they must know that they can attain this worth-while future only by their own toil and sweat.

Only in this way will we get the older people on our side; if we do not get them on our side, then we shall not succeed. By the older people I include the age groups 18 to 25, vide para 12.

15. The immense importance of getting the level of industry fixed without further delay is at once apparent.

We must be able to tell the Germans what is to be the peace economy of Germany: what is to be the "worth-while" future which they can strive to reach by their own hard work.

16. Unless the level of industry is such that there is a decent standard of living with little unemployment, and unless allied to this there is a reasonable hope for the future, then everything that follows can only be a palliative and no measures stand a chance of real success.

The people will merely look to the past.

They are a mystic people, who will mope and get into a state of chronic self-pity.

It was out of just such a situation of misery, want, and frustration that Hitler arose.

17. Therefore the level of industry must make it apparent that the standard of living will be reasonable, and the future will be "worth-while".

If this is not so, and the Germans have no hope for the future; then we will have trouble. And as the trouble grows and spreads, so some evil man will arise and will call on the Germans to follow him and throw off the foreign yoke. Such a man would find a ready response.

18. It must also be remembered that if the level of industry is fixed too low, it will mean widespread unemployment. We may well have six million unemployed in Germany, of whom some three to four million would be in the British Zone.

This mass of unemployed persons would be a menace: on top of our other troubles.

19. And so it is obvious that the first and basic line of attack to the problem is the economic line of attack.

We must fix the peace economy of Germany at a level which will give good grounds for hope for the German people.

This is vital.

And it must be done soon.

20. With this sound foundation, and having got the Germans on to the work, we can then proceed with some degree of confidence to the next two lines of attack: which are :-

- (a) Political
- (b) Educational.

Political Line of Attack

21. This line of attack can be divided into two halves :

- Practical
- Psychological

22. Practical

(a) Churches

The churches have been freed from all outside influence. They are re-organizing themselves, and are taking their chance with both hands. One of the most important results will be the re-establishment of the influence of the family, and all that goes with it.

The best help we can give the churches in the future is material to build up their churches, halls, and institutions, and the opportunity to visit the outside world. The former may be difficult at the moment; but steps must be taken to arrange the latter in the Spring.

(b) Decentralization of Government and of the Civil Service.

The whole object of our policy is to break up the Civil Service into separate components as in England is local Government officials, Regional government officials, and then the Civil Service

.../ proper for

proper for central government functions. Our aim also is to make all these officials, servants of elected councils and purely administrators. In this way, we hope to break down authoritarianism. Allied to this, by a suitable system of elections, etc. we hope to get local people elected to local government councils, and, in that way, get people interested in their own local affairs.

A committee is being set up to plan a series of broadcasts and lectures on our aims in the field of government administration.

(c) Contacts with Outside World

In order to show the Germans how democracy works in England, we should get authority for German administrators to go to England for attachments to local government at different levels, and for summer schools of 6 weeks to 2 months at universities, to teach all walks of the British way of life. Students at these schools should include university professors, legal officers, politicians, civil servants, and local government officials. On their return to Germany, it would be the duty of these men to spread the Gospel in their various walks of life: not only by normal contacts in their daily life, but by organized lectures, etc. A plan would be necessary to ensure full value being obtained from these men. Such a plan will require Cabinet sanction, and "selling" in England as a positive duty for the future of Germany.

In addition we should encourage such societies as the Friends, and the Salvation Army, to come out here to educate and work in with their opposite numbers in Germany.

By these means we should aim to give the German people a new ideology, to replace the Nazi doctrines.

23. Psychological

The German people must be given hope and, in this matter, we must include the Nazis in our midst. First, we must give out a date when the process of denazification will be considered complete except for outliers, so that this class of person has some sense of security, and also those people who are quite innocent and fear an injustice will be done to them.

I suggest that this date might be late summer or autumn.

The next thing to do is to divide the Nazis who are either interned, or have been dismissed or removed, into classes. This will be a complicated and difficult business and a committee is being set up shortly to consider the details.

.../ The result of the ...

The result of the Nuremberg trial, and Quadripartite views, will have to be taken into account in deciding the composition of the classes.

I consider that we want only two classes, but I realise that staff investigation may disclose that we require three.

The top class should be as small as possible, but must definitely include all the men we consider irreconcilable and a menace to our security and British aims of Government. The men should be properly tried and sentenced. This class should be interned for at least 10 years, but the men should be told that their cases will be reviewed from time to time.

The bottom class should be as large as possible and subject to a minimum of sanctions. Our aim should be to use and encourage this class to the best advantage in the rehabilitation of their country. There is a risk in so liberal a policy, but any men found to be subversive can be arrested and interned. I consider we must accept the risk, and take a chance.

Detailed planning may show that an intermediate class between these two is necessary; but whatever plan is adopted should be simple, so that it is easily understood by all Germans.

Educational Line of Attack

24. The problem may be conveniently divided into four Age Groups :-

- (a) 4 - 14 Children still at school.
- (b) 15 - 17 Youths and girls who are mostly outside school influence.
- (c) 18 - 25 Young men and women who were mostly too young when the Nazis came to power to have had a lasting experience of any other form of government. Obviously this is the most difficult group of all.
- (d) 30 - upwards. The fathers and mothers for the most part, who will have some memories of a more liberal regime.

Some notes on each Group in turn are given below.

25. Age Group 4 - 14.

- (a) Normal sane education should do much. The curriculum includes broadcasting, which is a great success, and films: for the showing of which most schools are fitted.
- (b) The main problems are books, and teachers, and buildings.

... / (1) Books

(i) Books

A temporary problem, providing paper is available. It is rather inadequately met at the moment by emergency text books. New books on all subjects are being prepared and printed.

(ii) Teachers

An acute shortage is becoming apparent as more children get more full-time education. Existing teachers, owing to denazification, are mostly old and, while technically competent, have not generally a broad conception of their duties. To meet this need, emergency and normal teachers training courses have started, and a large-scale expansion of this training has been planned. It will take time to obtain results.

(iii) Buildings

These are essential. We need both temporary and permanent buildings, as part of the overall plan for rehabilitation.

(iv) In addition, everything must be done to build up the links between home and school, to which the Churches are giving full support.

26. Age Group 15 - 17

(a) (i) The needs of this group are partly met by the normal education of those at Secondary and full-time vocational schools. This group is faced with the same difficulties as regards books, teachers and buildings.

(ii) The next step is to encourage clubs of all sorts within the framework of these schools, in order to teach this part of the group a new way of life.

(b) Although a big percentage of the group receive some formal schooling (about two afternoons a week), there is a great need for Boys' and Girls' Clubs. Complete arrangements must be made to meet this need, and considerable progress is visible already. The three main points here are :-

(i) The vital necessity of obtaining the right German leaders. Without them the thing will go off on the wrong foot.

(ii) A successful Club depends on having a building which it can call its absolute own, within which the boys themselves can plan their own activities. The provision of these buildings will not be easy.

.../ (iii) The

- (iii) The necessity of the Churches broadening their activities for purely religious teaching. This point is being stressed to them through their Bishops.

27. Age Group 18 - 25

The most important group of all, as it is the one which has been under Nazi domination most completely: in fact almost entirely.

- (a) Direct education is being given to a small proportion in -

Universities and training colleges.
Adult education centres - part time only.

In both fields the requirements are -

- (i) Literature, both indigenous and books already published abroad. In addition there should be a free interchange of learned journals.
(ii) Visiting lecturers from England.
(iii) Allowing German professors and students to visit England and other countries (see para 22 (c)).

- (b) The majority of this group is, however, untouched by the above institutions and they should be influenced by the following means. It is important, however, to understand that direct teaching by Englishmen will have little result. The word must come from Germans. Hence the outstanding importance of getting Germans to England to learn a new way of life, and for these men to come back and spread the gospel (see para 22 (c)).

- (i) Broadcasting

The bulk of this should be under German control, subject only to our supervision. Some of the time might, for a period, be controlled by us to cover our main ideas, i.e. the presentation of factual information, knowledge of the outside world, and of democratic institutions. In this connection, although there are a large number of wireless licences, it is known that many licenced sets are out of action. Spare parts are an urgent necessity.

- (ii) Films

An expansion, as far as practicable, of outside films, including documentary and educational films.

... / (iii) Press

(iii) Press

Here again, Germans will learn most readily from Germans. We should select the right Germans and give them a free hand. If they are the right Germans they will welcome contributions from outstanding Englishmen, and this must be arranged.

(iv) Books

Strongest encouragement to be given to indigenous productions. But it is important to help publishers to translate and print foreign works. Everything should be done to import 'pilot' copies.

(v) Promotion of self-governing voluntary organizations of every type.

Not only is this a most valuable means of teaching unselfishness, and the help of others without thinking of reward, but also it is an important field for learning democracy almost unconsciously - in the simplest, and perhaps best, forms. The sort of organizations meant are -

professional,
cultural - drama and music,
women's institutes,
W.V.S. etc.

The field is almost unlimited.

28. Age Group 30 upwards

The points mentioned in para 27 will also cover these people. In addition, most of the parents come into this category and the links between them and the schools should be made as strong as possible. (Para 25 (b)(iv)).

Conclusion

29. This paper sets out the object we have to try and achieve, it examines the problem, and it gives the three main lines of attack:

- (a) the economic line.
- (b) the political line.
- (c) the educational line.

30. I would like to emphasise, once more, three vital issues which must never be forgotten :

- (a) our conflicts with the German people lie ahead, and will come.

.../ (b)

- (b) we must have a definite plan to deal with this matter.
- (c) in our plan of attack, the foundation of the whole thing is the economic line. Unless we can give the German people some hope for a reasonable standard of living and a "worth-while" future, we fail.

31. Lastly, our great safeguard will be a highly efficient intelligence organization. We must know what is going on in Germany; provided we can ensure this we can deal with any trouble before it becomes dangerous. As time goes on our occupational forces may become weaker; as they grow weaker, so our intelligence organization must grow stronger.

Notes

32. This paper will be regarded as TOP SECRET.

It will not be reproduced, and the contents of it will not be communicated below Chiefs of Divisions, and Corps Commanders.

It is particularly important that the contents of para 7 should not be discussed.

33. The Deputy Military Governor will :-

- (a) Arrange for a staff investigation of this memorandum to be begun at once.
- (b) Issue the necessary orders to implement the decisions reached.
- (c) Take the necessary steps to get our Allies on the Control Council interested in the general principles set out in this memorandum, with a view to obtaining their agreement and co-operation.

B. L. Montgomery.

Field-Marshal,
Military Governor and,
Commander-in-Chief.

1 February 1946.

Copies to: Political Adviser to C-in-C
Deputy Military Governor.
Chief, Political Division
Chief, Economic Division
Chief, Finance Division
Chief, IA and C Division
Chief, Legal Division
Chief, PW and IP Division
Chief, Manpower Division
Chief, Transport Division
Chief, RD and R Division
Chief, PR and ISC Division
Major-General Intelligence

Commander 1 Corps District
Commander 8 Corps District
Commander 30 Corps District