

CONFIDENTIALMEMORANDUM ON VISIT TO PARIS AND SWITZERLAND

Since leaving home I have met in Paris: M. Reynaud, M. Delbos, Professor Scele, Professor Paul Mantoux, M. Osusky, M. Pierre Cot, M. Grumbach (Secretary of the Franco-Britannique Parliamentary Group), Dr. Rauschnig, Mr. Wright (British Embassy), and others.

In Switzerland: Professor Rappard, Dr. Spuhler (Secretary of the Swiss League of Nations Society), Dr. Buerkhardt (late Commissioner in Danzig), Dr. Hans Kelsen, M. Boissiere (Secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union), Count Coudenhove-Kalergi (Pan-Europa), Mr. Malcolm Davies (Carnegie Endowment), Mr. Pitman B. Potter (Geneva Research Centre) General Dollfus (Adjutant General of the Swiss Army), Dr. Hans Bauer, Herr Ritzel, Herr Klaesi, Herr Wettstein (representing Europa-Union), Captain Walters and Mr. Sweetser (League Secretariat) Dr. Zbinden, and others.

The object of my visit was two-fold:-

1. To canvass opinion regarding the feasibility of a Confederation of Europe at the conclusion of the war, and the possibility of joint action by voluntary societies.
2. If possible, to discover contacts in a neutral country, through which this idea could be conveyed to people in Germany.

The impressions I gained in the course of many conversations do not, of course, express the views of all the individuals I met, some of whom in responsible positions - as for instance, M. Reynaud and M. Delbos - did not express any opinion at all, but merely listened to what I had to say. Consequently, it must not be inferred that all the conclusions in the following summary are necessarily shared by all the persons I interviewed. On some points they agreed; on others they differed, and I have merely tried to condense the gist of the conversations into a general statement.

WAR AIMS. There appear to be two schools regarding War Aims. First, there are those who may be described as the "good jobbers" - we made a bad job of it last time, we must make a good job of it now; we should have marched to Berlin and dismembered Germany in 1918. Now we must cut her up into small pieces and garrison her cities. Whips last time; scorpions next. No distinction must be drawn between Hitlerism and the German people - one is as bad as the other.

Assuming an Allied victory, the logical result of this punitive policy would be (a) the extermination of 70 millions of people, or (b) the garrisoning of German cities by the Western democracies for fifty or one hundred years. Obviously, (a) is a moral and physical impossibility, whilst (b) is impracticable. The experience of the last twenty years has clearly demonstrated that as the will of the German nation to reassert itself became stronger, so the determination of the democratic nations to maintain a stranglehold weakened, and finally disappeared. Therefore, the idea that Germany can be garrisoned indefinitely is an illusion.

I did not meet many "good jobbers", but gathered there was a considerable number, especially in France. Their slogan is: "Put Germany into a vice and hold her there." But if elimination - massacre - or a system of garrisons - occupation - are ruled out, what coercive measures short of these could prevent Germany from once again becoming a menace to the peace of Europe?

The unfortunate experience of the last twenty years proves that disarmament, dismemberment, reparations, etc. would only produce a fresh crop of Hitlers, secret armaments and unilateral repudiations. If the policy of the "good jobbers" represents our War Aims, then the following results are likely to happen:-

- (a) the Germans will go on fighting to the last man;
- (b) they will probably become Bolshevist, and
- (c) There will be another Versailles, and the seeds of a new war will be sown in the treaty of peace.

The truth is that 70 millions of Germans are an unpleasant fact with which the Allies will have to deal. If the former cannot be put into a strait-jacket, then let them be treated in a reasonable and commonsense way.

Secondly, there is the school which believes that this way is to be found in some form of European Federation, or Confederation, and most of the people I talked to belonged to this category.

Good Europeans, as distinct from the "good jobbers", were agreed that:-

1. Another Versailles - or something worse; namely, an attempt to dismember Germany, or hold her down indefinitely - would only produce existing conditions in another 20 or 30 years, or drive her into the arms of Russia.
2. That the solution which offers any hope of permanence is a Confederation, or Federation, of Europe.
3. That a declaration of War Aims in this sense would have a profound influence upon neutral opinion, and might be followed by favourable reactions in Germany, where the system of federalism has been practised and is, therefore, at least understood.
4. That such a solution is the alternative to Communism in Germany, and therefore the only way of escape for the nonproletariat sections of the community.
5. That inasmuch as Germany will be compelled to choose between Federalism and Communism, the Allies should assist the German people in making this choice, by declaring that she would be admitted on terms of equality into a European Confederation.
6. That if such a Confederation could be established, the delimitation of the frontiers of a new Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria would not present insuperable difficulties.
7. That if France and Great Britain championed the federal solution now, before military operations have begun in earnest, it might hasten the downfall of the Nazi regime.

DECENTRALISATION IN GERMANY. Several German refugees, and others whom I met, insisted that no European Federation would work unless the Government of the Reich was decentralised, and the domination of Prussia eliminated. They proposed either (1) that Germany should recreate a federal system of her own, under a constitutional monarchy, Reichstag and Bundesrat - an adaptation of the 1914 federal constitution, or (2) the breaking up of the Reich into a number of autonomous states, all of whom would be represented in the Parliament or Congress of a European Federation. Under (1) the Reich would be represented as a unit. Under (2) as a group of autonomous states in the European federal system.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that if the Allies endeavoured to impose autonomy upon the German states, this would be regarded by the German people as an attempt to weaken the Reich, and in the long run, would only defeat its own ends. Clearly, the internal government of Germany, as of every other country, is the concern of its own people and cannot be imposed from outside, or at any rate, only as a temporary expedient. Hence the necessity that any move in this direction should be undertaken by Germans who desire to rid their country of Nazi domination, and to replace the Hitler regime by a government which could co-operate with the Western democracies in establishing a Confederation of Europe.

I was asked what steps are being taken by the authorities in Great Britain and France to facilitate collaboration between German refugees, especially ex-members of the Reichstag, in the preparation of a new constitution which they would be willing to sponsor in Germany at the conclusion of the war.

GUARANTEES. In the course of several conversations the question of guarantees was discussed. What guarantee, asked the "good jobbers", would be demanded from the Germans for their future good behaviour. It was suggested that the best guarantee would be the handing over by the German Government to the federal authority of all its super-weapons. If the German people, in conjunction with the peoples of other European states, were prepared to pool their weapons in a common defensive force, that would constitute the most sincere and convincing proof of their loyalty to the new system, and their abandonment of Prussian imperialism. Moreover, the other members of the European Confederation would share in this mutual guarantee.

I was reminded that on two occasions at the Disarmament Conference, France had offered to provide a similar guarantee, and that at the end of the last war, the nucleus of such a force might have been constituted by handing over the German Fleet to the custody of the League, instead of allowing it to be sent to the bottom of the sea. In the years which followed, other state members might have been willing to contribute their quotas to this force, and thus have realised the proposal for the establishment of an international navy, which was passed through Congress and submitted by the United States Government to the Chancellories of Europe in 1911.

FRENCH OPINION. My French friends were also insistent upon the necessity of guarantees to safeguard the security of France against the recrudescence of German imperialism. I reiterated the view that the most effective guarantee was to be found in the pooling of at least the air forces of the co-operating states - if not of all their super-weapons - which would eliminate competition in national armaments, and thus liberate vast economic resources for the rehabilitation of Europe. On the other hand, coercive measures applied to one country alone - Germany - had been tried during the last twenty years and had signally failed to produce the results which French statesmen had anticipated. If the Allies won the war two courses were open to them. Either they could embark upon a new and more drastic policy of coercion, or endeavour to rebuild Europe upon the foundations of justice, prosperity and the rule of law.

Despite Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's assertion to the contrary, I formed the impression that French public opinion leans towards the policy of the "good jobbers" and for three reasons:-

- (1) During the last seventy years France has, on three occasions been compelled to defend French territory against German aggression.
- (2) Because, like us, France has no federal background of her own, and
- (3) because she is suspicious of what are known as our "idealistic tendencies" - a polite description of our traditional policy of the balance of power.

From the British standpoint the problem is how to dissipate these suspicions, and to create a feeling of confidence between the two countries, so as to secure the utmost co-operation in the prosecution of the war and the framing of a durable peace.

To achieve this result the following suggestions were made:-

1. It was considered essential that the British and French peoples should be animated by a common ideal. That ideal should be justice for all, and the establishment of the rule of law in Europe.

2. That this ideal, expressed in terms of federal institutions, offers a far greater and much more real security to France than the Articles of any Treaty which the Allies could impose upon Germany. The former would gradually develop into a living organism, the latter - like the Treaty of Versailles - would slowly perish limb by limb until at last, under new conditions, it would become completely moribund. If the French are realists they will not repeat the fatal errors of Poincare, Clemenceau and Foch; on the contrary, they will follow the precepts of Sully, St. Pierre, Rousseau and Talleyrand, reinforced by the advice of Briand, Bourgeois and Herriot.
3. To seek every possible means to establish the identity of ideologies and interests between the two nations. Above all, to stress their mutual loyalty to democracy, and thus help to re-establish more firmly than ever their faith in Parliamentary institutions, which, unfortunately, in these days appears to be at a low ebb on the other side of the Channel.
4. To collaborate in prosecuting the war with the utmost vigour, to create the machinery necessary for securing the closest co-operation in every sphere and at the conclusion of the struggle to weave these institutions into the peace fabric of Anglo-French relationships as the nucleus of a United States of Europe.

LEAFLETS. Almost all the people I met thought that the distribution of leaflets had been overdone. Both in form and substance they appear to have excited the derision of almost everyone. As a demonstration during the first few days of the war this activity was to be commended, but when it was not followed up by prompt military action it tended to become a damp squib. On the other hand, it was suggested that leaflets drawn up in an attractive form dealing with a specific point, or a particular incident, and distributed at the psychological moment, might become effective weapons of propaganda. I was told that South Germany, especially Bavaria and Austria, were the most fertile fields for this kind of propaganda.