

Dokumentation

ADAM VON TROTT UND DAS STATE DEPARTMENT

Vorbemerkung des Herausgebers

Unter dem Schutz einer Einladung zur Teilnahme an einer Konferenz des Institute of Pacific Relations in Virginia Beach fuhr Adam v. Trott im September 1939 nach den Vereinigten Staaten. Es gelang ihm, der britischen Blockade zu entgehen¹ und sodann in Washington, New York und Harvard mit Persönlichkeiten der deutschen Emigration wie auch des amerikanischen öffentlichen Lebens Kontakte aufzunehmen, bei denen er sich mehr oder weniger deutlich als Vertreter der innerdeutschen Opposition zu erkennen gab. Über seine Berührung mit amtlichen Stellen und insbesondere über die Denkschrift, die er an das State Department gelangen ließ, habe ich 1948 zuerst eingehendere Angaben machen können, da mir Paul Scheffer, dem ich für die Erstfassung meines Buches „The German Opposition to Hitler“ überhaupt viele Aufschlüsse verdanke, den in seinem Besitze befindlichen maschinenschriftlichen Entwurf der betreffenden Denkschrift überließ. Ich habe den Inhalt im Hauptgedankengang wiedergegeben (a. a. O., S. 136 ff.), ohne auf die Verfasserfrage näher einzugehen. Über sie hat Paul Scheffer aus Gründen, die dem Kenner der Person wie der inneramerikanischen Lage von 1939 sowohl wie von 1948 verständlich sein werden, sich ausgeschwiegen. Das hat zu einigem Rätselraten unter den näher Eingeweihten geführt². Sicher ist, daß Beratungen oder Gespräche über den Inhalt geführt worden sind, an denen Kurt Riezler, Hans Simons und – nach ausdrücklichem Zeugnis – auch Brüning, ebenso wie andere bekannte Deutsche teilgenommen haben³. Sicher ist aber gleichfalls, daß der eigentlich Treibende Trott war. Nichts indessen hätte seiner ganzen Art ferner gelegen, als sich mit fremden Federn zu schmücken. Wie sich aus Dok. 3 ergibt, hat er denn auch in der Unterredung von dem Memorandum nur gesagt, daß es im Ganzen seine Ansichten repräsentiere, und sich in einem bestimmten, sehr charakteristischen Punkt davon

¹ Daß er der Kontrolle in Gibraltar entgangen sei, indem er als alter Rhodes-Scholar einen „Binder in den Farben des Balliol College trug“ (J. Wheeler-Bennett in „Die Nemesis der Macht“, S. 510), dürfte auf Phantasie beruhen, wie durch das Zeugnis eines mitfahrenden deutschen Rhodes-Scholar erhärtet werden kann.

² Zu ihnen gehörte auch Wheeler-Bennett, der Trott und seinen Freunden bzw. ihren Bestrebungen damals sehr viel näher stand, als seine reservierte Darstellung vermuten läßt. Er nennt (a. a. O., S. 511) Kurt Riezler und Hans Simons als Ko-Autoren, was wohl Gerhard Ritter (Goerdeler, S. 495, A. 2) zu der irrigen Annahme einer „Riezler-Simons-Denkschrift“ veranlaßt hat.

³ In der nicht eingereichten Einleitung zum Memorandum hieß es: „The views put forward are the result of careful discussions among a small group of Germans with scholarly, publicist and political background.“ Diese Worte umschreiben den Teilnehmerkreis recht wohl, auch die Denkschrift selbst braucht gelegentlich die Wir-Form. Andererseits hat Paul Schwarz (bis 1933 Generalkonsul in New York) schon am 7. Oktober 1945 in der New Yorker „Staatszeitung und Herald“ (unter dem Pseudonym „Diplomaticus“) von der Denkschrift „eines in den USA beruflich tätigen Deutschen“ gesprochen, die Trott in Washington vorlegte.

sogar distanziert. In einem bisher ungedruckten Brief an seinen Freund David Astor (Washington, Dec. 26, 1939) spricht er von einer Denkschrift „whose author I am only in parts“. Ich habe daraus schon in der letzten Auflage des Buches über die deutsche Opposition (Fischer-Bücherei, S. 203, A. 18) geschlossen, daß Scheffers Anteil „als sehr erheblich“ anzunehmen sei. Inzwischen hat sich aus erneuter Korrespondenz ergeben, daß er der Verfasser des mir vorgelegten Entwurfs gewesen ist. Trott seinerseits hat, wie der Vergleich mit der Ausfertigung zeigt, einige Schlußgedanken hinzugefügt, die ihm offenbar wichtig waren. Darauf wird zurückzukommen sein. Jedenfalls gibt Dok. 2 die Denkschrift nunmehr in der Form wieder, wie sie an das State Department gelangte.

Die darauf bezüglichen Akten durfte ich dank dem Entgegenkommen der Historical Division des amerikanischen Außenamtes einsehen und verwerten. Damit ergibt sich auch die Möglichkeit, die Frage, wie die Mission Trotts aufgenommen wurde und was die Gründe ihres Scheiterns waren, auf etwas festere quellenmäßige Grundlage zu stellen. Trott hat zwei Unterredungen mit dem Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. G. S. Messersmith⁴, gehabt. Wie bei vielen anderen Gelegenheiten ist auch hierbei der Eindruck seiner Persönlichkeit ein sehr starker gewesen. Aber die Mauer des Mißtrauens zu durchbrechen gelang ihm nicht. Es beruhte dieses auf gewissen vorgefaßten Meinungen („background material“), die das Büro veranlaßt haben mögen, den betreffenden Aktenfaszikel (Case No. 862.20211) mit dem Vermerk zu versehen „Subject: Espionage Activities, Adam von Trott in US“! So weit ging der Assistant Secretary in seinem Verdacht nicht. Aber er kam von der Erwägung nicht los (Dok. 6), daß, wer unter den gegebenen Umständen Deutschland verlassen und dahin zurückkehren könne, kein ganz „freier Agent“ sei. Während er in der ersten Unterredung (Dok. 3) nur von Zweifel erfüllt war, ob Leute, die vorgeben, für „konservative Elemente“ in Deutschland zu sprechen, nicht vielmehr für die gegenwärtige deutsche Regierung handelten, glaubte er bei der zweiten, gestützt auf einen Bericht des FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), daß Trott direkt oder indirekt in der Tat Beziehungen zu nationalsozialistischen Agenten unterhalte. Das sei vermutlich der Preis, den er für seine Bewegungsfreiheit zu zahlen habe (Dok. 6). Von der persönlichen bona fides Trotts war Messersmith gleichwohl überzeugt. Er kam seinem Wunsche nach (Dok. 7), ihn bei dem Geschäftsträger der Botschaft in Berlin, Mr. Alexander Kirk, einzuführen. Er betonte diesem gegenüber, daß Trottsche Mitteilungen allemal mit Interesse aufgenommen werden würden, aber auch dabei war die Mahnung zur Vorsicht unverkennbar. Von der Sonderpolitik Weizsäckers, die Trotts Bewegungsfreiheit erklärt, wie auch von der Art und Zusammensetzung der deutschen Opposition hatte man offenbar im State Department keine genauere Vorstellung. So blieb es bei dem mageren Ergebnis der Anweisung an den Berliner Geschäftsträger⁵.

⁴ M. wurde im Jahre 1937 wegen seiner Kenntnisse der mitteleuropäischen Angelegenheiten von der Wiener Botschaft nach Washington zurückgeholt. (Vgl. Langer-Gleason, „The Challenge to Isolation“, S. 21)

⁵ Ob Trott von dieser Verbindung später Gebrauch gemacht hat, war nicht festzustellen. In

Damit ist freilich nicht gesagt, daß dies das einzige amtliche Echo war. Das Memorandum ging auch an Lord Lothian, den britischen Botschafter in Washington, mit dem Trott seit langem in seiner Eigenschaft als Vorsitzender des Cecil-Rhodes-Komitees in Verbindung stand und – vermutlich durch Wheeler-Bennett – an das Außenministerium in Ottawa. Die Denkschrift kam außerdem (Dok. 1) zur Kenntnis des Staatssekretärs Cordell Hull und des Unterstaatssekretärs Sumner Welles. Daß sie dem letzteren bei seiner bevorstehenden Rundreise irgendwie nützlich war, ist abwegig zu vermuten⁶. Daß sie über Hull in das Weiße Haus gelangte, hat eine gewisse Wahrscheinlichkeit. Für die Tatsache jedenfalls der Kenntnisnahme und der sympathischen Aufnahme durch Roosevelt finden sich sehr bestimmte Aussagen, wenn auch der aktenmäßige Nachweis nicht zu führen ist. Das gleiche gilt für die Annahme, daß ein vertrauter Berater Roosevelts, der Richter am Supreme Court, Felix Frankfurter, sich der Weiterverfolgung der Angelegenheit in den Weg gestellt hat. Immerhin geht aus Dok. 3 mit Deutlichkeit hervor, wie sehr gerade er an der Schaffung einer Atmosphäre des Mißtrauens von vornherein beteiligt gewesen war. Es lagen dem offenbar Eindrücke gemeinsamer Oxforder Jahre zugrunde, während derer Trott auch von Nahestehenden in seinen politischen Motiven empfindlich verkannt worden ist. Er selbst klagt in dem schon erwähnten Brief aus Washington über „certain ‚clever‘ quarters in Oxford“, die ihn als „Appeaser“ denunzierten; er nennt ausdrücklich „Felix und seine Freunde“. So gewiß man mit ihren Wünschen und Hoffnungen weitgehend übereinstimmen könnte, so sehr ständen sie durch ihren Argwohn, durch ihre „passionate destructiveness“ jedem positiven Ansatz der Kooperation im Wege.

Das führt auf die Frage, worum es Trott bei seiner Aktion in Washington vor allem ging. Der Hauptinhalt der Denkschrift braucht hier nicht wiederholt zu werden. Ihr praktischer Zielpunkt war, wie er es Felix Morley (s. Anm. 6) gegen den Berliner Gesandtschaftsberichten findet sich wohl einiges Material zum Widerstand. So ein „Rush“-Telegramm von D. R. Heath, das sichtlich auf Oster Bezug hat (May 10, 2 a. m. – 740.0011/2778): „I understand that the Netherlands Government has been advised from confidential sources in Berlin that orders were issued Thursday morning May 9 to the German army to move into Holland at 5 a. m. Friday May 10 and that up to 8 p. m. last evening the orders had not been countermanded –“. In den Berliner Berichten, die ich einsehen konnte, findet sich indessen weder der Name von Trott noch eine Anspielung auf ihn. Hingegen taucht er in den Akten des State Department im Oktober/November 1941 auf (Foreign Activity Correlation) und ausführlicher in den Stockholmer Berichten vom Juni 1944 und – rückblickend – vom September 1944. Auf die Stockholmer Mission kurz vor dem Attentat, für die noch andere Quellen zu erschließen sein werden, soll hier nicht eingegangen werden.

⁶ Dies gegen Wheeler-Bennett, a. a. O., S. 511. Dazu und zum Folgenden die Angaben und Andeutungen Felix Morleys, damals Herausgeber der „Washington Post“. Sie finden sich als Tagebuchnotizen in E. B. Maley (Human Events, February 27, 1946) und in folgenden Sätzen eines Briefes an Frau von Trott (24. 12. 57): „The problem was to get him in direct touch with Secretary Hull, bypassing Undersecretary Sumner Welles who I knew would be unsympathetic. As I knew Hull well and had his confidence, this was not difficult. I further endeavoured to get him a private talk with President Roosevelt, but sought to arrange this indirectly because Roosevelt did not like my editorial policy. This meeting with the President was apparently arranged, but as I recall fell through . . .“

über formulierte, „dafür zu sorgen, daß nicht das Programm eines Vernichtungskriegs alle diejenigen Elemente zum Anschluß an die Nationalsozialisten zwingt, die begonnen haben, sich zum Sturz Hitlers zusammenzufinden“. Es ging also um moralische Ermutigung und Stärkung der Opposition. Dem dienten in kritischer Auseinandersetzung mit Versailles die Erörterungen über ein vernünftiges Friedensprogramm, für das ein nachhitlerisches Deutschland bestimmte Opfer zu bringen und bestimmte Garantien zu leisten habe, für das aber auch die Alliierten bestimmte Maximalforderungen festlegen sollten, die insbesondere nicht hinter den Territorialbestand von 1933 zurückgriffen⁷. Insoweit befürwortet die Denkschrift eine ausdrückliche Absage an den Vernichtungskrieg und eine frühzeitige Proklamierung maßvoller alliierter Friedensziele. Um so mehr fällt auf, wie auch Mr. Messersmith sofort feststellte, daß Trott im ersten Gespräch von dem Wunsch nach einer solchen Proklamierung für den gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt abrückte. Er mußte sich offenbar decken gegen den Verdacht, daß es ihm um ein neues München gehe, aber man spürt auch seine eigene Sorge vor den „Appeasers“ in England; vor allem aber betonte er mit aller Schärfe, das Schlimmste, was passieren könnte für Deutschland und die Welt, sei ein vorzeitiger Friedensschluß mit der gegenwärtigen oder einer ähnlichen deutschen Regierung. Dies war ein entscheidender Vorbehalt, der das konstruktive Programm unmißverständlich mit dem Umsturz in Deutschland verknüpfte. Von den Vereinigten Staaten erbat die Denkschrift nicht eine formelle Vermittlung, wohl aber den Einsatz ihrer Autorität für einen gerechten und dauerhaften Frieden und „eine Gedankenrichtung aufbauender Art“. Das Gemeinte wird deutlicher in den Schlußabschnitten, die Trott hinzugefügt hat. Sie warben unmißverständlich um ein Bündnis mit den „constructive elements“ selbst der Länder, die gegenwärtig als Störer des Friedens galten, sowie um eine Ordnung, die nicht auf Propagandaformeln, sondern auf den tatsächlichen Bedingungen des Völkerlebens beruhte und Krieg zwischen den westlichen Nationen unmöglich machen würde. Es ist die betonte Einsicht in die tiefe Veränderung der sozialen Wirklichkeit und in die solidarische Verantwortung der westlichen Welt, die Trotts zweiter internationaler Aktion, so wirkungslos sie blieb, ebenso wie seiner Denkschrift vom April 1942⁸ etwas Vorausweisendes geben. So mögen die nachfolgenden Dokumente in einem Heft zur Veröffentlichung kommen, das um den 20. Juli herum erscheinen wird.

H. R.

Dokument 1.

Assistant Secretary (G. S. Messersmith) to Mr. Welles.
November 14, 1939

(Mitteilung über die Anwesenheit eines Deutschen in Washington).

I have a good deal of background on him which I think you should have. Yesterday Stone, the Washington representative of the Foreign Policy Association, left with me a

⁷ Damit erscheint die Angabe Wheeler-Bennetts (a. a. O., S. 510) schwer vereinbar, Trott habe sich gegen jeden Verzicht eines Nicht-Nazi-Deutschland auf die Gebietserwerbungen Adolf Hitlers erklärt.

⁸ Vgl. diese Zeitschrift, 5 (1957), S. 390 ff.

copy of a memorandum prepared by Trott of which I append a copy. I gave a copy of it to the Secretary before he left last evening. You will wish to read this, and there is a good deal of background that I should give you orally. G. S. M.

Bleistiftvermerk: Many thanks, I had already seen this memorandum. W.

Dokument 2.

Memorandum

From the very start, and, indeed, before the outbreak of the war, public discussion all over the world has focussed on the order of the things which may eventually emerge from the struggle between Germany and the Allied powers. The principal issues of the peace programmes emanating from the discussion can already be plainly discerned.

Most proposals published hitherto seem to take an Allied victory for granted. The possibility of a stalemate through mutual exhaustion has scarcely been contemplated, while the possibility of a German victory is generally ignored.

The relative merits of these predictions shall not be discussed here. Ever since Wilson proclaimed that there should be „no victors and no vanquished“, effort has not been lacking to dissociate the task of making an enduring peace in people's minds from the military outcome.

It is the purpose of the following memorandum to suggest from a new angle that, whichever way hostilities may come to an end, it will prove of inestimable value if the Allies – even at this early stage – have put on public record, in clear and unmistakable terms, the kind of peace for which they are fighting. Timely clarification of definite war aims, in this sense, must be regarded as not only extremely helpful, but, in fact, indispensable in order to bring this war to a desirable conclusion.

In arriving at this conviction we recognize that there are two fundamentally opposite premises:

a) One school of thought starts from the proposition that Germany has now given final proof of her inability to live on equal terms with other European states. Consequently it considers it imperative to weaken Germany beyond hope of recovery and, with that end in view, to break her up into several parts. Only thus could all future attempts at political and military concentration be frustrated from the start. Even the Versailles treaty had not been sufficiently drastic to achieve this. A really crushing peace treaty must therefore be drawn up this time.

To this end, they either advocate unmitigated severity towards Germany and uncompromisingly self-interested protection of their territories from further German aggression, or they plead for a „more constructive“ solution to these problems. They argue that the creative side of the German national character would be given sufficient chance of development if their interests were confined to industrial and cultural fields. This could be achieved by depriving the Germans of every possible lever and hope of political initiative abroad. A certain emotional compensation for Germany's former political status, according to this view, could be found in exploiting the antagonism latent between her northern and southern parts. There would be no danger for the rest of Europe if the states south of the Main were permitted to form a union including Austria, if not the Rhineland. Such a union might well be economically successful and might in time develop a national consciousness sufficient to offset moves towards a restoration of German unity.

b) In direct contrast to this, the other school of thought starts from the proposition that the Versailles treaty and especially the spirit of its application was too harsh, and that the present war is its natural outcome. That treaty has brought to power the aggressive forces in Germany, as such a peace settlement might have done in any other self-respecting nation. A future settlement, then, would have to avoid all stimuli to a

repetition of the aftermath of Versailles. Germany, in their view, should be granted a fair basis for national existence. Measures which might rekindle her persecution complex and supply new material for demagogues must be avoided. These critics of the Versailles treaty consider the breaking up of Germany, under whatever circumstances, as disastrous to the future peace of Europe. Never, in the long run, would the German people submit to this forced partition. This group would demand a radical departure from all experiments based on the old conception of „power politics“. They consider Europe, and Germany within Europe, as ripe for an attempt at other methods taking into more adequate account the underlying economic and social factors. They regard as a dangerous dogma the view that this war of 1939, following on previous outbreaks ever since 1864, proves the perpetual bellicosity of the German. The period since the Treaty of Versailles must, in their opinion, be regarded as an abnormal state of affairs which was bound to result in wholly extraordinary reactions, such as the submission of Germany to an extremist government. There are, in this view, sufficient reliable elements in the German make-up to warrant an attempt to form a new order in Europe in cooperation with a liberated Germany, provided that she is not made a victim of new grievances, and thereby again driven into channels of irrational escape.

The Allied Governments, and each Government which will participate directly or indirectly in any eventual settlement, must decide between the merits of these two points of view before they on their part approach the problem of peace terms.

If the theory is accepted that Germany is bound to remain a nefarious element in the European family of nations, any proclamation of war aims on this basis can only do harm. Such an act can only contribute to the prolongation of the war. Even though the German people are increasingly opposed to the National-Socialist Government and embittered by its policies, it is clear that only a negligible minority of Germans will deny their support even to the present regime, if the preservation of the German nation is at stake.

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Most, if not all, considerations, on the other hand, support an early declaration of the Allied peace aims, if a departure from the treaty of Versailles and its philosophy could be envisaged. The practical purpose in proclaiming the Allied peace program would be:

- (1) to finish the war quickly;
- (2) to reduce actual and potential friction in Europe to a minimum by a negotiated peace;
- (3) to set moving machinery for European cooperation.

The extreme importance of a timely clarification of war aims derives not merely from the fact that it would reassure and consolidate opposition in Germany and thereby contribute to the discrediting and undoing of Nazi domination. It is of vital importance also for the future internal situation within the Allied states themselves. All experiences of the last war substantiate the likelihood that this internal factor will form a cause of acute anxiety for all belligerent governments once hostilities are ended.

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Looking at it from an international point of view there would be a distinctly favorable reaction in Germany to the proclamation of reasonable and definite peace aims, providing that this proclamation will be convincing.

The Nazi Government has so far effectively kept the German people from realizing the reasons that made the Allies go to war. Should it prove possible to dispel the view

hitherto prevailing in Germany, that the Allies are fighting to crush a young and rising nation whatever its leadership, this would be a tremendous step ahead.

The attempt to disentangle past history offers little prospect of clarification. However, the vision of a constructive and fair peace, as the pledged aim of Allied war efforts, could substantially disprove the Nazi explanation why war became necessary. The realization of Hitler's incapacity to conclude such a desirable peace would intensify the deep discontent which is growing in Germany, caused by physical distress and the spectacle of Nazi mismanagement.

The working classes in Germany especially are certain to break through their present attitude of reserve, which is partly due to their defeat in 1933 and also to the fact that they see no practical alternative to the present international deadlock. If a way were to emerge clearly from the present maze of domestic and foreign propaganda which envelopes them, their grievances against the Nazi regime will be felt to be no longer tolerable and, in so far as such discontent cannot be vented in the heavily policed factory yards and military ranks, it will find an even more impressive outlet in the homes and, through the women, in the streets. It must be realized that the German proletariat still retain in essence their international inclinations¹, even though the hopes of Communism have been shattered and discredited by the Hitler-Stalin pact. There are signs that even beyond this profound disillusionment all political creeds have lost their hold on people's mind – a natural outcome of the Machiavellian cynicism of both Communist and Nazi policies. The political thinking of the German working man tends to be eminently „matter of fact“ nowadays.

The middle and lower strata of the German middle class are committed to follow any violent mass movement, whatever its origin. They are rapidly losing the new pride with which National Socialism had inflated them: concentration of Nazi power in recent times has proceeded at their expense, and they have lost all political initiative.

The propertied or otherwise privileged classes („liberal“ professions, especially university teachers) are struggling in silent, but desperate, opposition to the regime which, however, contrives to retain their ultimate loyalty with the threat of national annihilation by the Allies, if all patriotic Germans do not stand together in this supreme moment of danger. The upper bourgeoisie in particular hope that eventually the army officers will take matters in hand and liberate them from their present yoke and from the threat of an effective Nazi-Bolshevik fraternization.

Up to now the attitude of the German officer corps towards the regime has not been uniform. The present High Command must be regarded as somewhat hypnotized by Hitler. But the likelihood of a change in this respect is the greater as pressure on responsible army opinion increases. The higher ranks are bound to revert to their previous conviction that Germany, in her present state on the military as well as the home front, should not be exposed to the stress of a major European war. Their primary concern, naturally, will now be to bring this war to a satisfactory conclusion, but they will be all the more disposed towards an equitable peace if opinion is crystallized on the fact that Hitler had forced this conflict and is precluding its honorable and reasonable settlement by his headstrong disregard of the rational and responsible elements in the state.

Taking Germany as a whole, the following can be stated with certainty: Hitler came into power by promising the destruction of Communism to all who still had something to lose, and by promising the restoration of Germany's greatness without war. In August 1939 Hitler finally destroyed these two fundamentals of his power. His rule is now supported merely by the direct necessity of the German people to back the regime in its war against the alleged intention of the Allied powers to destroy Germany once more. While Hitler's two promises have been blatantly broken, this last fear

¹ Fragezeichen in Bleistift am Rand.

still holds the majority of Germans in the thrall of Nazi war measures so long as they appear to be the only means to national survival. The realization that continued National Socialist control is the chief obstacle to peaceful survival will of necessity bring a profound change and an overwhelming sense of having been betrayed by Hitler. If the prospect appears that this government may be removed and simultaneously a tolerable position for Germany in a new Europe could be secured, this realization would provide the German people with a psychological pre-requisite without which the instinct of national preservation must outrule even the most passionate urge to liberate themselves.

If, on the other hand, the German people – groping for some bearable alternative to Hitler – are met with continued vagueness and intransigence from the Western powers, their desperate hopes are bound to turn eastwards once more. The ensuing resurgence of popular unrest forms as yet a remoter possibility than might be taken as the obvious immediate implication of the Nazi-Soviet-threat. But ultimately the nightmare of another crushing peace settlement and its keenly remembered humiliations must drive the Germans into close union with Russia as the only remaining alternative. And it is difficult to see how the revolutionary developments following such a change of attitude within Germany could be confined to the frontiers of that country.

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In their own states, too, the Allied Governments now in power must anticipate profound psychological changes if this war goes on.

They have a vital interest in guiding these changes in order to preclude unexpected and undesirable outbreaks at the end, or even before the end, of this struggle. The British Prime Minister has recognized this necessity in his speech of Oktober 12th. He emphasized the fact that the Europe emerging from the present conflict will be very different from the Europe we know now. This does not merely mean territorial changes and the like. Mr. Chamberlain must have been thinking also of the inevitable and profound alterations in the inner political temper of the belligerent peoples and the incalculable effect of this on the life of the state.

The Governments, both in Paris and in London, have from the very start of this war realized that the mood of their peoples differed profoundly from that hitherto observed in wars which had to be fought by popular armies. The people this time were not carried away into a frenzy of passion. Their attitudes remained wholly rational. All observers have stated this with amazement. Consciously or unconsciously, the speeches of Daladier as well as of Chamberlain, communicating to the people the Government's decision to fight, have respected this mood. Neither have used the terms, „Glory“, „Prestige“, or „National Grandeur“, as the primary motivation for the necessity of such a grave step. As distinct from any such general appeal, they have concentrated their arguments on the interests of every individual Frenchman or Britisher, his way of life, his personal liberty, and his desire for an undisturbed existence.

Those arguments, too, are the cause of the common man's readiness to fight for England and France; it is neither enthusiasm, revengefulness or greed which drive him to do so. It is in the interests of both Allied Governments to support this attitude. There is no reason to intensify the conduct of war by replacing these motives with those propaganda slogans, which were customary in previous wars. But it is necessary to sustain this rational and deliberate attitude by supplying it with a clear objective, the emotional as well as rational appeal of which justifies the terrible sacrifices which are demanded. It is imperative to tell the people not only why they were forced to fight, but moreover what they are fighting for.

The permanence of what has here been characterized as a rational attitude is not to

be relied upon. The enormous efforts which war imposes on the people even now increase their irritability and the violence of their reactions. If popular passions get beyond control, grave dangers in the nature of those hinted at by the British Premier are inevitable.

There is a definite threat that on both sides popular opinion may lay this war to governmental failure and denounce it as „their“ war. Hitler may have wanted it, but the other cabinets did not successfully prevent his having his way. The popular fury – as after 1914–1918 – may well direct itself against certain political systems, or, indeed, against government as such: a kind of semi-religious revival with chaotic social consequences may surge up, and revolutionary tendencies, already latent, may manifest themselves in a more drastic and destructive form the longer this war lasts. Governments will only lend substance to their former dealings and their present authority if they rally public opinion in good time around a peace program which meets with sufficiently broad approval to serve as a safety valve. They will otherwise become victims of the catastrophic events, which any realist must presage, and will be blamed for having embarked on a course of destruction without the vision of a tolerable future on which their successors will base their claim to power.

If one has to count on an increase in the elements of passion in popular thinking, it becomes imperative to canalize these forces into constructive channels. They are dangerous, but they also have the advantage of permitting a radical remolding of ideas. The present Governments have no better means to crystallize popular emotions than to proclaim the goal of a peace which is just and constructive and worth fighting for.

It may be remarked in passing that nationalism of the kind which finds its most extreme expression in Nazidom has been distinctly on the down-grade in Europe for some time². This assertion may seem paradoxical. But it must not be doubted that the same cool reasonableness which prevails on the Allied side is also present in the German popular attitude towards this war. Even Hitler, in deference to this, had to present the decision to fight as an act of generally shared deliberation. He had to let the war „slide in by the back door“. The regime was acutely conscious of the fact that the onslaught on Poland was unpopular, as certainly the extension of hostilities to the West was dreaded by the German masses.

Almost imperceptibly, the whole complex of national prestige has lost its hold on the peoples of Europe. For this reason a definite move towards European cooperation will be much easier than it was after the last war.

If, therefore, the Allied Governments decided upon the necessity of a peace of reconciliation with Germany, they would not only be able to deal with their own critical internal problems after the war, but they will also find the necessary material for building a stable and cooperative future for Europe.

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The technique of an early proclamation of Allied peace aims certainly presents formidable difficulties. Its communication to the people of Germany is but one of the smallest among them.

The procedure herein advocated has been applied before. Woodrow Wilson published his Fourteen Points on January 22, 1917, less than two weeks before severing diplomatic relations with Germany. His action turned against itself in the latter course of events, and now it forms one of the strongest impediments to a successful repetition of such action in the present war.

And yet, this unparalleled and high-minded initiative on the part of the President

² Wie Anm. 1.

of the United States had been perfectly right as a guiding principle and might, if properly followed up, have set the standard for a lasting democratic peace. It had its effect, under even less favorable internal conditions in Germany, for the duration of the war. The Fourteen Points, without any doubt, spurred the unleashing of democratic forces in Germany. Their unfortunate later effect was due to mistakes which must and can be avoided this time.

Germany has felt herself betrayed by what followed after the Fourteen Points. This feeling is sincere. When the first confirmed news about the later stipulations of Versailles, at the end of February 1918, reached Berlin, the German nation stood aghast.

It is evident that this later perversion of President Wilson's honest intentions, as expressed in the text and commentaries of his Fourteen Points is at present being successfully used by the Nazi Government to convince the German people that another betrayal is at the back of all peace proposals.

The fundamental question therefore arises: How can the diffidence, which any stipulation advanced by the Allies at present is bound to meet in Germany, be modified or even avoided?

The best means lies in the nature of the proposal itself, in the practical and unequivocal character of its terms. The European future must appear as a result of common sense reasoning, not of lofty ideals. The latter approach is blocked by past disillusionment but the former will strike a powerful chord of consent.

It follows that a maximum of precision is necessary. It will certainly not be possible to be exhaustive on all points, because a full understanding between the Allied Governments cannot be expected. But it should be possible, for instance, to state certain maximum concessions which are going to be asked of the German people or to assure that their territorial status of 1933 shall be disputed under no circumstances.

Certain minimum commitments on the Allied side should be subjected to equally careful consideration, not only regarding economic concessions which the Allied should be prepared to make for a constructive peace, but also regarding the actual conditions and forces which enable Germany to participate in a cooperative European future.

Any peace based on the outcome of military victory would mean abandonment of Europe's common traditions in sharp discrimination against one or some of her great peoples. The natural consequence would be continued tension between the powerful and the helpless which, according to the laws of history, would again resolve itself in new catastrophes.

It will not be attempted to even sketch in this limited context the material adjustments which would have to be made in Europe's political and economic structure. The necessity of relinquishing some, especially of the economic attributes of national Sovereignty is rightly emerging as one of the chief problems. The contribution from both sides will have to be substantial, but even large sacrifices, if made on the basis of negotiation, must be considered as infinitely preferable to the indefinite toll of life and treasure which a drifting on of the European catastrophe will necessitate.

Granted that the Allies do not intend to partition Germany, her own contribution must consist first and foremost in the abandonment of her present political leadership. But this is clearly not enough, because there must be assurance also that the Germany which may emerge after the downfall of Hitler will be an honest and effective partner to such a peace. The question, how this function of Germany can be made to work in terms of her social, economic and political structure, must be answered separately. Germany must be able to satisfy the desire of the European peoples as a whole that another war amongst them is ruled out as a possibility.

This is not a victor's peace, but conditions worked out on such a basis of negotiation would restore in Europe tranquility and potential well-being, and they would answer the inherent trend of her peoples' aspirations.

Vierteljahrshefte 3/7*

America's tremendous authority in helping to decide the character of a future European and world peace could, in our view, be asserted in various effective ways.

The momentous increase of diplomatic influence now at the disposal of the United States all over the world is one of the most significant results of the first two months of the war. The manner in which this influence could be used, lies outside the range and competence of the authors of this memorandum. But if it were felt all over Europe, in the allied countries as well as in Germany, that the authority of the United States is backing the effort of devising a fair and durable peace settlement, this would be a most substantial aid in setting people's minds to work in constructive directions. And this, in our view, would be achieved most effectively by American diplomatic insistence on a timely and explicit pledge of the Allies to a rational war aim.

The early publication of war aims has been frequently urged by various quarters in the allied countries and foreshadowed in a general manner by several governmental speeches.

To be fully convincing, however, such a proclamation would have to be enhanced by some specific pledge which would bring it home to the German people that peace will be negotiated on this and no other basis.

It is obviously out of the question that the American government could attach their guarantee to such an allied pledge, though this would certainly be the most convincing assurance available in present-day world politics. Isolationist forces would oppose this guarantee, though it might afford an excellent opportunity to define the character and content of America's peace policy and its fundamental attitude towards the war in Europe. Yet the United States will probably not wish to be implicated to the extent of a guarantee which might put them in the position of having to enforce certain peace conditions.

If then, it is impossible to grant such a measure of American participation, it might still be feasible to bring the moral weight of this country to bear upon the European situation by eliciting some solemn promise of the Allied Governments addressed to the American people and its government, that they will fight for and stick by their declared war aims. This would not, in case of default, imply the enforcement of their stipulations by America, but would leave the way open for later constructive influence on the European situation³.

Beyond this diplomatic measure which it may be considered feasible to administer to the present state of European bewilderment and indecision, America is already preparing for an even broader and farreaching contribution to the future peace. The British Ambassador to the United States has pointed out in a recent speech (New York, October 29) that, not being involved in the immediate implications of warfare, America may find herself in a better position than any of the belligerents in the task of defining the fundamentals of a lasting peace.

America, not divided as we are by social and national boundaries, may well raise the standard of all peace discussion above our complex prejudices of the past, provide a foundation for personal contact, mutual information and confidence, and extend her sympathy to the constructive elements even of those countries which in their present frame are considered the chief disturbers of peace. Such understanding, especially if ever there is to be a permanent settlement, in our view constitutes a crying need at a time which is increasingly obscured by propaganda and indiscriminating war passion. Contacts which link up the domestic potentialities in Germany with sound judgment of the international situation seem to us prerequisites of a peace built on the firm basis of the actual popular conditions, and not on formulas which breed future maladjustment and conflict. It may be possible, before the conflict has become too passionate

³ Von hier an Zusätze Trotts (s. Vorbem.).

for America not only to insist on a responsible declaration of war aims, but to help substantially in clarifying those profound and comprehensive political adjustments which really contrive to rule out war amongst the Western nations.

Dokument 3.

Strictly Confidential.

G. S. Messersmith to the Secretary – The Undersecretary.

November 20, 1939

When Dr. Bruening was my house guest recently, he spoke to me about Adam von Trott and said that he was convinced that Trott was an honest man and really represented responsible, potentially powerful, conservative influences in Germany. I gathered from Dr. Bruening that he was of the opinion that von Trott was in contact with, and in some respect was a mouthpiece of, these elements in Germany which would have to be depended upon to form eventually a respectable and responsible government in Germany. He suggested that he thought it would be useful if I would see von Trott while he was here. I told him that I would be glad to do so, but I did not give expression to Dr. Bruening of the doubts which I myself had concerning him.

Justice Frankfurter spoke to me some time ago with regard to von Trott, whom he has known in the past. He was highly suspicious of von Trott, and I gathered that his suspicion was based on information which he may have received from some of his friends in England. My own attitude was inclined to be one of scepticism, as I think experience has taught us, how difficult it is to determine, whether these people, pretending to speak for conservative elements in Germany, are really doing so or whether they are acting for the present German Government.

Mr. von Trott came to see me this morning, and the impression he made on me on the whole was good, and I am now inclined to believe that he is an honest man and does represent the thought of certain responsible elements in Germany. I referred to the memorandum which he had furnished to Mr. Stone of the Foreign Policy Association, and told him that I had read it carefully. Mr. von Trott said that while the memorandum represented on the whole his views, he was not so sure that the time had come for a statement of the Allied peace terms or conditions. He was not so sure that this would serve a useful purpose at this time. This was not an idea that he was pressing himself, for the most dangerous thing, he said, which could happen was a premature settlement which would leave the present Government or something similar to it in power in Germany. Such a solution would be as much a catastrophe for Germany as it would be for the rest of the world. It was the last solution which those whose thoughts he represented in Germany would wish, for it would mean the end of anything which they could do to bring back order in Germany. He was all the more concerned about this because there was still a very powerful group in England which he felt could not be altogether trusted and which might be prepared to make peace on terms which would be disastrous all around – as much so for Germany as for the rest of the world.

I was frankly astonished to hear Mr. von Trott make this point with the emphasis he used, as I had been under the impression that he was pressing just the other way – that is, using his influence here among certain people in order to encourage the movement towards forcing the Allies to a statement of peace terms now. It was my understanding that it was Mr. von Trott who had been responsible for Mr. Lippmann's article some weeks ago which was so surprising⁴. Perhaps Mr. von Trott's own views have undergone some change in recent weeks.

⁴ Mr. Walter Lippmann war freundlich genug, einen Auszug aus diesem Artikel zur Verfügung zu stellen. Er erschien unter dem Titel „TODAY AND TOMORROW – THE THIRD

Mr. von Trott said that it would be extremely important, some time before the spring of next year at the latest, for the conservative elements in Germany to have some idea of a definite character as to what the Allied peace objectives and terms were. The uncertainty in which they were was making it more difficult for them. I remarked that there was information that some of the industrialists and financiers in Germany who had been opposed to the regime and its objectives were now getting behind it on the basis that it was a complete disintegration of Germany which was the Allies' objective. Mr. von Trott said that he doubted whether the views of the industrialists and financiers had changed to that degree, because it was their thoughts that he represented, but one had to keep in mind that there was that possibility growing out of their uncertainty, and that such a change, of course, would be unfortunate. He realized, however, more than ever the difficulty in the Allied peace terms being formulated and stated at this time, and the danger which lay therein. He was wondering, however, in what way some information could be conveyed to the conservative elements in Germany as to what the Allied objectives were, in order to give that movement the strength and support which it needed.

I refrained from comment except of the most general kind, and said to Mr. von Trott that after he came back from the meeting of the Institute of Pacific Relations which he was going to attend, I would be very glad to see him again. He said that he expected to leave this country about the middle of December for the Far East and expected to get back to Germany about the middle of February.

ALTERNATIVE“ in New York Herald Tribune am 10. Oktober 1959. Wie Mr. L. betont, erinnert er sich sehr wohl an den Besuch von Trott in Washington, der indessen keinerlei Einfluß auf seinen Artikel gehabt habe. In der Tat liegt außer der Vermutung von Mr. Messersmith kein Anzeichen zu solcher Annahme vor. Um so mehr ist es – angesichts des so oft bezweifelten „Realismus“ der deutschen Opposition – von Interesse, festzuhalten, wie weitgehend die Überlegungen in ihrem Kreise mit den Gedanken eines führenden amerikanischen Publizisten und eines Hauptes der „realpolitischen Schule“ zusammentrafen (mit Ausnahme allerdings der Bezugnahme auf München). – Es seien daher einige Sätze aus Mr. Lippmanns Artikel angefügt:

... If the Germans can be made to see that a military victory is impossible but that a decent peace is possible, Europe may yet be spared the incalculable horrors of a war to the bitter end . . .

That . . . is the reason why the time has come for the Allies to state their war aims with a view to making clear to the German nation that the siege can be lifted whenever they have a government with which it is possible to negotiate.

.....

The statement of Allied war aims presents no such difficulties as it did during the World War. For then the British and French had allies, Russia and Italy, and Japan, whose support had been purchased by the secret treaties, and the Allies themselves had territorial ambitions, namely Alsace-Lorraine and the dismemberment of the Turkish empire and the distribution of the German colonies among themselves, the British dominions, and Japan. This is not the case today. There is no German territory they themselves could want, and they have no allies who have to be compensated. They can, therefore, say that they want no annexations, and, having learned the bitter lesson of the nineteen twenties, they will seek no indemnities. They can declare that they are not fighting for the restoration of the Versailles boundaries or the Versailles system, and they can point to Munich as proof of their willingness to negotiate a revision of the Versailles system. They can declare that they are not committed to the 1919 or to the 1959 frontiers in central Europe but to the liberation of the Czech and Polish peoples. They can declare that the colonial question is open to negotiation, but that the handing over of helpless colonial peoples to Nazi rule is not negotiable . . .

Mr. von Trott said that he was a good deal concerned as to himself, and he was, of course, putting his neck into a noose. He hoped that the memorandum and his remarks to me would be kept confidential. He was taking great risks. He said that when he came here from New York by automobile, he was quite obviously followed all the way by another automobile. He had the distinct impression that his movements were being followed. He did not know whether it was by officers of this Government or by German agents in this country. I told him that I could not enlighten him in this respect, but that I did not know of any surveillance of his movements by this Government⁵.

G. S. M.

Dokument 4.

Trott to Messersmith.

Virginia Beach, December 3rd, 1939.

(Kündigt seine Rückkehr nach Washington an). With your permission, I shall telephone your secretariat on Tuesday to inquire if and when it would be convenient for you to have me call on you.

Dokument 5.

Note of Mr. Messersmith (December 7).

Mr. Carter⁶ called to see me on December 7 to say that he was glad that I had seen Mr. von Trott. He said that Mr. von Trott was active as his „German associate“. He asked me to what degree I thought confidence could be put in von Trott. I told him that one had to view with a certain amount of caution any person coming out of Germany and that this, I believed, applied to von Trott. I had been willing to listen to what he had to say, but I had said little to him. Von Trott might be an honest man, and probably was, but no man coming out of Germany these days was altogether a free agent. Mr. Carter said he was conscious of all this and asked, if I had at any time any information indicating that von Trott was not trustworthy, to let him know. I said that I would keep in touch with him in this respect. I also indicated that I would be glad to have any information from him at any time with respect to von Trott's further travel and activity.

Dokument 6.

Memorandum for the File.

December 8.

Mr. Adam von Trott expressed the wish to see me again before he left Washington for New York and from there for the Far East. I received him as a matter of courtesy but did not enter into any detailed conversation with him. My net impression at this time is that Mr. von Trott is an honest man who is in touch with the conservative elements in Germany, not in sympathy with the present Government, and who would like to see a change of government. I am, however, of the opinion that he is not entirely a free agent, as no person who is permitted to leave Germany and to return, as is true in the case of Mr. von Trott, can be entirely a free agent. The letter addressed by FBI⁷ on November 17 to Mr. Berle⁸ hereto attached⁹ would indicate that Mr. von

⁵ S. dagegen Dok. 6.

⁶ Edward C. Carter, Vorsitzender des Institute of Pacific Relations. – Daß C. vollkommenes Vertrauen zu Trott hatte, ist in F. Morleys Tagebuch ausdrücklich bezeugt. Offenbar wollte C. sich über die Quelle der Gegeninformationen orientieren.

⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation.

⁸ Assistant Secretary of State.

⁹ Lag nicht bei.

Trott is in touch with certain persons here who are directly or indirectly acting for the present German Government. This may be only the price which he has to pay for the freedom of movement which he enjoys.

Mr. von Trott, whom I saw only for a few minutes, said that a small group here, composed of Mr. Carter and others, would keep in touch with the group he was associated with in Germany, and left the inference that any information which such group had which would be of interest would probably reach him through Mr. Carter and his associates.

Mr. von Trott asked who in our Embassy he might be able to talk with in confidence from time to time. I told him that our Chargé d'affaires, Mr. Kirk, was a very capable and experienced diplomatic officer, and that I was sure he would always be glad to see him.
G. S. M.

Dokument 7

Personal and Strictly Confidential.

Messersmith to Kirk.

December 8, 1939.

(Mitteilung über Trotts Aufenthalt und Unterredungen mit ihm.)

Mr. von Trott is a young man who arouses confidence and is undoubtedly a man of intelligence. I am inclined to think that he is an honest man who is deeply concerned over the future of his country, and it is not unlikely that he is in touch with conservative elements in Germany who view with concern the course of the German Government in various spheres of activity. I have received Mr. von Trott with courtesy, and have been glad to hear what comment he has to make. I think, however, that one must view with a certain amount of caution any person who approaches us from certain directions at this time.

My object . . . is to tell you about Mr. von Trott's stay in this country and to say that before he left he indicated to me that it would be helpful to know whom he could approach in our Berlin Embassy from time to time. I told him, I saw no reason why, when he so wished, he should not call on you and that you, I am sure, would be glad to see him. I would suggest that, should he come to see you, you will find it interesting to talk with him and hear what he has to say, and we here would be very glad to have you tell us anything of interest which he may communicate to you.

Dokument 8.

Trott to Messersmith.

January 5.

(Ausdruck seines Dankes).

I felt that my age and slender achievements gave me no right to make further claims on your time. But I also feel that I am leaving America with a somewhat clearer knowledge of the power and substance inherent in the position that you made clear to me in our last talk.

It seems to me that the fateful uncertainties of our present international situation resolve to an enormous degree in the judgement and conscience of a few key figures in control of the great powers concerned. And with all surface bewilderment I have no fundamental doubts about the kind of peace which alone will satisfy the American conscience this time.

Hoping that you may extend the confidence you have been kind enough to express to that substantial part of our younger generation of which I am just one representative,
I remain, Sir,

Yours faithfully
(ohne Unterschrift).