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0700

Rehabilitation program

For many reasons, some of which are personal, I am troubled and perplexed by the question of the proper area of RF operations in Germany. In order to clarify my own thoughts I am writing this memorandum. Many of the points were discussed extensively at the Officer's conference but I am not sure that we understood all the implications. Therefore, it seems worth while to put the major propositions down on paper with as little reference to moral issues as possible.

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My first impulse last year was to regard the question of RF aid to Germany as in no way different from that of aid to any European country. Such a course would have been in line with AG's proposition that a physician does not censure or punish his patients. A physician is, however, under obligation not only to his patient but to society at large. No matter how much sympathy he has for the individual nor how fully he understands his wishes to injure or kill those about him, he must discourage these wishes and, if they prove intractable, isolate the individual from society. It is this second consideration that has slowly convinced me that the giving of aid to Germany must be regarded as a special problem. We ordinarily proceed on several assumptions but the one which is most important for our present purposes reads as follows: New knowledge of whatever kind, so long as it is "true", will, through the ordinary processes of society, be put to use for the welfare of mankind. The history of the last half century raises doubts as to whether this proposition can be accepted in regard to Germany without qualifications so serious as to make it inoperative at least for the next few years.

The United States has publicly taken responsibility for reorganizing Germany in such a way that she can ultimately take her place as a decent citizen in the comity of Western nations. This is being done in two ways:

1. Destruction of industries potentially useful in war.
2. The inculcation of "democratic principles."

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The first of these is being done, perhaps too enthusiastically; the second is being badly fumbled. The RF can do a good deal to aid the reorientation process, but it cannot be too often emphasized that this is a different sort of operation than that to which we are accustomed. It therefore requires different methods.

In an already democratic society, increased scholarly and scientific production will in all probability be put to use to strengthen its democratic nature. In a stratified dictatorial society it can, and has, buttressed the citadels of reaction and special privilege. It has done so in several ways:

1. Baldly, by increasing the power - physical, chemical, economic, and military - in the hands of the dictators.

2. Subtly, by increasing the prestige of the Wissenschaftler so that they became in effect a priestly class separated from the people and ministering to the needs of an impersonal and, if I may say so, amoral state. The fact that some of these scientists and scholars presented the world at large with discoveries of considerable advantage to the race as a whole admittedly arouses our gratitude and commands our sympathy. This should not blind us to the fact that in Germany the primary motivation of the scientist was the personal one of increasing his own status in a pathological and dangerous system. Even today the majority of pleas for support which come to us from Germany are for aid for MY laboratory and MY library.

For some time to come the primary and, to me, the only task which should engage our energies in Germany is the nurture of a stable democratic society.

Every project should be carefully scrutinized and evaluated, largely on the basis of its potentialities for forwarding this high purpose. Therefore, I am in hearty agreement with RJH's proposals 1 and 2.

In thinking about means of communication, attention should be directed at reaching a relatively large audience. RJH's emphasis on radio, stage, and screen is excellent and I should like to emphasize that the book and periodical problem should also be regarded in more or less mass terms. I am doubtful if the provision of specialized scholarly works is at present as important as the wide distribution of secondary works and textbooks. Until there is considerable assurance of the successful establishment of a sound self-supporting democratic Germany, specific aid to scientific and scholarly work considered primarily on its intrinsic merits should be avoided for the following reasons:

1. It would be largely wasted in the not unlikely event that the social system in Germany breaks down completely or another European war occurs.

2. It would separate the individuals so aided still further from the mass of the population at a time when the gap between geheimrat and ordinary citizen is still much too wide.

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3. Unless all United States aid is clearly earmarked for the changing of basic social attitudes it is sure to be interpreted in part at least as an admission of a U. S. obligation to make amends for the present destruction. This may seem chimerical to some, but personal experiences of considerable intensity make me certain that the overwhelming majority of Germans have no understanding of their own responsibility for what has come to pass. If I may risk this one digression into "morals," may I point out that it is not crassly mosaic, nor aggressively vengeful, to ask a measure of regret for the initiation or condoning of evil. It has been repeatedly pointed out by moralists of the highest stature that repentance is an indispensable preliminary to reform. In medical terms, insight must antecede recovery. It is my belief that RF aid in the development of communications and the exchange of personnel concerned in youth education could be given so as to facilitate rather than impede the development of healthy insight. Aid to specific individuals or laboratories at work on matters primarily of scientific and scholarly interest runs the critical danger of appearing to the German either as stupid extravagance, maudlin sympathy, or tacit admission of U. S. guilt.

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I do not believe that divisional officers can keep these general considerations steadily in mind when considering specific projects. All of us are professional people, trained to set a high value on knowledge for its own sake and keenly sympathetic to the talented investigator struggling against heavy odds. Ordinarily in RF work these considerations are primary. In the present content they are of subsidiary importance. It is for this reason that I feel strongly that initiation and evaluation of proposals for Germany should rest in a superdivisional commission or individual charged with the responsibility of carrying out RJH's propositions 1 and 2. Divisional officers should only be referred to as experts competent to pass on technical questions after the desirability of the project from the general standpoint has been established.

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