

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH GERMANY?

BARBARA WARD: I think that the difficulty facing us, in devising a settlement for Germany, is that we have got three separate problems which to some extent contradict each other. The first is that the Nazis have committed the most awful atrocities in Europe and they have made the nations of Europe suffer in a most atrocious way. We have therefore a first need for justice and reparation. Then we have another problem and it is on our side. The British people are not war-minded, they go to war with difficulty, and yet, if you are not ready to go to war to enforce a peace, that peace is in fact not enforced. We have got therefore to consider what in 20 or 30 years' time the British people would be ready to enforce: it may be very little. Lastly, we have surely to devise a settlement which in the long run—it may be a long run—is such that the Germans will finally live under it, otherwise we are faced with police-work for ever. I think there is some way in which these three problems can be brought together. I think that we have got to make a really tough settlement, but to make it for a strictly limited period of time. By tough, I mean that we have got first of all to insist on complete occupation, naturally. Under this occupation we have got to deal in the most drastic way with German war-criminals; a great many of them will have to be shot because they are murderers; secondly, a great many of the Nazified youth movements and the Nazi S.S. could, I think, be usefully, and from the point of justice, perfectly properly, employed on something like penal servitude for restoring the devastation the war has created. Finally, I think for a period of years, six or eight perhaps, German economy should work primarily to restore the evils which the war has created: in a physical sense, for example, sending machines to Russia, building canals in Holland, and so forth.

More Drastic Than Versailles

Lord Vansittart: I agree with Mr. Eden in thinking it may possibly be misleading to talk of the difference between a soft peace and a hard peace, but what is certainly not misleading is to talk of a drastic peace, and I think it is evident that if people will not keep a soft peace they will not keep the drastic one either or vice versa. That is what happened last time. After all it is in the nature of things that the settlement this time is going to be much more drastic than the Treaty of Versailles was, and it will just have to be enforced. I take it for granted that East Prussia is going to be detached from the Reich. I believe that to be an element of Russian policy; I hope it is. I should certainly support it. In addition, I think there must certainly be a regime of precaution for the Rhineland, and a drastic decentralisation of the German administration. That I think would have to be part of the treaty. It may be also that there will be tendencies towards secession. If those tendencies occur I should certainly not discountenance or cold-water them as we did last time. You may get the beginning of decentralisation—we should certainly welcome that.

Kingsley Martin: We encouraged decentralisation in the Rhineland last time, surely? The French did their best.

The Search For A Solution

THIS article is condensed from a discussion broadcast in the Home Service of the BBC. It took place, of course, before the Crimea Conference, and should be read in the light of the decisions reached there. For if the "Big Three" did not solve the problem of post-war Germany at that conference, they at least agreed on the method by which they intend to tackle it.

Vansittart: We didn't encourage decentralisation, particularly in the case of Bavaria. Now I take it that our object is to prevent the German nation as a whole from making any further aggressions, and therefore there must be three main objectives: material disarmament; spiritual or mental disarmament; and the decentralisation of the Reich. Not one of these three objectives can be obtained without prolonged occupation. If it is again going to be prematurely ended all prospects of a reformed Germany will just disappear.

"Sentimental Twaddle"

Martin: Most of the adjectives used about the peace as "soft" and "tough" and all these things are rather sentimental twaddle. What we want is a sensible peace, and I would give as the test of a sensible peace one that will last, one that we shall continue to believe in, one that will prevent war, one that will keep Germany disarmed and one that will help to put the world on its economic legs again, because I do not think that unless you put the world on its economic legs again the peace will last in fact. Now, take the most important of the things we have to do—disarmament. Now, in fact, disarmament was carried out against Germany after the last war, and rearmament was never in fact secret. And the reason why Germany was rearmament was because she was a wonderful market for armaments, because the business people who sell iron and metals and tungsten, and all the other precious metals you need for rearmament, and oil and all the other things, were naturally anxious to supply Germany in the ordinary way of business because she was a natural market for them, just as they supplied Japan with oil right up to the eve of Pearl Harbour. The second reason why Germany was allowed to rearm was because the Allies quarrelled, and they rather wanted to build up Germany against the other. Particularly they were afraid of Bolshevism, and they liked the idea of a strong

Germany in the middle of Europe. When you talk about enforcing the peace, you have got to think therefore not only about controlling German industry, but whether you are going to be able to ration our own industry, whether you are going to stop our business people selling the things to Germans quite as soon

again. One of my complaints about the sort of talk that goes on about the hard peace for Germany is that the people who talk most about it are often the very people who are most inclined to want to supply Germany with the things she will be asking for in a few years' time.

But if the Allies remain united—particularly Britain and Russia—then there isn't any way at all in which Germany (which should be completely helpless at the end of the war) can become dangerous again.

The British Conscience

Ward: I think the drastic period should be a period of years during which time the Allies are more ready for enforcement. And when I talked about disarmament I was talking about a long-term feature of the settlement.

The reason why I want all our attention to be centred on disarmament is this: there is, and I'm very glad of it, in the British people a very deep-rooted sense of moral justice and of the things that are decent and the things that cannot be done. And I think that if you write into the treaty very drastic and crippling economic and territorial clauses, Britain's own conscience will come up in 20 years' time and say, "No, no, we can't do that." And then as for getting the British to go to war about it, you can just whistle in the wind. But on the question of disarmament I think there is a chance that we've learned a severe lesson. You do not learn much from history, but I think you can learn a little. I am optimistic to that degree. And I think that if in 20 years' time any Germany came to us and said, "In the name of justice, let us have

doodles, let us have tanks," we should just break into laughter. I don't think that that will contradict, even in the long run, anything that the British are prepared to back.

Control of Key Materials

Vansittart: I entirely agree on the necessity of maintaining the Russian alliance. I think that is the cardinal point. Then I think we must not exaggerate in any way the extent to which Germany was rearmament by foreign connivance or assistance. The re-armament of Germany was in the main—indeed most exclusively—the handiwork of the Germans themselves. In regard to what Miss Ward has said, I quite agree that there are points on which you cannot expect people to go to war, but you can expect them to use force if any have left themselves with the means of using force. Now, for instance, I think that Germany will have to be most strictly rationed in all the key war materials, things like tungsten and bauxite and chrome and all that sort of thing.

Martin: But those are the things we supplied her with. My point was that we re-armed Germany by allowing her to have them. Do we want it to happen again?

Vansittart: In future I hope the control will be very rigid and if in any way Germany is detected smuggling in sufficient of these materials to lay up war stocks, that we shall interfere by force and that will be a function of the occupation, which is bound to be prolonged for that reason, if for no other.

Taylor: This question of disarmament leads me on to a more general one. It seems to me that we are always using the words "We must control German industry"; "After the war the victorious powers must control German industry and direct it to this or that." But I must confess that it seems to me far more difficult to control the industry of a country which is a going concern than to cut off great chunks of it. That is not an economist's judgment; it is a remark from outside.

International Control

Martin: When I talked about rebuilding in Europe, I did not suggest that Germany should come first; on the contrary, there is Russia to come first, and many other devastated countries to come first. But what I was saying was that we might actually have an international consortium to take over this great centre of heavy industry in the Rhine and the Ruhr, which has in fact been used by, I think, the most dangerous class in human history to make wars.

Ward: I don't think that the German heavy industrialists should be allowed to carry on—they are a warmongering class. Secondly, I don't altogether like the idea of rationing German supplies, not because I don't think you ought to ration Germans, but because I'm sure, with Kingsley Martin, that the solution is international control and using those productive resources for the full benefit of Europe.

Vansittart: May I ask there whether you would contemplate that you should make it for ever impossible for the Germans to attain a dominant position in regard to the Ruhr?

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Taking Part in the Discussion:

BARBARA WARD

(Assistant-Editor of "The Economist")



LORD VANSITTART

KINGSLEY MARTIN

(Editor of "The New Statesman")



In the Chair: A. J. P. TAYLOR
(Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford)