

**Gustav Heinemann et al. - Exposé of the German Question,
Especially of the Question of the Rearmament of Western Germany -
September 1951**

Copy Number 66

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EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION, ESPECIALLY OF THE
QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY

by Dr. Gustav Heinemann

and

COMMENTS

by

Bishop K.F.O. Dibelius	(Germany)
Dr. Kenneth G. Grubb	(United Kingdom)
Bishop Halfdan Høgsbro	(Denmark)
Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr	(U. S. A.)
Dr. Martin Niemöller	(Germany)
M. Andre Philip	(France)
Dr. C. L. Patijn	(Netherlands)
Prof. Baron F.M. van Asbeck	(Netherlands)

September 1951

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
20 Balcombe Street, Dorset Square, London N.W.1
297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

At the meeting of the C.C.I.A. Executive Committee at Rolle, Switzerland, 30 July - 1 August 1951, Dr. Gustav Heinemann, C.C.I.A. Commissioner in Germany, presented an "Expose of the German Question, Especially of the Question of the Rearmament of Western Germany." After discussion the following resolution was passed:

AGREED: 1. That Dr. Heinemann's statement be distributed to Dr. Niebuhr, Dr. Kägi and others who would be present at the W.C.C. Central Committee meeting, with a request for comment as soon as possible.

2. That thereafter a selection of such comments, together with Dr. Heinemann's statement, should be published for transmission to interested persons and, if thought desirable, to governments as the basis of discussion and information.

(Translation)

EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION, ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION
OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY

Dr. Heinemann, August 1, 1951

1. The restoration of a unified Germany and its incorporation into the fellowship of free democracies is a problem that is bound up with world problems in general. The German question cannot be isolated at the present time. But it must not be lost sight of among the world problems. It retains its special aspects.

2. One conception of the solution of the German question is as follows: the political, economic and military incorporation of Western Germany in the fellowship of Western Europe and of the Atlantic nations, for the purpose of making the West so strong that it can in any event resist a Russian attack; perhaps also a solution of the German question through negotiation.

3. There are a number of reasons against this conception, of which I mention the following:

(a) The rearmament of Western Germany would bring a new factor into the international game, and it is by no means certain that it would contribute towards the maintenance of peace. Russia has repeatedly declared that it will regard the rearmament of Western Germany as the most serious provocation. Will not the rearmament of Western Germany set rolling the avalanche, which we wish at all costs to prevent?

(b) If Russia allows the rearmament of Western Germany to take place, the West will not be appreciably strengthened thereby. I will not go into the question of whether the German nation today is capable of taking action, or whether it is so disrupted behind its economic

achievements that it has ceased to be a factor in politics. Nor will I go into the question of whether it might come to Germans shooting against Germans. In any case Russia is holding 22 million Eastern Germans hostage (including nearly 20 million Protestants). In the final event, Russia can only set Russians (or satellites of Russia) against Americans, French, Dutch, etc. Against Western Germans it can set Eastern Germans, either as soldiers, or as forced labourers in the armament factories, in order to set Russians free for the army. The rearmament of Western Germany would give Russia carte blanche to do either of these things. The balance of power between East and West would not be greatly changed.

(c) The rearmament of Western Germany, whatever form it may assume, would completely destroy what still remains (thanks to the strength and decisiveness of the West) of German unity. This unity has been greatly reduced, but it has still not entirely disappeared. There are still a few good-sized holes in the Iron Curtain on the frontier of Eastern Germany. While Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other European nations are completely cut off, this is far from being the case in Eastern Germany. If only to a very limited extent, travel between Eastern and Western Germany is still possible. The churches can still do a certain amount of relief work in Eastern Germany. West-Berlin is still an island of freedom in the red ocean and the recent Kirchentag in Berlin clearly shows the significance of all this.

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neutral; I only mean that Germany should be excluded from the clash between the Eastern and Western powers, because neither side can essentially improve its position by drawing the two halves of Germany into the struggle. And it would mean the end of everything for Germany.

Finally, as I said at the beginning, the German question can be solved only within the larger framework of the East-West problem, and of world politics.

(Translation)

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COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY.
BY DR. K. F. O. DIBELIUS

1. The question of German re-armament is not a question of Christian faith, but of political expediency. For spiritual reasons the Evangelical Church in Germany has desired till now to avoid re-militarisation or to postpone it as long as possible.
2. Germany is completely in the hands of the occupying powers, both of whom desire from her a clear decision in favour of their policy. A policy of neutrality on the part of Germany herself has become impossible.
3. After numerous declarations by its rulers there can be no doubt of Russia's general desire for aggression. The danger of an attack on Germany has become of immediate importance as a result of events in Korea, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

of events in Korea, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

4. Russia's specific aim is the Ruhr. America is determined not to let the Ruhr fall into Russian hands undamaged. A united Communist Germany is only possible with the Ruhr out of action, that is, with 20 million fewer Germans than live there now. In practice that means the degrading of Germany into a Russian colony by the uprooting of half the population of Western Germany.
5. Therefore the Ruhr must be defended. To leave this defence wholly to the foreign powers of the West would make Western Germany an American colony. Germany must therefore make a substantial contribution.
6. The re-introduction of general conscription might cause Russia to take counter-measures in the Eastern Zone and would destroy the remains of German unity. German interest demands that care should be exercised, that is, that the West does nothing other than that which the East has already done - in connection with which the numbers (Zahlen) have to make allowance for the fact that Western Germany has more than double the population of Eastern Germany.
7. And so I come to the same practical deductions as those which Dr. Niebuhr made at the end of his memorandum.*
8. The task of the Church is to hinder military units from creating a new militaristic spirit in Germany. That is no impossible task.
9. The decision in favour of the West is the decision of 90% of the German people in the West and in the East. Since Communism has been established wholly on a materialistic philosophy the Church must give its consent to this decision.

* In September 1948 Dr. Fischer, who took over the supreme control of the "Volkspolizei" declared:- "The Eastern Zone Police will be equipped with good weapons, as it was customary in the former German armed forces (also called Police!) The police forces will have at their disposal tanks, together with light and heavy artillery." Cf. W. Bedell Smith, "My Three Years in Moscow", German edition, Hamburg 1950 p.361.

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY DR. KENNETH G. GRUBB

There is a distinction between the words 'rearmament' and 'remilitarisation' which have both been used in this discussion. 'Rearmament', in the case of Germany, immediately conjures up in the West a picture of vast Ruhr steel mills pulsing and glowing day and night. I do not think any one is advocating this

growing day and night. I do not think any one is advocating this. 'Remilitarisation' has a slightly different emphasis. It awakens a picture of the battalions, and raises the questions of integrated armies in the West which has been so widely debated in Europe and the U.S.A. lately.

2. Western Germany must realise that the acute difficulty of reaching a satisfactory position on the question is not hers alone, although it is peculiarly and tragically hers. All the western nations, particularly France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Britain, are deeply concerned and to some extent divided on the matter. On the one hand men feel that Western Germany ought to make a contribution not only to her own defence, but that of the West against Communism since it is largely through her folly that Communism has advanced so far. On the other, they fear that that very contribution means a dangerous rebirth of pride and power.

3. But I think that in Britain it is realised, at least among the churches, that Germany cannot be compelled to make any contribution to 'remilitarisation' as a part of Western rearmament, since you cannot make men fight if they prefer to be enslaved or die. That leads to the characteristically British conclusion that the best thing is to meet the public conscience by agreements making large demands on Germany, and the hard facts by doing little or nothing about it. This is a policy which governments can only pursue if no party to the issue challenges the tacit assumption that the issue will not be challenged. Hence it is important that the churches should use such influence as they have, not to deter discussion, but to prevent it putting challenges which can only be answered by drastic action.

4. On the general argument I am inclined to agree with Niebuhr, more particularly as the passage of months is in any case beginning to show, I think, that the Russians are not prepared to make 'rearmament' the ground of a decisive show-down. But on one point I strongly agree with Heinemann, although I am not sure whether he made it at the C.C.I.A. meeting or on some other occasion, namely that Adenauer was not entitled to assent to the Allies' plan for German remilitarisation without going to the country. On an issue of this kind which may mean the division of the nation for an even longer period than any sane man would hope, it is not sufficient merely to say (as Adenauer has) that he will consult all parties in the Bonn Parliament.

4th August 1951

- ad 3 a. Yes.
- ad 3 b. Not convincing. Western Germany has double the size and the industrial capacity as East Germany has.
- ad 3 c. Is well answered by prof. Niebuhr in 1 b.
- ad 3 d. Yes, yes.
- ad 3 e. This could be regulated in a peace treaty between the allied powers and West-Germany.
- ad 4 and to the whole question the following remarks:

In trying to find some obvious facts in this very complicated situation, I should want to draw the attention to the following points:

A. The situation in Germany is very little stabilized; the development in the last years is deplorable. German nationalism and nazism find a new day dawning upon them. Strong forces, in the first line amongst the expellees, press for a revision of the eastern border, even at the cost of a war. Any strengthening of Germany may be used for this purpose. And the leaders of these circles have not learned anything; they will be inclined to act against the slavie nations in the old way.

It seems probable, that this development not only depends upon the possibility of a German rearmament, but too on the whole economic recovery of Germany, its gradual return to international equality and administrative independence. Trained people, necessary for exterior and interior state-administration and for local administration can almost only be drawn from such circles, who with more or less enthusiasm worked for the nazi-regime. This development may therefore be intensified and become more dangerous by a German rearmament, but will not be stopped, even if Germany is not rearmed.

B. Germany belongs, in spite of its unclear and fluctuating psychology, to the western hemisphere. Communism has only a chance in Germany through military force. Russia has this military force. It is uncertain whether or at what moment Russia is ready to use it. A number of cases since 1945 shows that Russia is ready to use it anywhere the risk for itself is not too great, but that it will not take the terrible risk and damage of a world-war at the present moment.

This means that social prosperity, economic justice and democratic development alone will not be able to defend Germany, it cannot be defended without (being) backed up by sufficient military strength. Germany will in no case ever be strong enough to defend itself against an eastern aggression without help from America. On the other side it seems certain that the military strength of the Atlantic powers may hold Russia back from trying an aggression in Europe, but if it tries, will Germany and perhaps most of the European continent not be saved from an at any rate temporary occupation without the help of German soldiers.

C. Hardly anything would make so important a contribution to an appeasement of the world as a psychologically and politically healthy, economically sound and united Germany.

It has to have a police-force, strong enough to defend the country against inner revolutionary forces.

It has to be neutral and without any military force, these two being inseparable, as a considerable military force only could be built up and kept up, when it was backed up by either eastern or western industrial and military capacity.

But the condition for the effectiveness of such a neutrality, its possibility for acting as an intermediary element, would depend upon the military strength of the Atlantic powers being equal to that of the East.

This is the opinion of Heinemann and Niemöller, and there is much strength and wisdom in it. The great questions are:

1. How will it be possible to bring this about? How can the allied and the Russian powers be brought to retire from Germany and a united Germany be guaranteed against any revolutionary plots from communistic or nationalistic side? This is not only a question of police and army and foreign guarantees, but too: will the sound political forces of the country be strong enough against the radical forces from both sides?

2. Will Germany be able to resist the temptation by having its place in the center of playing both sides and continue the unrest in order to profit by it itself.

The fate of the Weimar-republic makes the answer to both these questions very uncertain.

D. The one way to follow is earnestly to try to carry this solution of the German question and the world's question through. And it must be admitted that it has till now not yet been thoroughly tried. Should it be found impossible or on account of the too fluctuating character of German politics too risky, then a full German incorporation in the west will have to be contemplated with equal duties and rights, inclosed (including?) a German rearmament.

It must be admitted, that a German rearmament will intensify the tension between East and West and may cause the Russians to march. If Russia does not react in this way, then through a German rearmament it may be made still more reluctant and more inclined to get an appeasement of the situation.

Much can be said in favour of Niebuhr's suggestion of a modest German rearmament, in the first line the building up of a strong police-force.

But only under very strict control will voluntary forces not so easily be misused for nationalistic and revisionistic purposes as conscript forces.

E. The answer to the question whether to work for a

neutral, united Germany or a western rearmed Germany needs the best political and military information, and has to be decided on political reasons, controlled by moral convictions. It cannot

(Høgsbro)

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be the duty of the WCC to make any pronouncement on this question, as proposed by some of the eastern churches. But the question ought to be followed closely.

Especially attention ought to be drawn to these points:

1. The development of German nationalism; how far is it a symptom of sound national and psychological recovery, and how far does it express a new national egotism and self-overestimation?

2. That not all interest is allowed to be concentrated on the endeavours to strengthen the military and industrial capacity of the west, justified and necessary as they are in themselves, but that beside this any chance for promoting peaceful economic and cultural relations is used. And

3. That the churches themselves do their best to strengthen their ties of mutual understanding and cooperation and admit openly their sins and shortcomings and those of their nations and so contribute their share to bridge the gulf between east and west and increase the possibilities for trust and peace.

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY D. MARTIN NIEMOLLER

In general agreement with Dr. Heinemann's views, I wish to underline and to add the following arguments and ideas:

1. The rearmament of Western Germany will not add to the strength of the Western powers. There is no doubt that Russia can and will take the corresponding steps by conscription of the male population to forced labor.
2. The West-German rearmament will complete the absolute division of the nation and the total isolation of its Eastern half, consisting of about 20 million Protestants, i.e. the half of the Evangelical Church constituency. Difficulties for getting passports will without the slightest doubt become unsurmountable immediately.
3. The consequence will be that the integration of the East-German population into the Russian orbit and world will be hastened whereas the 1st means of counteracting it will be lost.
4. The last hope of a peaceful solution and reunion will disappear and contribute to despair and hopelessness in the Eastern parts, which will have to bear most of the additional burdens.
5. In the case of actual war, the West-German troops will prove unreliable as soon as they will have to fight against an enemy who has control of their homes and families.- The Eastern "People's Police" (there is no proof for an "armored police" existing in the Russian Zone!) may easily side with the West-German troops against both power-blocs for the unity of the nation.
6. Rearmament in Western Germany will mean the official end of the Potsdam declaration and leave the German people as a whole without any acknowledged international legal status, since neither the Western nor the Eastern Government in both Germanys have been acknowledged internationally. Dr. H.'s apprehension as to the legal status of "German" "Soldiers" is only too justified.

7. All advantages and privileges resulting from a West German contribution to the defense of the West will have to be paid by the East-German people. This means a highly immoral insinuation and will break the last Christian solidarity between two groups of people who share in their common responsibility and plight.

8. Rearmament in Western Germany means the end of Democracy in Germany in general. More than 80% of the West-German population are opposed to rearmament, but are forbidden to say so publicly and are excluded from any possibility of public propaganda for their conviction. The result cannot be but cynicism and nihilism.

9. There are all reasons against rearmament and none for it. For the present time and situation it ought to be left with a police force on both sides of the demarcation-line, which ought to be prevented from developing into military forces.

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(Niemöller)

10. The main task for the moment is to prevent the outbreak of war and thereby to gain time for negotiations with the aim of finding a way to peace; the German people will have to pay their further contribution to this end by patiently tolerating the present state of division in the midst of the two great competing powers without giving way to the temptation of option.

August 6, 1951.

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY DR. REINHOLD NIEBUHR

1. All of the perils inherent in the remilitarization of Germany, to which Dr. Heinemann calls attention, must be recognized as real.

I would be inclined to agree most particularly with the points: a) That it would be regarded as provocative by Russia and thus heighten the east-west tension; b) that it would tend to strengthen nationalistic and militaristic elements in a nation, not yet established in the supremacy of civil over military power; c) that it would tend to deepen and make more irrevocable the tragic division of a nation.

Some of the other perils which he enumerates may not follow as inevitably from remilitarization as he supposes. a) It does not seem to me to be certain that Russia could inevitably match any new military strength in western Germany with new military strength in the east. At any rate this fear must be subordinated to the necessity of matching the military strength of eastern Germany (armored police) with commensurate strength in the west. b) The peril that German rearmament would close the rifts in the iron curtain, which still give eastern Germany some windows to the west must be weighed against the facts that those

rifts or windows exist primarily by the power and the resolution of the west, more particularly the maintenance of western power in Berlin. c) The peril that soldiers of western Germany would not have military status in the event of war and would therefore be exposed to special hazards may be real; but since west-Germany would have the status of nation it is not at all certain that this would apply.

The difficulty with Dr. Heinemann's main alternative, that of a united Germany, powerful enough to protect itself against communist intrigue and aggression seems to me to hide the real perplexities of the situation. For Germany is divided between two great communities of nations, which do not trust each other sufficiently to arrive at an agreement in regard to Germany. They can not even agree on matters of much less moment. The west can not agree to any form of unity in Germany which would expose the nation to conquest by communism in either military or conspirational terms. Russia would not now agree to any unification which did not have such a prospect in it. We must not rule out the ultimate possibility of Germany's reunification without war; but that must wait upon a stabilization of the present power situation and imperial weariness on the part of Russia.

Dr. Heinemann's hope for a united Germany in the present situation grows inevitably out of some miscalculations of the present tragic situation. These miscalculations are understandable and must be sympathetically appreciated because the tragedy of a divided world rests with special force upon this divided nation. The facts not given sufficient emphasis are: a) The peace of the world is being maintained by preventing the extension of communist power. War would break out if Russia gained control of the resources of any part of Europe, not now under its control. b) In this process of common defense Germany has increasingly become a part of a vast community of nations and will increasingly hold full rights and privileges in that community. c) It will be difficult to disavow the responsibilities which attend these rights, including the responsibility of a common defense.

(over)

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(Niebuhr)

If these considerations are weighed against those which Dr. Heinemann advances, we might arrive at a moderate solution which might offer a greater common ground between nations and between parties in Germany than now exists: The solution involves three propositions:

1. The rejection of the idea of a conscript army for Germany. Its perils, both internally and externally, are too great.
2. The creation of a more adequate police force, as strong as the east-German one and as fully armored.
3. The consideration of a possible ^{second} ~~second~~ step of a volunteer army. This second step would depend upon international and domestic developments in Germany.

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY DR. C. L. PATIJN

Dr. Heinemann is right in most of his analysis of the perils of German rearmament. Some of his points deserve most serious consideration (especially a, d and e, the danger of an "avalanche", the danger of a revival of German militarism and the legal position

one danger of a revival of German militarism and the legal position of German soldiers). I cannot, however, accept his point c, which is far less evident than the other points and more open to criticism.

In view of the perils inherent in the remilitarization of Western Germany Dr. Heinemann proposes an "alternative" along the following lines:

- a) To preserve what is left of German unity in order to keep open approaches to the East;
- b) A united Government for the whole of Germany strong enough to protect itself against internal attacks;
- c) The protection of Germany against external attack to be "considered as things develop";
- d) Germany to be excluded from the clash between East and West.

With regard to this clear statement the following questions arise:

- 1) Is it really an "alternative"? Is it a workable idea and will it serve its purposes?
- 2) Is this German proposal acceptable to other countries? Is the position of Germany's neighbours sufficiently taken care of?
- 3) Does Dr. Heinemann's proposal contain better guarantees for peace and security in the long run than the policy which the Western powers seek to establish in cooperation with the Bonn Government?

I cannot believe that the preservation of what is left of German unity will keep open approaches to the East. It will keep open (and this is in itself certainly important) contacts between Germans in the Western and Eastern zones, but it will not give any new opportunities in the relations between the big powers. Approaches to the East do not depend upon contacts in Germany. Nothing that happens on a purely German level will change the fundamental lack of agreement between East and West. On the other hand a meeting of minds between East and West would deeply affect Germany. The idea of a united Germany as a bridge between East and West does therefore not carry enough weight to outbalance the serious disadvantages of Dr. Heinemann's alternative. These disadvantages are the following:

- 1) A united Germany strong enough to be safe against internal attacks is not to be expected. For reasons which Dr. Heinemann himself has eloquently explained at another occasion (the character of a federal government, the instability of the political coalition supporting such a united government, the spiritual

(Patijn)

and economic weaknesses in the German domestic situation, the lack of instruments of power in the hands of the Government, etc.) a united Germany is most probably for the time being bound to be a weak state. Furthermore, the Soviets would never accept a really strong Government, since it would be in their interest to create only such a state as they could dominate or get under control through internal strife. A "Sovietization" of Germany would, however, have serious repercussions on the peace of the world. Civil war in Germany, for instance, would greatly increase the danger of a new war (c.f. Korea).

- 2) Even if it were possible to create a strong and united German state, it would still be questionable whether this would be at this moment in the interest of world peace. The more so since Dr. Heinemann proposes that such a state would develop its external relations "as things develop, according to the circumstances" and should be excluded from the clash between East and West. Dr. Heinemann states that he is not arguing in favour of making Germany neutral; his proposal nevertheless is so similar to neutrality, that I cannot see much difference. My first remark is, that no country and certainly not Germany can be excluded from the clash between East and West, since we are living on a planet which is split by this clash from the North Pole to the South Pole. Furthermore such a position of "wait and see" would be utterly unacceptable for Germany's neighbours, since it would imply that their security would depend upon some future decisions which a German Government might take. If a strong Germany would choose to take the Soviet-side at some future date, as Hitler did in 1939, the world's balance of power would be strongly affected and certainly the countries of the European Continent would be at the mercy of Germany again. We must ask Dr. Heinemann very seriously whether he feels that such a momentous decision could be left in the hands of Germany alone. Does not Europe have a right, after all that happened in the past 40 years, to know what Germany will do to her and should not guarantees be given for mutual consultation and joint decisions? The German position cannot be considered "as things develop"; the European scene would be full of insecurity and strong temptations. As long as the German position is unclear world-peace will be in a constant danger.
- 3) Therefore it seems that Dr. Heinemann's "alternative" does not contain better guarantees for peace and security in the long run than the policy of the Western powers. On the contrary it seems to be either utopian, or even less acceptable than the continuation of the present policy of the West. It seems to me that to build up a position of strength in the West, provided that it be done with firmness and very carefully, will open better opportunities for some future settlement than the insecurity which would follow a German unification in the terms of Dr. Heinemann. I feel that his alternative which can be understood in the German domestic situation, would be inadequate on the international level. It does not ease the tensions between East and West, on the contrary might create new difficulties. It does not give any guarantee to Germany's

neighbours, on the contrary makes them fully dependant on Germany. It kills the idea of European integration, which is the only new and creative phenomenon in post war Europe. It does not even make an attempt to handle a European problem on a European level but is clearly prompted by the obsession of the divided Germany and the terrible consequences for the population especially in the Eastern zone. I will not underrate the seriousness of this problem and we should have the fullest understanding for Dr. Heinemann's motives. But I feel that his alternative would not open a way out, since it is impossible at this moment to give a solution for a world problem in the terms of the needs of one country.

Nevertheless Dr. Heinemann's argument regarding the perils of German rearmament must be carefully considered. It seems that some common ground can be found in his statement that a police-force, similar to the "People's Police-force" in Eastern Germany, can be built up in the West. The relation of such a police-force to the rest of the armed forces of Western Europe should be considered. It is possible that a German participation in a European army will be more acceptable to the Soviet-Union than rearmament in the form of a fully equipped and independent German military establishment. It is clear that the Western powers should proceed very carefully here and should not try to rush where angels fear to tread. On the other hand we must ask Dr. Heinemann whether he feels that it is possible to fight the idea of German rearmament with the promise of an alternative of doubtful viability. It seems that from both sides better understanding of the implications of their policies is needed. I am very grateful to Dr. Heinemann that he has contributed greatly to such a better understanding by elaborating his theses on the perils of German remilitarization. May the discussion continue!

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY PROFESSOR BARON F.M. VAN ASBECK

1. We cannot but understand and sympathise with the fears of Dr. Heinemann and many other Germans in respect of steps which would not only close the doors now still partly open between the Eastern and the Western parts of Germany, but also would perpetuate the division of Germany into two parts. I think all of us have been deeply impressed by what Dr. van Thadden and others told us about the unity so splendidly demonstrated in the Berlin "Kirchentag."

2. But we should be fully conscious of the very fact that the doors between Western and Eastern Germany are kept "partly open" now because the West has shown its will to oppose the expansion of Communist influence and rule, and its determination to strengthen Western Europe, Western Germany included.

3. The major consideration in the political field of the divided Europe and the divided world should be how to strengthen the non-Communist part of Europe. For strength, military and material - which within our orbit means above all: spiritual strength, cooperation and unity - is the only argument which impresses dictators and totalitarian regimes. And our strength in the West nowadays constitutes, in the political field, the only hope, the ultimate hope of the oppressed Germans in the eastern zone, nay of all the oppressed people in the satellite states.

4. Western strength in Europe cannot be built up without American help and assistance. But Europe on the other hand cannot be strong without internal unity and association. American assistance itself will soon be mainly dependent upon the confidence which Americans will put in Europe's determination to remove barriers now existing between its component parts.

5. An integrated Western Europe cannot exist nor play its role without Germany, i.e. - we must state this with deep sorrow - for the time being Western Germany only. Western Europe cannot play its economic role without the cooperation of Western Germany's industrial power. The Schuman plan makes this abundantly clear: the Schuman plan means the "economic rearmament," for peace purposes as well as for war preparation, of Western Europe. In other words: Western Germany will be incorporated in the war-effort of Western Europe.

6. Must that incorporation go further and be extended also to German manpower? The question of German rearmament is generally restricted within the limits of reestablishing a German army. I agree with Dr. Heinemann's arguments against such a policy, when put in terms of a conscript-army. And I agree with him in his defense of the building up of a Western German "police

force," but in relative numbers, of the same strength as the East German Volkspolizei (Western Germany has a population about double that of the eastern zone) and equipped with exactly the same arms and armament.

7. The problem of a German army at once takes another aspect if put within the cadre of a European army (the Ploven plan), provided that would be a real, a genuine European army, and not merely a bundle of national contingents such as formed Eisenhower's invasion army in 1944-5. The severe sentences, referred

(van Asbeck)

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to by Dr. Heinemann in no. 3, letter e) of his expose, couldn't apply to German soldiers belonging to such a unified genuine European army.

8. Nevertheless, we ought not to close our eyes for a possible Russian reaction against any step leading to German re-militarisation in manpower. But here Europe finds itself in the grip of exactly the same contradiction, the same antimony which pervades world policy of the West: the West strives to prevent a third world war a) by keeping doors open towards a modus vivendi between Eastern and Western systems, Eastern and Western States, and in a very much later stage if ever possible reconciliation, reuniting between the now fundamentally "Disunited Nations," and b) by building up strength in military and economic forces in order to be able in the hour of trial to stem the rolling on of the Communist waves. Exactly the same contradictory policies apply to Germany: everybody understands the deep longing of the German people to re-unification (beyond the Oder-Niesse line also), everybody hopes to see the unity realised in order that Europe may get stability and peace; - but we knew at the same time that Europe, Western Germany included, has to build up strength in order to keep what we have and to prevent great dangers which, if they ever came to reality, would mean unspeakable horrors to millions of men.

9. That paradoxical situation cannot be solved rationally, we shall have to endure it and be patient. In the midst of this situation we cannot but deeply sympathise with and sustain the impressive efforts of the Church in Germany to keep united the Christians of the divided country and to tender its services to the oppressed people of the eastern zone.

(Translation)

COMMENTS ON DR. HEINEMANN'S "EXPOSE OF THE GERMAN QUESTION,
ESPECIALLY OF THE QUESTION OF THE REARMAMENT OF WESTERN GERMANY"
BY M. ANDRE PHILIP

I am in accord with Heinemann on two points:

1) The problem of German unity is important. It is not possible to be isolated from world problems, but every international solution of these problems should take into account the necessity of reestablishing German unity, as soon as circumstances permit.

2) I believe equally that a national rearmament of Western Germany would create a grave danger. I do not think that that would be regarded as a provocation by Russia, because Russia's attitude in each instance will depend exclusively on the balance of existing forces and not on the attitude of such and such a country. But I am persuaded on one hand that such a form of rearmament would encourage the rebirth of nationalism in Germany; on the other hand that the financial burden would be unbearable and, by aggravating the misery of the population, would make communist propaganda easy. In fact, I do not believe that a European country, whatever it may be, can today support the financial burden of a national army. The problem of European defense can only be solved in the form of a unified European army.

Per contra, I am not in accord with Heinemann's other affirmations, and especially with the presuppositions which are behind his affirmations:

1) He seems to believe there is the possibility of a unified Germany, with entire neutrality between the East and the West. For my part, if it were possible to engage in negotiations with Russia under the form of a conference of four, of which so much has been spoken, I would be of the opinion that it is impossible

much has been spoken, I would be of the opinion that in exchange for the democratic unification of Germany, its permanent demilitarization should be accepted. But I do not believe in the possibility of an economic or political neutrality. Germany forms a part of Western Europe. If she tried to detach herself from it she would inevitably fall under the economic domination of Russia.

2) In fact, Heinemann's position reaches the same position as the nationalists whom he combats. Neutral Germany of which he dreams should have a policy of an economic autarchy based on the use of the monopoly of the Ruhr to negotiate sometimes with the East, sometimes with the West. This policy would bring together all the nationalist forces and would end in a national-communism united with Russia.

3) In fact, such a national neutralist policy would make every organization on the European continent an impossibility. Germany would also take the responsibility for the failure of a Europe, which, definitely balkanized, would fall in its turn under the influence and authority either of Russia or the United States. And yet, it is only by the unification of Europe that we can constitute a force able to guarantee our common independence and to exert one day in a peaceful way sufficient pressure on international affairs to secure the return to Germany of its territories in the East.

(over)

(Philip)

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4) Finally, what seems to me to be the most dangerous in Heinemann's position is that he looks at the whole problem exclusively from the national point of view, which does not correspond any more with the political reality of today. It is in the plan of European community included in the Atlantic solidarity that we have to examine all vital problems. If we do not look at them in this way we put ourselves outside the reality, and run the risk against our will of giving pretext to nationalist forces which are out of date and dangerous.

Comments on Dr. Heinemann's Theses on German Rearmament

1. Heinemann: Germany is a world problem.
 - A. Philip agrees. Every international solution of world problems should take into account the necessity of re-establishing German unity as soon as circumstances permit.
 - B. Niebuhr agrees. In the "process of common defense Germany has increasingly become a part of a vast community of nations and will increasingly hold full rights and privileges in that community."
 - C. Patijn: "As long as the German position is unclear world-peace will be in constant danger."
 - D. Högsbro: "Hardly anything would make so important a contribution to an appeasement of the world as a psychologically and politically healthy, economically sound and united Germany."

2. Heinemann: States there is a conception that the solution of Germany would be to incorporate Western Germany in the fellowship of Western Europe and of the Atlantic nations.

A. Høgsbro: States that "Germany belongs, in spite of its unclear and fluctuating psychology, to the western hemisphere. Communism has only a chance in Germany through military force. Russia has this military force." "Social prosperity, economic justice and democratic development alone will not be able to defend Germany, it cannot be defended without (being) backed up by sufficient military strength. Germany will in no case ever be strong enough to defend itself against an eastern aggression without help from America. On the other side it seems certain that the military strength of the Atlantic powers may hold Russia back from trying an aggression in Europe, but if it tries, will Germany and perhaps most of the European continent not be saved from an at any rate temporary occupation without the help of German soldiers."

3. Heinemann: Gives the following reasons against this conception:

(a) Russia would regard rearmament of Western Germany as provocation for war.

A. Philip does not agree. However, he believes rearmament would create a grave danger because (a) it would encourage re-birth of nationalism; (b) financial burden would be unbearable; and (c) by aggravating misery of the people, Communist propaganda would be made easy.

B. Grubb: Believes Russians are not prepared to make "rearmament" the ground of a decisive show-down.

C. Niebuhr: Agrees with Heinemann that remilitarization of Germany would be regarded as provocative by Russia and thus heighten East-West tension.

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D. Høgsbro: Agrees. German rearmament will intensify tension between East and West and may cause Russians to march. "If Russia does not react in this way, then through a German rearmament it may be made still more reluctant and more inclined to get an appeasement of the situation."

(b) Western powers would not be strengthened.

A. Niebuhr agrees. No doubt that Russia can

- A. Niemöller agrees. No doubt that Russia can and will take corresponding steps by conscription of male population to forced labor.
 - B. Høgsbro believes Heinemann's statement on this point is not convincing. He states that Western Germany has double the size and industrial capacity that East Germany has.
- (c) Rearmament of Western Germany would destroy what still remains of German unity.
- A. Niemöller: Agrees. Rearmament would complete absolute division of the nation and the total isolation of its Eastern half (consisting of about 20 million Protestants). Last Christian solidarity between East and West Germans would be broken. Integration of East-German population into Russian orbit would be hastened. Rearmament would contribute to despair and hopelessness in Eastern parts.
 - B. Niebuhr agrees that remilitarization would tend to deepen and make more irrevocable the tragic division of a nation.
 - C. Dibelius believes "the re-introduction of general conscription might cause Russia to take counter-measures in the Eastern Zone and would destroy the remains of Germany unity."
 - D. Høgsbro seconds Niebuhr's view.
- (d) German people have not experienced change of heart since 1945. Growth of nationalism at present time in Germany.
- A. Niebuhr believes nationalistic (and militaristic) elements would be strengthened.
 - B. Philip: (See 2 (a) A.)
 - C. Høgsbro agrees. He states, "The situation in Germany is very little stabilized; the development in the last years is deplorable. German nationalism and nazism find a new day dawning upon them. Strong forces, in the first line amongst the expellees, press for a revision of the eastern border, even at the cost of a war, any strengthening of Germany may be used for this purpose. And the leaders of these circles have not learned anything; they will be inclined to act against the slavic nations in the old way."

Does not believe this development will be stopped, even if Germany is not rearmed. Special attention should be given to the development of German nation

should be given to the development of German nationalism. How far is it a symptom of sound national and psychological recovery, and how far does it express a new national egotism and self-overestimation?

- (e) According to international law, Germans cannot be soldiers.
- A. Niemöller agrees. Rearmament would leave German people without any acknowledged international legal status. It would mean the official end of the Potsdam declaration.
 - B. Niebuhr questions this point. "The peril that soldiers of Western Germany would not have military status in the event of war and would therefore be exposed to special hazards may be real; but since West-Germany would have the status of nation it is not at all certain that this would apply."
 - C. van Asbeck: States that this would not apply if the German army were part of a unified genuine European army.
 - D. Högsbro believes this could be regulated in a peace treaty between the allied powers and West-Germany.
4. Heinemann: What is the alternative? Immediate task is to preserve what is left of German unity and thus to keep open the approaches to the East.
- A. Patijn: "I cannot believe that the preservation of what is left of German unity will keep open approaches to the East. It will keep open (and this is in itself certainly important) contacts between Germans in the Western and Eastern zone, but it will not give any new opportunities in the relations between the big powers. Approaches to the East do not depend upon contacts in Germany. Nothing that happens on a purely German level will change the fundamental lack of agreement between East and West. On the other hand a meeting of minds between East and West would deeply affect Germany. The idea of a united Germany as a bridge between East and West does therefore not carry enough weight to outbalance the serious disadvantages of Dr. Heinemann's alternative...It seems that Dr. Heinemann's "alternative" does not contain better guarantees for peace and security in the long run than the policy of the Western powers. On the contrary it seems to be either utopian, or even less acceptable than the continuation of the present policy of the West. It seems to me that to build up a position of strength in the West, provided that it be done with firmness and very carefully, will open better opportunities for some future settlement than the insecurity which would follow a German unification in the terms of Dr. Heinemann. I feel that his alternative which can be understood in the German domestic situation would be inadequate on the international level. It does not ease the tensions between

East and West, on the contrary might create new difficulties. It does not give any guarantee to Germany's neighbours, on the contrary makes them fully dependent on Germany. It kills the idea of European integration, which is the only new and creative phenomenon in post war Europe. It does not even make an attempt to handle a European problem on a European level but is clearly prompted by the obsession of the divided Germany and the terrible consequences for the population especially in the Eastern zone."

- (a) The West could build up "People's Police Force" to correspond with that in the East.
- A. Niemöller believes for present time and situation there should be police force on both sides of demarcation-line, which ought to be prevented from developing into military forces.
 - B. Niebuhr: Necessity of matching military strength of Eastern Germany (armored police) with commensurate strength in the West.
 - C. van Asbeck agrees that building up of Western German police force should be in proportion to that in East Germany, and equipped with exactly the same arms and armament.
 - D. Patijn: "It seems that some common ground can be found in his (Dr. Heinemann's) statement that a police-force, similar to the "People's Police-force" in Eastern Germany, can be built up in the West. The relation of such a police-force to the rest of the armed forces of Western Europe should be considered. It is possible that a German participation in a European army will be more acceptable to the Soviet-Union than rearmament in the form of a fully equipped and independent German military establishment."
 - E. Høgsbro: "Much can be said in favour of Niebuhr's suggestion of a modest German rearmament, in the first line the building up of a strong police-force. But only under very strict control will voluntary forces not so easily be misused for nationalistic and revisionistic purposes as conscript forces."
- (b) The whole of Germany should have a united government strong enough to protect itself against internal attacks.
- A. Niebuhr believes a united Germany powerful enough to protect itself against Communist intrigue and aggression seems to hide real perplexities of the situation. "Germany is divided between two great communities of nations, which do not trust each other sufficiently to arrive at an agreement in regard to Germany."
 - B. Patijn: "A united Germany strong enough to be safe against internal attacks is not to be expected... a united Germany is most probably for the time being bound to be a weak state... the Soviets would never accept a really strong Government."
 - C. Høgsbro believes that "psychologically and politically healthy, economically sound and united Germany" would have to have a police-force strong enough to defend

have to have a police-force, strong enough to defend the country against inner revolutionary forces.

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- (c) Does not argue in favor of making Germany neutral, but believes that Germany should be excluded from the clash between East and West.
- A. Niemöller believes "the main task for the moment is to prevent the outbreak of war and thereby to gain time for negotiations with the aim of finding a way to peace; the German people will have to pay their further contribution to this end by patiently tolerating the present state of division in the midst of the two great competing powers without giving way to the temptation of option."
- B. Philip feels that Heinemann views the situation exclusively from the national point of view and dreams of a neutral Germany. He does not believe in the possibility of a neutral Germany. He states, "Germany forms a part of Western Europe. If she tried to detach herself from it she would inevitably fall under the economic domination of Russia." In Philip's opinion, a national neutralist policy would end in communism united with Russia.
- C. Dibelius believes that a policy of neutrality on the part of Germany has become an impossibility.
- D. Patijn states that Heinemann's proposal is so similar to neutrality that there is very little difference. He believes that "no country and certainly not Germany can be excluded from the clash between East and West." "Such a position of 'wait and see' would be utterly unacceptable for Germany's neighbours, since it would imply that their security would depend upon some future decisions which a German Government might take. If a strong Germany would choose to take the Soviet-side at some future date, as Hitler did in 1939, the world's balance of power would be strongly affected and certainly the countries of the European Continent would be at the mercy of Germany again."
- E. Högsbro believes a united Germany would have to be neutral, without any military force. The condition for the effectiveness of such a neutrality, its possibility for acting as an intermediary element, would depend upon the military strength of the Atlantic Powers being equal to that of the East. He states that there is much strength and wisdom in this opinion of Heinemann and Niemöller. However, there are various questions as to how this can be brought about. "How

can the allied and the Russian powers be brought to retire from Germany and a united Germany be guaranteed against any revolutionary plots from communistic or nationalistic side? This is not only a question of police and army and foreign guarantees, but too: will the sound political forces of the country be strong enough against the radical forces from both sides?

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Will Germany be able to resist the temptation by having its place in the center of playing both sides and continue the unrest in order to profit by it itself?"

- (d) German question can be solved only within larger framework of East-West problem and of world politics.
- A. Philip believes problem of European defense can only be solved in the form of a unified European army.
- B. Grubb: Difficulty of reaching a satisfactory position is not Western Germany's alone.
- C. van Asbeck:

"An integrated Western Europe cannot exist nor play its role without Germany, i. e. - we must state this with deep sorrow - for the time being Western Germany only. Western Europe cannot play its economic role without cooperation of Western Germany's industrial power. The Schuman plan makes this abundantly clear: the Schuman plan means the "economic rearmament," for peace purposes as well as for war preparation, of Western Europe. In other words: Western Germany will be incorporated in the war-effort of Western Europe." Western strength in Europe cannot be built up without American help and assistance.

General Remarks

- A. Grubb: Distinction should be made between term "remilitarization" and "rearmament." Does not think any one is advocating the latter.
- "On the one hand men feel that Western Germany ought to make a contribution not only to her own defence, but that of the West against Communism since it is largely through her folly that Communism has advanced so far. On the other, they fear that that very contribution means a dangerous rebirth of pride and power."
- "It is important that the churches should use such influence as they have "

use such influence as they have.

Is inclined to agree with Niebuhr on general argument.

- B. Niemöller: "In the case of actual war, the West-German troops will prove unreliable as soon as they will have to fight against an enemy who has control of their homes and families. - The Eastern "People's Police" (there is no proof for an "armored police" existing in the Russian Zone!) may easily side with the West-German troops against both power-blocs for the unity of the nation."
- C. van Asbeck: "The major consideration in the political field of the divided Europe and the divided world should be how to strengthen the non-Communist part of Europe." Our strength in the West constitutes in the political field the only hope of the

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oppressed Germans in the eastern zone. The West strives to prevent a third world war (a) by keeping doors open towards a modus vivendi between Eastern and Western systems, and (b) by building up strength in military and economic forces in order to be able to stem Communist influence.

"Everybody understands the deep longing of the German people to re-unification...everybody hopes to see the unity realised in order that Europe may get stability and peace; - but we know at the same time that Europe, Western Germany included, has to build up strength in order to keep what we have and to prevent great dangers which, if they ever came to reality, would mean unspeakable horrors to millions of men."

- D. Patijn agrees in general with Heinemann's analysis of the perils of German rearmament.
- E. Dibelius: "Russia's specific aim is the Ruhr. America is determined not to let the Ruhr fall into Russian hands undamaged. A united Communist Germany is only possible with the Ruhr out of action, that is, with 20 million fewer Germans than live there now. In practice that means the degrading of Germany into a Russian colony by the uprooting of half the population of Western Germany. Therefore the Ruhr must be defended. To leave this defence wholly to the foreign powers of the West would make Western Germany an American colony. Germany must therefore make a substantial contribution."
- F. Niebuhr: "The peril that German rearmament would close the rifts in the iron curtain, which still give eastern Germany some windows to the west must be weighed against the facts that those rifts or

windows exist primarily by the power and the resolution of the west, more particularly the maintenance of western power in Berlin."

Conclusions

- A. Dibelius: "The task of the Church is to hinder military units from creating a new militaristic spirit in Germany. That is no impossible task. The decision in favour of the West is the decision of 90% of the German people in the West and in the East. Since Communism has been established wholly on a materialistic philosophy the Church must give its consent to this decision."
- B. Niebuhr: The solution of the German problem "involves three propositions:
"1. The rejection of the idea of a conscript army for Germany. Its perils, both internally and externally, are too great.
"2. The creation of a more adequate police force, as strong as the east-German one and as fully armored.
"3. The consideration of a possible second step of a volunteer army. This second step would depend upon international and domestic developments in Germany."

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- C. Philip: "It is only by a unification of Europe that we can constitute a force able to guarantee our common independence and to exert one day in a peaceful way sufficient pressure on international affairs to secure the return to Germany of its territories in the East."
- D. Høgsbro: "The answer to the question whether to work for a neutral, united Germany or a western rearmed Germany needs the best political and military information, and has to be decided on political reasons, controlled by moral convictions."
- E. Niemöller: "Rearmament in Western Germany means the end of Democracy in Germany in general. More than 80% of the West German population are opposed to rearmament, but are forbidden to say so publicly and are excluded from any possibility of public propaganda for their conviction. The result cannot be but cynicism and nihilism."

