



OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MEMORANDUM

AMERICAN EMBASSY

LONDON

July 29, 1943.

To: Mr. Whitney H. Shepardson.

From: David C. Shaw.

Attention Mr. Goldberg.

The Moscow "Free Germany" Movement.

On 21st July the Moscow radio broadcast the Manifesto of the "Free Germany National Committee" to the German Army and German people. This manifesto was reprinted in "Pravda" from the German paper "Free Germany" and appears in the "Daily Digest of World Broadcasts" for 21st and 22nd July, 1943. From press reports I understand that its publication has caused considerable discussion at home. For this reason I thought it necessary to make an examination of the document and to find out, if possible, the representative and bona fide quality of the document.

Similar documents have appeared before. If you will recall, the famous Rhineland Conference of the United Front group in Germany appeared in the New York "Daily Worker" last winter. I commented on this from New York. The pattern of the manifesto is very similar to the pattern of that one. The Socialists in London consider the manifesto to be quite a reactionary one and to advocate reactionary policies, and they look at it as another "Popular Front of the Reaction". This description is given to the manifesto because of the provisions therein for the restoration of property which has been looted by the Nazis.

The interesting thing about the document is the type of people who have signed it. I am enclosing for your information the list of those who signed the document. If you will look at this list you will see that it contains two types of people. The first group are obvious military prisoners, and the second is made up of numerous individuals who are refugees in Russia. All of those names, down to the name of Anton Ackermann, are unknown to (any of the German Socialists or Communists in London (Auerbach gave me this information)). This is with one exception - the name of Heinrich Count von Einsiedl. Although he is not known to any of the London Communists, a biography of him was published in "The German American" recently in New York. Among the

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remaining individuals on the list the following information is known about them:

(1) In general they are all Communist refugees. Those who are labelled as trade union leaders are members of the "Red Trade Union Opposition" - the German section of the Comintern. This raises a serious question whether or not the Profintern as well as the Comintern has been abolished.

(2) Wilhelm Florin, described as a Reich deputy from the Ruhr, was the leader of the Communist metalworkers of Germany and a contributor to the "Red Flag".

(3) Edwin Noernle is a Communist peasant leader in Germany, and is described as a very able and brilliant man with a substantial following among the left wing peasants. Auerbach describes him as "a Communist with real brains".

(4) Wilhelm Pieck is the Secretary of the German Communist Party.

(5) Gustav Sobotka, described as a leader of the Miners Trade Union and a deputy from the Ruhr, is described by Auerbach as a man of extremely bad reputation and he is accused of having betrayed certain German workers to the Gestapo.

(6) Walter Ulbricht is described as another very bad man who wrote an article during the Pact period threatening to expose members of the anti-Nazi underground if they did not stop their opposition to the Russian-German Pact.

(7) Anton Ackermann is a local trade union leader of the textile workers, and is without influence nationally in Germany.

(8) Johannes Becher, described as a writer from Munich, is perhaps Germany's most excellent lyric poet and is very well known and highly regarded in Germany.

(9) Friedrich Wolf is the best and most well-known of the German dramatists from 1925 to 1952. Both he and Becher are intellectuals of extremely high standard and great influence.

(10) Willi Bredel is another poet, but he is more important as a propaganda novelist who has tried to imitate Upton Sinclair, but has failed.

(11) Erich Weinert, the Chairman of the "Free Germany" Committee, is a writer and a poet. He is fairly well-known but not highly respected, and is usually referred to as one who just fills up space in Communist papers.

1. Thus [name] is indeed a leader of a very small Communist group in London.

2. Questions raised are that the London German Communists have the following attitude towards the manifesto:

- a) The Committee is not final in its composition. This is only a start, and some of the names may be removed from the group and a great many more added.
- b) The reason for the publication of the manifesto was to accomplish political pressure on the Poles.
- c) This was the Russian way of expressing Russian fury about AMCOF. The Russians fear military government of the Allies in Germany.
- d) The London German Communists are attempting to set up what they intend to be a sub-committee of this Moscow Committee. They will seek the support of all left wing German refugees in London. Because the Socialists consider the manifesto to be reactionary, they will refuse to support it.

This brings us to the question of English opinion about the Moscow manifesto. The London "Times" published the manifesto in almost complete form on July 22nd. There was not very much editorial comment about it. The most interesting exposition of British opinion about the manifesto is found in Vansittart's letter to the "Times" published on July 27th. As was expected, Vansittart would not take the manifesto very seriously for the reason that he feels that there is no substantial body of people in Germany who are in opposition to Hitler and who can be relied upon to do any effective job in getting rid of him. Comments in the British press, in general, have been in line with Vansittart's point of view, and they do not place the same seriousness on the manifesto that some of our American papers do. [As I wrote you in my report on the Labor Party Conference and the discussion on Vansittartism at that time,] The argument over Vansittartism here has been largely one of whether or not the German people are to blame for the Hitler regime. This has led the discussion into some very interesting irrelevancies. Vansittart himself has been misquoted and misunderstood to a point beyond recognition. Actually his basic premises have hardly been discussed at all. The most fervent followers of Vansittart are somewhat divided between the exterminationists and the vivisectionists, and his most fervent opponents are a mixture of semi-pacifists and people who are afraid of bombing the German cities. Obviously, therefore, it is difficult to make any sense out of the argument. The intelligent enemies of Vansittartism, who have really something to say on the question have been, in the main, inarticulate. These people have no desire to be at all soft on the Germans, and do not wish to let up for one moment on the bombing activities or on the war effort. They do, however,

which can conduct its own revolution, struggle and defense of Nazism
in its own way.

I have gone into detail on this matter because of the importance
of the amount of press comment on the manifesto at home. Over here, the
matter is not taken very seriously. For your convenience I am attaching
copies of radio broadcasts which have been given out from the "Free
Germany" radio station during the past few days. These will give you
some idea of what the station has been doing and of the type of propaganca
which is going into Germany from Russia. I don't want to close this
matter without pointing out that there are a great many of the serious
Labor and Socialist people here, who have connections with anti-Nazis in
Germany, who were very disturbed over the manifesto because they recognized
that the Russians had taken advantage of a tactic which they had been
deprived of by the British and American policy of not allowing them to
broadcast to their people.

David C. Shaw.

Attachments: -

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Legalese

[The main body of the document contains extremely faint and illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is mostly illegible but appears to be a list or index of names and titles.]

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"FREE GERMANY".

To The Editor of The Times.

Sir, - I am glad that in your issue of July 24 you quoted the "New York Herald Tribune" on the manifesto issued in Russia by the so-called "National Committee of Free Germany". The "Herald Tribune" rightly points out that such bodies proliferate everywhere - including the United States. While no particular weight can be attached to their standing, suspicion frequently attaches to their objectives. This new body is no exception.

It may save subsequent trouble if I point out that there are points in the programme of this particular body which many of us here will in no circumstances whatever accept - for example, the impudent "promise" of an amnesty to those of Hitler's adherents who desert him after more than 10 years of atrocity. This "National Committee" is of course nothing of the kind: it is nebulous and unrepresentative - indeed fictive. The "Herald Tribune" terms such bodies "a dime a dozen", and in this case we need not dispute the definition. I shall therefore not follow the "Herald Tribune" in the assumption that these advertised nonentities are "a manifestation of Russian foreign policy". I think better of Russian foreign policy.

Allowing for differences in latitude, I am no more disposed to take a manifesto for a manifestation than in the case of similar activities in the United States or this country.

Yours, &c., VANSITTART.
Denham Place, Denham, Bucks, July 24