

PRIME MINISTER

SEMINAR ON GERMANY

We have the Seminar on Germany next Saturday. I am coming under some pressure from the participants to say what you want to talk about. Basically, it seems to me, you will want to tap the wisdom of each individual participant in his particular area of specialisation: Professor Craig on German history as a whole: Professor Stern on the lessons of the nineteenth century: Hugh Trevor-Roper on the Nazi period: Timothy Garton-Ash on Germany and Central Europe: and George Urban and Norman Stone on the modern-day politics of it.

But I have also tried to define a number of specific questions to which the Seminar might try to provide answers or at least guidance (and any resemblance to Oxford or Cambridge entrance scholarship papers is entirely coincidental!). The principal ones are:

- what does history tell us about the character and behaviour of the German-speaking people of Europe? Are there such things as enduring national characteristics?

- how strong is the drive to unite all the German-speaking peoples, either within the existing borders of Germany or by extending those borders?

- have the Germans changed in the last 40 years, either as a result of some mutation in their national character or because of changes in their external environment? Or are we really dealing with the same old Huns?

- in the light of history, how can we 'satisfy' the Germans? Is there something they want and we can give them, which will neutralise their desire to extend their sway, whether politically or territorially?

- will German national ambitions be subsumed in the

I want to use our experience
of the past to help us shape the future. But
not to be dominated by the past. We have to enlarge
our minds. We have to build a new framework

for the future. for defence, for co-operation beyond
Europe and try to see how we can keep the Democratic

to a real western democracy with political freedom.
We must consider Central Europe - its

①
and how
our
security
could
be
improved
for the
continent
West

[N.B. - we must not let the
multiplicity of - Planning
anti-nationalism]

up to 150

internationalist appeal of an European Community as they claim? Can the sense of a German nation be supplanted by the sense of an European nation? Or is this wishful thinking on their - and our - part?

- how deep-rooted is the German mission in Central ^{Western} Europe? Is it part of their instinctive and historic restlessness? Or is it merely a current calculation of economic and political advantage?

- looking back through history, are there traits in Germany's relations with Britain which have been particularly positive and on which we can try to build in future? Are there some particular aspects of the German character or of German national interests to which we can appeal, to make them more cuddly and less abrasive?

- what is the key to German economic success? Is it something deep in their character and psyche a natural sense of discipline and order? Or is it 'simply' sound policy?

- what will be the tendency of a united Germany? Despite all protestations to the contrary, will it lurch inevitably and as often in history, towards geographical and territorial dominance? Or will it find satisfaction in the creation of something broader than Germany?

- can we deduce from history how the Germans as a nation will respond to certain sorts of treatment? Is it better psychologically to 'stand up to Germany'? Or do they respond better to a honeyed approach, based on understanding of their needs and an attempt to manipulate them?

- how strongly German do the remaining Germanic minorities in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union feel? Is an ambition to protect them likely to re-surface as a factor in German policy?

- to what extent do we need to take account of the growing influence of people of Germanic origin in the United States, as a factor affecting American policy towards Europe?

It would be very helpful if you could indicate whether these are broadly the sort of questions which you want to address: and whether you have any others. I will then try to fit them into a framework which I can circulate to participants.

Content to proceed on this basis?

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We must widen the discussion to include the interest in the USSR - (? of Russia) and whether we pursue spheres of influence, or alliances of democracy or geographical alliances. We cannot completely disregard history for the various eras & maritime skills have griddled the globe. We must consider some of the old balance of power. But it seems to me that what the in the past history was determined largely by the personalities & ambitions of the rulers of the people, in future it will be decided much more by the character of the people. However, the lesson of the past has been in that neither character nor pride has been ~~affected~~ supported by oppression. mb