

A CHALLENGE TO EDUCATORS

One of the basic purposes of our military occupation of Germany is to effect a change in some of the fundamental cultural and social institutions of the German people. By the Potsdam Agreement, the United States accepted an obligation to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis leading to the eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany, and to so control German education as to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas.

More than two years ago it was recognized that an effective reeducation of the German people would have to be made an integral part of the plans for their economic rehabilitation. The long-range policy statement released in August, 1946 declared "that the cultural and moral reeducation of the nation must be related to policies calculated to restore the stability of a peaceful German economy."

In keeping with this policy, Germany was included in the Marshall Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of Europe. The Economic Cooperation Administration, resulting from the leadership of the United States in economic affairs, is already functioning. A great step forward has been taken to restore the stability of the German economy. The entire American public is contributing through our system of taxation to the ECA and to the economic rehabilitation of Germany.

A comparable nationwide cooperation of the American public is needed to reconstruct the political and cultural life of Germany on a basis which will foster democratic ideas and promote peace in Europe—and in the world. How can this general public support and cooperation be enlisted? It is a problem to which our educational leaders must find a solution.

The United States Education Mission to Germany, reporting in October, 1946 to the Department of State, recommended that a volunteer body be set up to coordinate the work of individuals and private organizations in educational aid to Germany. This coordinating body, Commission for Educational and Cultural Relations with Occupied Countries, (744 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C.), has recently been authorized and is ready to serve as a clearing house of information, and to coordinate the activities of individuals and organizations wishing to contribute to the development of the democratic spirit in the occupied areas.

In some communities the educators have already begun to direct the local efforts to send cultural aid to these countries. Books and magazines have been donated; funds have been raised to offer scholarships to foreign students; some German and Austrian schools have been adopted by American schools. This type of aid must be extended. The help of all communities should be enlisted to contribute to the attainment of the educational objectives of our government in Germany, Austria, Japan, and Korea. Our educators, however, must take the lead. They must stimulate the interest of the public in the program. The goal to be attained is of supreme importance, not only to the people of the occupied countries, but to ourselves and to the world.—L. P. Irvin, *chief, Education and Religion Policy Section, Reorientation Branch, U. S. Army.*

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