From an internal memo from People's Commissariat on Foreign Affairs of the USSR, March 1943

According to information received from London, on 16 February 1943[[1]](#footnote-1) the subcommittee on political post-war reconstruction of Europe held a meeting, which was headed by Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Law.[[2]](#footnote-2)

At the session, an issue was raised about the necessity of entrusting to a single department all matters regarding the management of the press and radio in postwar Germany and other Axis powers following the armistice. One opinion was that these issues should be subordinated to the Political Warfare Executive[[3]](#footnote-3), which should keep in close liaison with the Ministry of Information, with the British Broadcasting Corporation, ATE Committee[[4]](#footnote-4) (committee on development of administrative activities on management of the territories being liberated from the enemy) and with the corresponding military departments. Employees of the military subcommittee[[5]](#footnote-5) present at the session stated that it is impossible to have the same approach to different liberated territories, where the presently discussed control would be a provisional measure or more durable. The general opinion was that the Political Warfare Executive should use the following principles in its work:

1) The Allied nations will maintain effective control in Germany for at least 15 years.

2) The Allies will install for a certain time period a weak central government in Germany, as the main policy of the United Nations will be to promote the development of particularism in Germany[[6]](#footnote-6). Similarly, though Allied plans must proceed from and be based on the “ideal solution” of the British-American-Soviet agreement and subsequently on joint occupation of Germany by these three countries, resulting in the creation of an inter-allied Supreme Command, these plans should also provide for a possibility of non-participation of the USSR in any plan of the allies. In this case, it will be impossible to create a united system of control over the whole of Germany. That is why control over different public and social events in the country shall have to be maintained separately in each area[[7]](#footnote-7). There may be a necessity for expanding the system of control; therefore the plan should make provisions for measures, such as creation of international newspaper agencies, an organization for control of radio broadcasts on a European scale, etc.

The following conclusions were reached at the session:

1) If higher [ranking] organizations do not find it necessary to take on responsibility for preparing the plan for an organization to control propaganda and press in the Axis countries after an armistice, this matter should be subject to the Political Warfare Executive.

2) When it becomes necessary, the Political Warfare Executive, together with the Ministry of Information, the British Broadcasting Corporation and other departments, should prepare the plan, having taken into consideration the main ideas discussed at this session, and submit this plan for consideration to Law’s subcommittee.

3) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform ATE Committee about these two decisions.

4) With aim of assisting the Political Warfare Executive with development of these plans, the British Broadcasting Corporation should study the organization and plans of German control via the press and radio in the occupied countries.

5) The Political Warfare Executive should prepare a memorandum about the control of the press and radio in Italy and territory occupied by Italy.

[FPARF, f. 0512, inv. 4, fold. 14, file 50, pp. 17–18]

Keywords: Post-war Germany

1. 1943 added, handwritten. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Law, Richard Kindston (1901 – 1980) – British statesman and diplomat, son of Andrew Bonar Law. Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Office (1941 – 1943), Minister of State in Foreign Office (1943 – 1945). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Political Warfare Executive – British secret service during the Second World War, designed to undermine enemy's morale and its political propaganda. Founded in August 1941, officially subordinated to the Foreign Office, headed by R.B. Lockhart (Lockhart). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Committee for Administration of Territories (Europe) – the committee was within the War Office. It was established in July 1942 to improve coordination between the British military and civilian officials. It was led by the Permanent Deputy Minister of War, F. Bovenschen. Representatives of the United States were later seconded to the committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Military Sub-Committee of the Ministerial Committee on Reconstruction Problems was one of the most important UK government bodies in the sphere of post-war planning. Established in August 1942, it was officially managed by the HM Paymaster General. In discussions within the Subcommittee a number of theses were put forward (the fear of Soviet domination in Europe, the possibility of the creation of the Soviet-German bloc, etc.) that would persist further onwards. For more see: Lewis J. Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-war Strategic Defense, 1942-1947. 2nd. ed. London, 2003. pp. 24-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Similar position was articulated in the Foreign Office memorandum, presented in a "preliminary study» on the problem of Germany’s future (send out by Eden to members of the Cabinet on 8 March 1943). Speaking against the dismemberment of Germany, the Foreign Office supported the organization of post-war Germany as "a voluntary federation”. "If spontaneous particularist or even separatist movements were to appear after the war, they should be encouraged, with a view to the possible development of a federal Germany” - read one of the conclusions of the memorandum (WP (43) 96, Memo by Eden, 08/03/1943 // TNA, CAB 66/34). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In March 1943, during the discussions held between the Foreign Office staff and US representatives, concerns were voiced by the American expert, N. Davis, "that the allotment of large areas to any one Power could only result in the creation of zones of influence and that this, in the long run, would not promote harmony between the big Three” (Note by Jebb, 25/04/1943 (in WP (43) 217) // TNA, CAB 66/37). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)