

Martin Bormann's Note on "Safeguarding the Future of the German People" (January 29, 1944)

Abstract

Even after he had consolidated his dictatorial rule, Hitler was always concerned with maintaining the loyalty and support of the German people. Thus, the most radical aspects of his population policy were largely reserved for social and other minorities, whereas the general public was to remain unaware of the implementation of extreme measures. But the following note by Head of the Party Chancellery Martin Bormann (dated January 29, 1944), reveals that Hitler envisioned a radical departure from established bourgeois and religious socio-sexual mores as being necessary in the postwar period in order to quickly compensate for the considerable loss of life during the war and thus secure the continued existence of the German *Volk*.

Source

Headquarters, 29 January 1944

Minutes for Comrade Friedrichs, Comrade Klopfer

Re: Safeguarding the Future of the German People

1. During the night of 27/28 January the Führer discussed with us the problems of our national future. The following points can be established from this and earlier conversations and reflections:

After the war our *national position* will be *catastrophic*, for our nation is experiencing the second enormous loss of blood within a thirty-year period. We shall undoubtedly win the war militarily but lose it in national terms if we do not decisively transform all our previous views and the attitudes which have resulted from them. For the loss of blood is not a one-off event but rather, its effects will go on year after year into the distant future.

A single example:

How many more children would have been born in this war if it had been possible to grant our front soldiers leave or to have done so more often!

How terrible the political consequences of a war can be is demonstrated by the Thirty Years War. When it started the German nation had a population of over 18 million; at its end barely 3½ million. The consequences of this loss of blood have still not been resolved to this day. For we lost the world domination which, at the beginning of the Thirty Years War, the German nation seemed predestined to achieve. Our political divisions lasted until 1871, our national ones basically till 1933; the confessional division has still not been resolved.

[...]

3. The Führer pointed out that after this war we shall have 3 to 4 million women who have no husbands or cannot get them. Think how many divisions we will be lacking in twenty to forty-five years' time, said the Führer.

4. The greater the number of births in a nation, the more secure will its future be. The calculation made by many parents, namely that they have to limit the number of their children to secure the future of the ones who have been born, is thus completely wrong; the opposite is true! Thus, if they thought about it properly, all women who have one child ought to be particularly concerned to see that not only they themselves but all other women have as many children as possible, because the more children that are born, the more secure their children's future will be. That is a very sober assessment of the situation.

5. Now the women who after this tremendous war are not married to a man or do not get married cannot get their children from the Holy Ghost but only from the German men who are left. Increased procreation by individual men is of course only desirable from a national point of view in the case of some of these men. The decent, physically and psychologically healthy men of character should increase their procreation but not those who are physically and mentally deformed.

[...]

7. There is no point in relying on state regulations alone in this delicate area. The only thing which can convince people is a very serious campaign by the movement. This issue is too important for stupid jokes. It really is a matter of securing the future of our people.

8. After this war we cannot order all women and girls to have children. The most sensitive—and here the over-used superlative is appropriate—education is required.

[...]

12. [...] At first many women will accept the general principle but—a lack of logic is after all innate in women—reject it in the personal circumstances of their particular case.

13. For obvious reasons, public, i.e., general education can only begin after the war. Let me just give one reason for this. We cannot now call on the women whose husbands will probably still get killed and we cannot begin the education campaign out of consideration for our soldiers because, beforehand, we would have to get our men who are now soldiers used to these ideas: not every soldier will necessarily want his wife or fiancée to have children by another man after he has been killed.

[...]

15. Right now we must remove all undesirable barriers to our goal. In particular, we must involve our poets and writers. New novels, stories, and plays which equate “marriage drama” with “adultery” will no longer be permitted. Nor will poems, writings or films which treat illegitimate children as inferior.

16. Now the “dislike” of illegitimate children undoubtedly has a reason which we too—or rather we in particular—must acknowledge. We too do not want our sisters or daughters irresponsibly to have children by some man or other or from more than one man. We must, therefore, desire that, after this war, our nation's women who cannot get married in the traditional way can join up with a man who really suits them and have children by him.

If I consider carefully how in animal breeding only those animals who suit each other are paired, then I have to observe that the rules which are valid for all mammals also apply to humans. If I want children who have a balanced character and are not inwardly torn then I must state the view that only people who are really suited to each other should have children with each other. We cannot want a woman to become pregnant from any man whatsoever, even if conception is carried out with a different man in mind [*Fernzeugung*]. Rather, only people who are really fond of each other should have children.

17. The upshot of all this is: we must hope that women who after the war do not have or get a husband

will have a relationship with a man, similar to marriage, which produces as many children as possible. The fact that such relationships will not last a lifetime is not an argument against them but is natural. Many marriages too end in divorce after a longer or shorter period. Moreover, I believe that two people who are bound together in friendship but do not see each other so often can stay together for a whole lifetime more easily than others and even more so if children strengthen the love and friendship of this bond.

18. I have already mentioned above that any defamation of relationships which are desirable from the point of view of the nation should be prevented. Anyone who insults a woman who has children without a husband must be harshly punished. Anyone who opposes the encouragement of national needs—this will concern a number of clergy—must also be harshly punished.

[...]

21. Very many women and girls would gladly have children, indeed many children, if they were sure that they would really be looked after for the whole of their lives. They don't want to have children and then, one day, because the father of these children dies, or becomes poor, or abandons them, to be left with their children dependent on the grace and mercy of some welfare institution.

22. It is clear that women who are employed and have children must be paid more and, moreover, that these women should be assigned flats appropriate to the number of people in the family.

23. After the war I want to build such flats in the Sonnenwinkel settlement for Party Chancellery personnel who have children. [...]

24. The number of boarding schools [...] must be enormously increased so that all women who for whatever reason cannot bring up their children themselves without difficulties can send them to boarding schools. That applies to boys as well as girls. These boarding schools are also necessary because the best and most efficient men are mostly pretty wild in their youth and can hardly be controlled by their mothers on their own.

25. Furthermore, these women should not only send their children away to boarding schools when they reach school age but, in accordance with the Führer's directive, the NSV should, as has been previously emphasized, set up the best maternity homes in which the children should be brought up from babyhood to school age. This upbringing in these children's homes must be far better than it generally is in the bosom of the family. That is the great future task for the NSV.

26. For the sake of the future of our nation we must encourage a cult of motherhood and no distinction must be made between women who have been married in the traditional way and women who have children with a man to whom they are bound in friendship; all these mothers are to be honored equally (naturally this does not apply to those asocial elements who do not even know who is the father of their children).

[...]

(i.) We must create for those mothers who have not been officially married in the traditional way a very similar comprehensive state of psychological and material security. Among other things: the children must be able to acquire their father's name without difficulty.

(ii.) In addition: on special request, men must be able to have a firm marriage relationship not only with one woman but with another one, in which that woman easily acquires the man's name and the children their father's name.

[...]

(iv.) As I mentioned above, it is necessary for us to get rid of and ban the current terms for a “relationship” which sound more or less morally dubious. On the contrary, we must find good and friendly-sounding expressions. We must, therefore, consider what the relationship between a woman and a man to whom she has not been married in the traditional way can be called; we must consider how the children from such a bond of friendship should be termed.

The more successful we are in finding a name, the easier it will be to remove existing inhibitions. However, these inhibitions must be removed, for otherwise all the sacrifices of the last World War and this war will have been in vain because our nation will inevitably fall victim to the next storms.

In twenty or thirty years or forty or fifty years we shall lack the divisions which we shall definitely need if our nation is not to perish.

(v.) After this war childless marriages and bachelors must be taxed much more heavily than hitherto. The current bachelor taxes must be child’s play compared with the tax burdens imposed on them in future. The income from these bachelor taxes must serve to support the mothers who have children, i.e., for the mutual support of our attempts to secure offspring.

Please give the whole problem careful thought and then let me have your views.

Signed M. Bormann

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Source of original German text: Vermerk vom 29. 1. 1944. Martin Bormann über “Sicherung der Zukunft des deutschen Volkes;” reprinted in Jochen von Lang, *Der Sekretär: Martin Bormann, der Mann, der Hitler beherrschte*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1977, pp. 478–82.

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