

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

MAY 22, 1950

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THE BIG 3 AND GERMANY

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Railroad Union Leaders Surrender Strike Aim

By GORDON HASKELL

MAY 16—The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen ended its six-day strike against four major railroads this morning under conditions which indicate a complete surrender on the part of the leadership of the union.

The major issue of the strike, the demand that the railroads employ a fireman in the engine room of multiple-unit road diesels has been all but abandoned. The secondary demands—that wages on diesel and electric locomotives be brought up to standard steam-engine rates, and that firemen be employed on all yard diesels regardless of size—will be arbitrated with both sides agreeing in advance to accept the ruling of an arbitration board.

Thus the firemen's strike will go down in history as one more instance of the misleadership of the railroad unions' officials. Though the text of the arbitration

agreement is not yet available, the probability is that the railroad workers will get very little out of it.

Newspaper reports indicate that the brotherhood chiefs hope to sneak the additional firemen in on the road diesels under a clause which states that they may place before the arbitration board evidence that the roads have violated an old clause in the BLFE contract. This clause states that if the railroads hire additional men in the engine room of diesels, these men will come from the ranks of firemen. The brotherhood maintains that the roads have been using up to 5,000 specialists and supervisory officials to ride in the engine rooms, and that according to the contract these men should be firemen. This claim is justified, on the face of it.

STRIKE WAS SOLID

But now that the strike has been called off, and after two presidential fact-finding boards have ruled that an additional man is not needed, there is little rea-

(Turn to last page)

On Ike's Letters

Columbia University, over the signature of its president, General Eisenhower, has sent letters to 750 universities, libraries and museums in 58 countries—"including some in Communist-dominated countries," says the press report—to support the principle of academic freedom.

We are interested by the letters going to the Stalinist countries. For what men like Eisenhower mean by academic freedom nowadays has a reservation attached to it, in their own minds, though we doubt that they were written into a ceremonial document like the one reported here.

It means: academic freedom only for supporters of the present system in the United States.

Let us grant, for the sake of argument only, that the restrictions on academic freedom urged in the name of defending the present system (whether that system be mislabeled "American democracy," "free enterprise" or any other pseudonym for capitalism) are justified. Not only the Eisenhowers but self-styled liberals, from Professor Sidney Hook to Professor Kelly (see report of the latter's argument on page 3 of this issue) make a case for themselves on this and similar grounds.

But if "subversiveness," as interpreted by these gentlemen, puts a man outside the pale of academic freedom under capitalism, no other principle can be urged by the same gentlemen for other systems.

Under Stalinism, pro-capitalism is as subversive as Stalinism is subversive under capitalism. Can they demand academic freedom for (say) pro-capitalist professors in the Stalinist countries, on the basis of their own theory and practice?

It may be argued that Stalinism is bad and Americanism is good. But that is quite beside the point, as far as the principle of academic freedom is concerned. *Democracy and freedom do not mean that you extend others the right to believe or advocate that which you think is good but that you give them the right to believe or advocate that which YOU think is bad.*

Stalinist totalitarianism is the consistent carrying-out of the restrictions on freedom which are being put into effect here in the United States. Fortunately, there is a long road between the spots of infection and the total corruption. What is more to the point is that the core of capitalist democracy is rotten to the center. In such a case, the spots of infection are not a superficial blemish but an evidence of deep-seated disease.

Eisenhower's letters no doubt contain beautiful sentiments. But these no more square with the principles of our capitalism than they do with the principles and practice of the Russian despotism.

Big 3 Decree Permanent Occupation of Germany As Garrison in Cold War

By HAL DRAPER

By courtesy, international diplomatic gatherings of the powers are called peace conferences. It would take a lot of courtesy to call the London Conference of the Big Three, just ended, by that name. As frankly as is possible for diplomats and statesmen today, the item on its agenda was WAR: HOW TO PREPARE FOR IT.

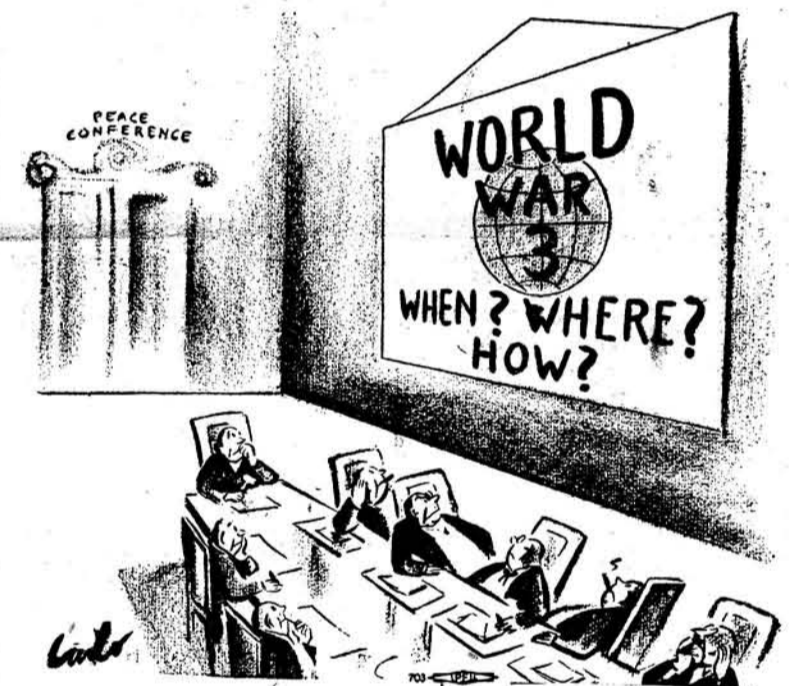
The communiqué on Germany has meaning only under that head.

The press has headlined the "concessions to Germany." These have been greeted in anticipation by Chancellor Adenauer. Only in anticipation, because even the concessions to German sovereignty were promised only in the vaguest form and even the promises are not to be spelled out till September 1.

Actually, the main point of the Big Three communiqué does not lie here. It is, rather, the announcement that Germany is to remain militarily occupied by foreign troops in permanence.

"Permanence," of course, is a long time, and it is doubtful whether the term can be used for anything in the A-bomb world of today. Specifically, Germany is to remain occupied for the duration of the cold war. This, in turn, will last until the beginning of the hot war or until the governments of the two imperialist war blocs are swept out by their people.

(Turn to last page)



AFL Leader Threatens New Party If Fair Dealers Don't Deliver

A second labor leader, a week after the speech by President Alex. Rose of the Hatters Union, has pointed to the formation of a new national party by labor as the answer to the refusal by both old parties to fight for the workers' needs.

This was Richard J. Gray, also of the AFL, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the federation, speaking at the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor convention on May 10. Gray heads two million members in 19 building trades.

Gray's point was couched in the form of a threat, not of an aim as in Rose's case, and it accompanied his denunciation of the Taft-Hartley Law. He still urged the delegates to vote in November "for the man and not for the party"—which means, for the "best" Democrats and Republicans. It was by no means a call for a new party representing labor's interests.

But what is significant about this declaration, limited as it is and coming as it does from the head of a conservative section of the AFL, is that for the first time since Truman's dazzling re-election in 1948 the idea of a break with the Democrats and Republicans is coming to the fore even at

the tops of the trade-union movement.

Labor supported Truman in 1948 especially on the Taft-Hartley issue. The second issue highlighted by the labor-liberal coalition in the Fair Deal party was that of civil rights and FEPC. On both counts labor has gotten nothing and is beginning to suspect (out loud) that the Democratic leaders are more interested in keeping the issues alive for their vote-getting value than ending them by passing laws.

The groundswell for an independent labor party was only temporarily abated by the Truman victory. The Fair Deal can't come through. All indications point to a revival and growth of pro-labor party sentiment.

Taftism

"Generally, we have better health, better houses, better house furnishings, better schools than less fortunate people elsewhere."

—Senator Taft.

Obviously, Taft is a better writer than less skilled writers.



ADENAUER

Congressmen Worried about "Oligopolies"— Can't Turn Clock Back to Small Business

By SUSAN GREEN

Representative Emanuel Celler has come up with a new word—"oligopolies." Oligopolies are the successors of the old-fashioned monopolies which to him are as outdated as the Sherman and Clayton anti-trust laws. He aims to amend these laws, and to this end he and his committee in the House are carrying on an investigation into oligopolies.

rubbing their eyes. Their much vaunted "free enterprise" and "free competition" have gone with the wind. Representative Celler wants to bring the anti-trust laws up to date. He also thinks that where it is proved that bigness and absence of competition mean more efficiency an industry should not be broken up but be looked upon as a public utility and subjected to controls.

Another of his ideas is that the question of "conglomerate concentrations" should be gone into. Per-



haps General Motors should be told to get out of everything but the production of autos; that distillers should be ousted from the production of food, chemicals and pharmaceutical goods; that soap manufacturers should be discouraged from manufacturing oleomargarine. And Celler, being limbered by his profit-system concepts, thinks that maybe big business should get tax inducements to shove off some of its bigness.

Another capitalist politician worried about business bigness is Senator O'Mahoney, chairman of a Congressional economic committee. He thinks, for instance, that "The great steel companies exercise such tremendous power and have such influence on all segments of American economic life" that they present an extraordinary problem. He does not think that the Sherman law, even if amended, is sufficient to insure free competition. The assets of large corporations are so great that "by Fabian tactics" they can outwait any anti-trust suit.

THEY'RE WORRIED.

All this has a very familiar ring. Labor has for years and years pointed up the oligarchical concentration of industrial power and its evil effect on prices and on the social structure. Going further than organized labor, socialists, guided by the Marxist analysis of capitalism, have constantly and consistently followed and exposed the inevitable development of competitive capitalism into industrial oligarchy and have urged the working people to take over industry to be run for use and not for profit.

Now capitalist politicians are

the limits of corporate activities. He would not regulate the size of corporations per se, but would prohibit conglomerate branching out, would make types of industrial holding companies illegal, also the setting up of private managerial systems in national and international trade, the division of territory, fixing of prices, curtailing production, etc.

A "MAGINOT LINE"

It is hard to see how federal charters making certain practices illegal will command more obedience than laws already on the books, which already make these practices illegal. Also how can this new charter system affect the oligopolies now in power? To be sure, the senator has some doubt and admits that his solution would not solve "completely" the problem of the "Big Threes" and "Big Fours" in major industries.

All the politicians who belatedly see the menace of industrial oligarchy, in addition to whatever pet solutions they may have, agree that small business must be encouraged. Probably President Truman's recent proposals to Congress to aid small business will receive favorable consideration. The president's proposals embrace the following: government insurance of bank loans to the smallest businesses, similar to present insurance of loans to householders; organization of investment companies calling on average investors to finance "larger" small businesses; improved operation of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to aid small businesses; provision by the Department of Commerce of technical and managerial aids to small businesses unable to carry on research by themselves as do large companies, similar to such service now given to farmers by the government.

Perhaps the best answer to those who hope to build up small business—as a Maginot Line—against the oligopolies was given by some of the industrialists testifying before the House committee or in public interviews. For example, the president of Republic Steel testified that his company buys products from over 12,000 different companies and in turn sells its products to 14,000 businesses. Along the same line, the president of DuPont stated that his company has 30,000 suppliers, a majority being small business customers. These industrialists cited these figures to "prove" that they could not exercise "undue influence" on such large groups and that as a matter of fact small business and large business are a happy family.

However, a more objective and disinterested interpretation of these figures is that expressed by Senator O'Mahoney when he stands aghast at the great companies which "exercise such tremendous power and have such influence on all segments of American economic life." Actually the giants of industry have the power of life and death over the thousands of small businesses dependent on them. This is shown very concretely during steel shortages, real or fictitious, when small businesses are victimized at the will of the giants; as it is shown when small businesses disappear entirely into the gargantuan maw of the "big brother."

CAPITALISM OBSOLETE TOO

Benjamin F. Fairless, president of U. S. Steel, stood up before the Celler committee and declared that his company "is successful, it is profitable, it is efficient and it is a large enterprise. These are the simple facts and I am proud of them." He vehemently denied that his company interferes with free competition: "The fact is that when U. S. Steel was created in 1901, it produced 66 per cent of all the steel then made in Amer-

ica—twice as much as all of its competitors put together. Today it produces only 33 per cent of the nation's steel, and its competitors turn out twice as much as it does."

However, Fairless shrewdly omitted to say that he listed among his competitors the other five large steel outfits which with U. S. Steel own more than 70 per cent of the nation's steel-making capacity. Thus U. S. Steel is the most important section of what Representative Celler calls the oligopoly, probably having one of those invisible "private managerial systems" mentioned by Senator O'Mahoney, which results in control of so much of the economic life of the country.

Fairless was by no means on the defensive in his attitude. He lashed out against those people intent on "dismembering business" as "the most dangerous, reactionary of the twentieth century." He said: "By dismembering business, they would turn back the clock to the horseless buggy days of fifty years or more ago and would try to squeeze a modern, dynamic, efficient America once more into the puny production patterns of industrial childhood."

It is not often that a socialist finds himself even in partial agreement with a big industrialist, but Fairless seems right about turning back the clock of industrial development. However, objectively speaking, time has also run out

on the big industrialist, who should be replaced by democratic socialization of industry.

The New York Times, entering the controversy editorially, points out that all industry, not just steel, is on trial. In support of industry, it quotes to the effect that in 1914 a worker would have had to work 96 hours a week in order to buy the "same amount" and kind of goods, services and luxuries which are standard today." Then the editor asks: "Was this monumental advance in living standards achieved in spite of, or because of, the great size of our big industrial units? It would not be accurate to say that there is no argument on that point. But the one hard fact that Mr. Celler and his colleagues will find it difficult to wish away is that this was precisely the kind of industrial organization under which these revolutionary changes were recorded."

There is no disputing that mass production has raised the standard of living, that mass production is big business, that the Cellers, O'Mahoneys and Trumans have no adequate answer in their books. The socialist who acknowledges the good in mass production, in efficient industrial concentration and combination, and who at the same time sees that the evil is in private ownership and private exploitation, offers the sane solution of democratic socialization.

MICHIGAN LABOR NOTES

Jim-Crowers Openly Advertise Restrictive-Covenant Homes

By JIMMIE LITTLE

DETROIT, May 12—Showing open contempt for the ban on restrictive covenants upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, Miller Homes, Inc., has released a statement to the press assuring prospective home buyers of protection against Negro infiltration.

The statement was directed to those prospective buyers "who have lived in older areas where population shifting, commercial encroachment and similar elements have operated to change the character and residential desirability of these older neighborhoods."

"To these groups," continued Miller, "the Miller Homes—controlled residential developments offering over 2,000 selected homesites throughout the metropolitan area have a strong appeal. These inviting home areas provide an ideal environment for the family seeking a home place of permanent desirability, and are rapidly passing into the hands of home-owners."

"Safeguarded against change in their basic character by careful zoning, proper restrictions and civic corporation, these protected communities offer a welcome relief from city congestion and population shifting," he said.

"The controlled character of the area in which our North Woodward homesites in Golfhurst, Beverly Hills, are located appears to be as important in the minds of today's home buyers as are our individually designed plans, large lots and modern community planning. The same is true of our developments in the Lahser Road area in Redford, our Ridgemont community on the East Side, and our Cole Avenue project in Birmingham."

Miller went on to say that home buyers today realize that land is fundamental and that, unless the land upon which their home is to be built is located in a controlled area, they can have no assurance against change that can adversely affect their home investment.

"As this investment," Miller concluded, "is made for a lifetime it is highly important that the homesite be located in a controlled area properly zoned and restricted as to industrial, commercial and residential occupancy."

As new ways are being used to invoke restrictive covenants, the housing situation is getting much more tense. The threatened lapse of rent controls on June 30 does nothing to contribute to an easing of the tension. According to reliable sources the construction of new homes has lagged behind the increase in number of families by some 70,000 units. This has resulted in a habitable vacancy rate in Detroit, as of last December, of one-half of one per cent, or one-tenth of normal.

Speakers at the Conference on the Church and War this week criticized the church, the government and the World Council of Churches for what they termed inadequate efforts to promote peace.

The federal government's "due bill for Mars" was criticized by E. Raymond Wilson, director of the Friends (Quakers) Committee on National Legislation. He said that while the government spends 72 cents out of every tax dollar "for armament," less than one-tenth of one per cent per tax dollar goes for participation in the United Nations and related organizations.

The conference was attended by about 500 representatives of pacifist groups within major Protestant denominations.

Among the resolutions passed were resolutions opposing the extension of peacetime military conscription and the Mundt-Nixon legislation requiring the registration of minority groups.

The conference also urged churches to abandon cooperation with the armed forces program of military chaplaincy and to substitute a "supra-national ministry" serving the military personnel of all nations.

'Liberal' Prof Says State Can Ban Freedom If It Is Danger to Own Power

By JAMES LOWERY

DETROIT, Mich., May 13—More than 400 students packed a lecture hall at Wayne University to hear Irving Howe, co-author of "The UAW and Walter Reuther," debate Dr. Alfred Kelly, professor of history on the question "Should Communists Be Allowed to Teach in an American University?" The meeting was arranged by the Wayne Student League for Industrial Democracy one week after Dr. Herbert Phillips, ex-professor at the University of Washington, discharged for being a member of the Communist Party, was denied permission to debate Dr. Kelly on the same proposition (reported in LABOR ACTION).

Interest was so great that every available seat was taken and students lined the sides and back of the room. Many had to leave because they could not find standing room to see the speakers.

Irving Howe, as speaker for the affirmative, first outlined the arguments for the denial of academic freedom to Stalinists. The first of these is their willingness to submit to the party line in their field, thereby being reduced to automatons completely lacking in intellectual integrity or freedom. The corollary to this argument is the one of "doctrinal imposition," the fear being that Stalinists will impose their beliefs on the student body.

Howe's contention was that the Stalinists are not the only group prone to injecting their bias into the classroom, noting that Catholics or pro-NAM economics teachers are also bound to a particular policy and introduce their bias into the academic discussions. "A Catholic historian is no more likely to be objective about the role of the Vatican in modern politics, birth control, contraceptives and Marxism than a Stalinist about Titoism," said Howe.

The reasons for dismissing a professor, Howe further stated, must be confined to classroom conduct. "Suppose a Stalinist who is assigned to teach physics devotes himself exclusively to discussing the wonders of Russia in his classroom or visibly discriminates against an anti-Stalinist student in grading, or conducts his class undemocratically, then he should be discharged, not because of his political beliefs, but because he is not performing his INDIVIDUAL duties as a teacher."

BEGAN WITH COLD WAR

Regarding fascists, Howe's position was that they should not be discharged simply because of their views. If, however, a teacher taunts a Jewish student with anti-Semitic remarks, he should be dismissed because this conduct militates against a student obtaining decent grades and destroys the "growth of a reciprocal relationship between himself and the students." A fascist who, like Lawrence Dennis, presents his opinions in intellectual terms should be allowed to teach, particularly when

the threat to academic freedom is as great as it is today.

The political context of these dismissals was noted by Howe. During the war, when Russia was the ally of the U.S., when liberals spoke of how Russia would "achieve democratic political institutions through the agency of Roosevelt's skill," there was no such concern over democracy in the classroom. Howe pointed out that the drive came only as a result of the cold war and did not represent a genuine concern for academic competence.

Howe's main point was that teachers must be judged on INDIVIDUAL behavior and that if one competent, intellectually honest Stalinist teacher could be found, that was enough to preclude firing teachers simply on the basis of party membership.

Dr. Kelly, upholding the negative in the debate, began his address with a definition of a university. "A university," Kelly stated, "is a Temple of Light.... It is in the environment of a university that theory must be examined, debated and even developed." Adherence to three tenets should be required of all instructors: (1) that they submit to rationality as opposed to irrationality; (2) devote themselves to the inquiry, pursuit, analysis and dissemination of truth; and (3) repudiate violence and power as means of disseminating what they believed was truth.

These are the rules Dr. Kelly proposed for admission as an instructor to American universities. Membership in the CP, by definition, excludes the Stalinist from having these qualities, according to Kelly.

BOWS TO STATE

His summation on why he would not allow Stalinists to teach consisted of two reasons: "A Stalinist refuses to function within the framework of rational liberalism, but substitutes power and propaganda for rationality. And Stalinists are avowed enemies of the state, and no state has the obligation to destroy itself."

Speaking first on the rebuttal, Dr. Kelly amplified his earlier remarks on the nature of the state, asserting that a university is an instrumentality of the state, launching into an extremely realistic exposition of the state as a power mechanism. The University of Chicago, for example, can afford academic freedom because it has a huge private endowment and is therefore free of the state's power.

This was one of the strangest contradictions ever heard in a Wayne University debate: the combination of mawkish liberal sentimentality ("Temple of Light") and an almost cynical acceptance of the coercive power of the modern state.

Kelly further revealed an amazing naivete in conceding that there are some card-carrying Stalinists who could meet his requirements. While declaring ignorance of Fred-

erick Schuman's formal political affiliations, Kelly would allow this apologist for Stalinist crimes to teach in universities. Irving Howe, not denying Schuman's right to teach, pointed out that Schuman had often defended the notorious Moscow Trials.

Dr. Kelly's concept, except for an aberrant exception, of the ideal university staff was one peopled with liberals teaching an official liberalism. By this method all discussion is a type of gentlemanly competition in which the rules prevent any but approved political action. This concept was notably lacking in the usual liberal latitudinarian bias of free investigation. Kelly's remarks presage the declining intransigent mood of liberals, who, as Howe pointed out, can now only be politically activated by an overt counter-Stalinist move.

Howe's rebuttal was principally directed at the failure of liberals to defend academic freedom. Referring to Dr. Kelly's acceptance of a debate with Dr. Phillips and then voting in the University Program Planning Committee against allowing his opponent to appear on the campus, Howe said: "That conduct is—fabulous." For this statement he was awarded the gold star for delicacy in retort.

Howe's final appeal was for a militant anti-Stalinist left to support the academic freedom of ALL groups.

Corporation Heads Figure Ways To Raise Own Pay and Beat Tax

Corporation executives, who are denouncing labor's demands for wage raises out of one side of their mouths, are busy plotting how to increase their own take-home pay. The reason for keeping the moves underground is to avoid paying the increased income tax.

So says U. S. News & World Report (May 19)—with details on how they are doing it. The sad situation is that (for example) President John L. Coffey of B. F. Goodrich has "only" \$102,452 left after paying taxes on his salary. The fatbos of General Motors, who are facing new demands from the United Auto Workers (CIO), will undoubtedly be influenced in the negotiations by the fact that they can hardly live on their own paychecks after kicking in to support their government.

President Charles E. Wilson is left with a dribble of \$203,860, for instance, even though the company gives him \$586,100. Three executive vice-presidents of GM are down to more than \$180,000 each, out of more than \$400,000 each. So it goes with the others, like DuPont's C. H. Greenewalt and his \$165,314, or American Tobacco's Riggio (\$171,164 after income tax).

They want a new round of wages—out of the government's pocket.

FOUR SWINDLES

"More and more, there are complaints from men who run the biggest businesses in the country that, all things considered, they are not doing as well as a lot of small businessmen with a tenth the responsibility." But there's no use getting a pay increase because the government will leave them only 35 cents out of the dollar, once they are in the stratospheric brackets. "The search is turning to other devices." Here they are, every one of them

PRESS ACTION

By L. G. SMITH
Business Manager

As previously announced, LABOR ACTION has been forced to increase its subscription price to \$2.00 per year. We did this with a heavy heart, as we know how hard it is for workers to dig up even one dollar for a paper these days.

But it had to be done. For years our subscription rates have been far below those of any comparable paper in the country. We simply have to narrow the gap between costs and income. And we are sure that our subscribers will not grumble at the new rate when they realize that it is necessary to keep our fine paper going.

During the rest of May and for the month of June we are offering a special subscription rate TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY. This is an introductory offer which we hope will make it easier for our present subscribers to make a special effort during this period to get their friends and acquaint-

ances to join the ranks of LABOR ACTION readers.

The special rate is \$1.50 for a year, 75 cents for six months. All NEW subscriptions will be honored at this rate till June 30. Please remember that if your present subscription expires during this period you will have to pay the full \$2.00 to extend it for another year.

The special rate is being offered because we want you, our readers, to make a concerted effort to get NEW subscribers to the paper during this period. Members and friends of the Independent Socialist League have already been asked to approach as many people as possible for NEW subscriptions. We are sure that their efforts will substantially increase the number of our readers.

But you readers can also do your part to spread the voice of Independent Socialism in the land. Pass this copy of LABOR ACTION on to a friend, and get him to use the special coupon for his INTRODUCTORY sub to LABOR ACTION.

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Editorials

German Nationalism

This issue presents a number of articles in and around the German question. There is a point which is mentioned parenthetically in a couple of places in these columns. This is the double meaning of "German nationalism."

Of course, "nationalism" has always had a dual connotation. In the advanced capitalist countries where national independence and unification had long since been achieved, nationalism became reactionary expansionism and imperialism. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, nationalism still meant the aspiration toward independence and freedom.

In the first, it is counterposed to internationalism. In the second, it is counterposed to imperialist oppression.

Like every other social phenomenon, the meaning of nationalism is not the same in different social contexts, times and places. It boils down to this: the nationalism of the imperialist oppressor cannot be the same as that of the oppressed whose nationalism is denied.

All that is from the ABC of Marxism, but the ABC of Marxism is not exactly familiar to the people who read the daily newspapers. To them, anything which smacks of German Nationalism has only one connotation: Nazism and its contemporary forms.

And there is plenty of that burgeoning in corners of German society. What is camouflaged by the press (we must add: *deliberately*) is that this reactionary nationalism is virulent precisely in the German forces which are supported by U. S. diplomacy.

The victory of Chancellor Adenauer's party, the Christian Democratic Union, in the last German elections was hailed by the U. S. as a victory for democracy. They were not referring to any danger of a CP victory, but that of a socialist victory.

But the 53 former Nazis who are now members of the Bonn parliament are not members of the Social-Democratic Party. They are distributed among the government parties and parties even further to the right. Adenauer's own party has stated that 43 per cent of the German officials now dealing with foreign policy are former Nazis.

The socialist job in Germany is to fight for national independence. They are the best bulwark against the reactionary neo-Nazi nationalism of the Right.

The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a world-wide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

Youth and Corner

Afterthoughts on N. Y. High School Strike

By MAX MARTIN

The strike of New York City high school students (see May 8 issue of LABOR ACTION for details) is over. The mass outpouring of close to 40,000 high school students—the largest in the city's history—came to an end and the students returned to their classes on Monday, May 1. The repercussions and the lessons, however, remain. And with them remains the need for organized, militant struggle.

The first thing that occurs to a socialist is the connection between the strike and May Day. The students, of course, know nothing—or next to nothing—about the traditions of May Day. Despite this, the strike was in the spirit of May Day—certainly so, when compared with the "Loyalty Day" demonstration by the supporters of capitalist reaction on the one hand, and the "May Day" parade of the supporters of Stalinist reaction on the other.

The student strike was in the spirit of May Day for two essential reasons: (1) The students acted independently in their own behalf and in behalf of their teachers. They acted despite the disavowals of their action by both their own student organizations and by the teachers. (2) They did not confine themselves to petitions and resolutions. They took the proletarian road of struggle, the road of mass demonstrations and picket lines. And symbolic is the fact that the strike took place in the week preceding May Day.

Some representatives of official respectable bourgeois life are complaining that the students had their education interrupted. Actually, the students gained a priceless education the like of which they never could have gotten in their civics classes in school.

For one thing, they learned a little about our police forces. Most of them undoubtedly started out with the idyllic picture of the genial cop on the corner directing traffic and carrying pretty girls across puddles on rainy days. The police brutality, the realization of whom it is the police really serve, must have come as a rude shock to many of the students.

The May 2 issue of the N. Y. Post printed a number of letters from students relating their personal experiences with the police. We repeat two of them without comment for no comment is really needed.

Two Educational Experiences

"At City Hall we were huddled, shoved and herded into the tunnel-like passage of the Municipal Building. Suddenly the mob started to surge back out of the tunnel. At our back there were many students being urged in by the police, directly at our heads were the mounted police charging into the crowd, the horses' hoofs looking fierce and terrifying to the frightened crowd. The panic which followed was one of the most horrible experiences I have ever undergone and I know that I shall have nightmares of those screaming, horrified faces and forms, running and stumbling to escape. When the horror subsided, men circulated among us, trying to tell us that we were being led by Communists. We were being led by OURSELVES [emphasis in original]."

"In reference to the pupil strike which took place in James Monroe High School, I would like to recount an incident: as the students were walking in front of the school, one policeman pushed my girl friend and she said in a very nice way, 'Please don't push me.' The officer then isolated her from the others, and asked her name. Then he opened her books and copied down her name, address and class. The officer then inquired as to what church she goes to. 'None,' she answered. The policeman then made the following remark and I quote: 'Oh, you're a Jew! Now I know why all this subversive activity began.'"

The most recent and blatantly cynical after-effect of the strike was reported on May 10 by the N. Y. Post. H. C. Byrd, president of the University of Maryland—which is a Jim-Crow school despite a recent order of the Maryland Board of Appeals to the contrary—announced that he will try to keep out of the university any New York students who took part in the demonstration.

That he should do so is no surprise. What is shocking, however, is the fact that a poll of principals and high school division members of the New York Board of Education reveals that these worthy gentlemen intend to help him discover who among this year's applicants to the university participated in the strike.

The New York City school officials, of course, "deplore" the fact that Byrd is requesting this information. But they'll give it anyway. As one official said, "The university is certainly free to take whom it pleases, and we're certainly obliged to answer its questions."

Here is an obvious field for concerted action. The students, the parent associations and the teachers' trade unions and professional organizations should unite and demand that the New York City Board of Education refuse to be a partner to the blacklist plans of the University of Maryland.

Progressive students on this campus as well as all others where this occurs should wage a struggle against their administrations for such reactionary and undemocratic action. And hand in hand with this must go continued and concerted action by teachers, students and parents in support of the just wage demands which the teachers are making.



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Reading from Left to Right

AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH ON ASIA, by George E. Taylor. (Virginia Quarterly Review, Winter 1950)

This from the director of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute of the University of Washington, staff member of the National War College in 1948, OWI deputy director for the Pacific area during the war, and a former State Department official:

"The objective of speeding up the defeat of Japan with as little loss of life as possible would have been more constructive if it had been conceived in political rather than purely military terms. It was this type of thinking which made the agreement at Yalta, an agreement which makes it a little difficult to agree with Dean Acheson's letter of transmittal that 'the record shows that the United States has consistently maintained... those fundamental principles of our policy toward China which include... respect for the administrative and territorial integrity of China, and opposition to any foreign domination of China.' We can't have it both ways. It is unrealistic to ask us to believe that 'military considerations were understandably predominant over all others' and that at the same time we have a clean political record."

"If there is any validity to the argument that we agreed to the restoration of the Russian imperialist position of 1944 at Yalta because the Russians were in a position to take anything they wanted, then it was hardly necessary for us to seal the betrayal with a kiss...."

The tenor of the article is generally conservative, but Yalta has become too much for Taylor to swallow.

RESISTANCE IN PRISON, by Cliff Bennet. (Retort, Vol. 4, No. 3)

We hope you won't need the advice, but this article is full of fascinating devices on how prisoners can keep their jailers in line when subjected to inhuman treatment. Here are a couple of examples:

"Most prisons have a vulnerable ventilating system which opens into corridors through panels equipped with Allen head screws. An Allen head screwdriver, with patience, can be shaped from a large nail. The water supply and waste pipes are usually run in these ducts. This ventilating system is a hollow steel drum, and a proper beating administered in the panels by five or six men will carry through the entire institution—officers' sleeping quarters included."

"Where demands are being made which are important enough to warrant drastic action by the group, IWW experience has developed a couple of useful methods applicable to practically any jail. In the case of concrete construction, there is a procedure known as 'building a battleship' which involves ten or fifteen men locking arms and standing as close together as possible. They count 'One, two, three' and on the count of three all jump together. When two or three tons of men land on a small area of floor most buildings feel it. In steel tank jails similar to most county lockups, marching in unison around uprights will shake bolts and rivets loose, and can even affect welded construction."

Bennet works up to the "last resort of the individual resister," Schweikism,

WORLD POLITICS

Events Leading Up to the General Strike Situation in Bolivia

By JUAN REY

Bolivia continues to be an intensely dramatic social battleground. Since the bloody events in the mining centers of the past year, in which the mining proletariat suffered a tremendous defeat as a result of the adventurist policy of the nationalist leaders, the government fell under the decisive influence of the big mine operators, the extreme capitalist right, which owns the principal industry of the country.

The defeat of the mining proletariat ended the period of social equilibrium embodied in the Hertzog government and ushered in the "strong" government of Uriolagoitia, a dictatorship of the mine operators, with police repression not only against the MNR (Nazi) and the PIR (Stalinist) but also against the workers' unions and all opposition. The Stalinist and nationalist "backbiters" asserted that the offensive "against Communism" initiated by the government was the result of Yankee pressure. In order to begin reprisals and declare the "Communist Party" outside the law in Bolivia, the policy made use of an opposition within the PIR against the opportunism of its leadership, an ultra-Stalinist type of opposition which proclaimed the necessity of a "new Communist Party."

The big mine-owners, for their part, took advantage of this opportunity to settle their accounts with the proletariat. The economic crisis in Bolivia has been provoked with a rapid lowering of tin from 99 cents (American) per pure pound to 70 cents, a decline of 30 per cent. Bolivian money is based, like the whole national budget, on the export of tin. The international rate of exchange was 42 "bolivianos" to the dollar, forcing the mine-owners to hand over 60 per cent to the government. Now, with the drop in tin, the mining barons, in order to avoid losses, forced on the government the devaluation of the boliviano by 50 per cent in relation to the dollar, that is, the exchange of 60 to the dollar for the articles of prime necessity, and 100 to the dollar for other articles of import.

To avert the resistance of the masses, the government decrees an increase in salaries, thus beginning the inflation. To behead the

was produced a partial coup d'état. The official party is half in opposition, although its majority aids the two ex-ministers who reached a compromise with the two unions.

The situation was defined for the opposition of the workers' movement not so much by the inflationary decrees of the government as by the military dictatorship. Both bands are now politically armed. The army has effected a preparatory reunion to put itself in power, "once the situation is calmed down." The factory union, which embraced some 20,000 workers of La Paz, have declared themselves on strike, and this action can be transformed into a general strike all over the country.

FUTURE QUESTION

The government has the assistance of the mine-owners and the army. The big mine-owners do not yet have a social base, being hated by the entire country; the army has no leaders of prominence and its officialdom is divided between the partisans of nationalism and those of oppositionist General Bilbao. The ex-minister of government, Molinedo, has more political influence than the cabinet. If it is true that the Yankees have counseled the economic measures of the government and the "anti-Communist" reprisals, then they have proved to be very bad counselors, and have tied the government into a knot. What will happen, no one can foretell.

Although military dictatorship and a government of the whip would be the logical result of the crisis and of the policy of the big mine-owners, the union movement, on the brink of war, has strengthened its unity to defend its miserable wages. The mining bourgeoisie lacks social bases and prominent leaders. The proletariat which follows in the tracks of nationalism and Stalinism can, in a moment, through these parties, mobilize the middle class and together with the workers' unions easily fumble the present regime, like the military dictatorship, by a popular uprising. Future events will tell what eventually come to pass: the military dictatorship or a new regime of the small bourgeoisie.

Lima, Peru, April

Readers Take the Floor...

UE Vote

To the Editor:

While I am in general agreement with Brother A. Winters' analysis of the recent National Labor Relations Board election results in the Westinghouse chain, I believe that his report in LABOR ACTION of May 8 did contain several factual errors on the results in this area.

Winters stated that "the two big plants that the UE won were in Philadelphia and in Essington, Pa." The only voting unit in Philadelphia was the 30th Street Maintenance and Repair Shop, which went to the CIO Electrical Union (IUE-CIO) by a vote of 227 to 13 for the Stalinist-led United Electrical Workers. The UE did win the production unit at the South Philadelphia Works in Essington by a vote of 3895 to 792. Also in the area the UE picked up Trenton (502-284), Baltimore (372-268) and Sunbury (988-159) so that well over half of the UE Westinghouse strength lies in District 1.

Also Winters' generalization, "Everywhere else [outside of East Pittsburgh and Bloomfield] the picture was the same. The more red-baiting, the stronger the Stalinists were," does not appear to be applicable to the South Philadelphia Works. This UE victory at the largest plant yet won by them in an NLRB election was not due to red-baiting on the part of the IUE-CIO. The campaign literature (which Winters may not be familiar with) stressed the failure of the UE on economic issues and mentioned the Communist Party control of the union only as it pertained to these failures on union issues and to the lack of democracy in the union. The UE forces did engage in some red-baiting, particularly against non-Stalinist socialists by denouncing all outside influences and charging that IUE meetings were packed by members of Trotskyist political parties.

The magnitude of the UE victory in Essington was unexpected, but might be explained by a combination of the following factors:

- (1) The UE was able to maintain support and control of at least 90 per cent of the officers and stewards.
- (2) UE strengthened its position by patronage and intimidation.
- (3) The relatively high wages and good working conditions in the South Philadelphia Works (better than those of large CIO unions in the area) were credited to the UE and not to the local union militancy.
- (4) The pro-UE forces continued to parade successfully as anti-Communist, third force militants even though they have followed

the line of the national office 100 per cent since the split.

(5) To an extraordinary extent the UE was able to convince the workers that it would make a complete sweep in the Westinghouse NLRB vote.

(6) The excellent leaflet campaign of the IUE-CIO was not adequately supplemented by activity in the shop.

There is now a feeling at the South Philadelphia Works that "we won the battle but lost the war." This feeling will increase if, as expected, the IUE takes East Pittsburgh. Meanwhile the pro-UE leaders in Local 107 in Essington have moved against the pro-CIO opposition by placing 39 people on trial for raiding and secession. It appears that the UE is simultaneously drunk with local victory and blind with rage at losing the major part of the Westinghouse chain.

Joe WILLIAMS

Suggestion

To the Editor:

"The ISL Program in Brief" is an excellent idea and should be continued, as should the emphasis on socialism and democracy.

However, the statement fails to provide an adequate idea of just what a socialist democracy would be, particularly what distinguishes our concept from that which leaves to the workers only the role of choosing a Parliament or Congress on election day. It is true that capitalism "must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies." However, stated this vaguely and left at that, the leaders of the British Labor Party could almost subscribe to it.

Naturally the thing to do is to demand the most direct and flexible control by the people over their places of employment and their daily lives, as well as over their workers' government, through suitable committees from the factories and people's organizations.

This program is indispensable for socialism. It is just as necessary for human (individual) freedom, and could be derived from this need. And in these times it would be well to say so.

Dave CORBIN

We agree with Comrade Corbin on the importance of his point, but our object was to keep the statement down to "postcard size," so to speak. There are several other points which are left out of this very brief statement, without prejudice to them.—Ed.

WIRE-RECORDINGS FOR SOCIALIST EDUCATION

Branches of the Independent Socialist League and Socialist Youth League may obtain, from the Chicago SYL, the following wire-recordings for use in educational programs. They may be borrowed free of charge, except for mailing costs, for short periods of time. First come, first served. One set at a time to each borrower. Please order well in advance. Specify the exact date on which you wish to use the wire-recording, in case more than one branch wants the same recording at about the same time. Write to: Socialist Youth League, 333 West North Avenue, Room 3, Chicago.

"Freedom Under Capitalism and Socialism"—A Debate Max Shachtman vs. Frederick Hayek (Debate for Politics Club, U. of C., February 3, 1950—2½ hrs.)

"The International Significance of the Tito-Stalin Split" by Max Shachtman (U. of C. SYL Forum, February 5, 1950—2 hours)

"New Economic Trends in American Imperialism" by Hal Draper (A class session at the SYL summer school, Sept. 1949—2 hrs.)

"New Political Trends in American Imperialism" by Hal Draper (Ditto—2 hours)

"Lessons of the Russian Revolution" by Max Shachtman (Ditto—3 hours)

Not in the Headlines

Gyp Doctors

Charges that doctors have been hired by a company selling eyeglasses to help it gyp its customers are contained in an order issued by the Federal Trade Commission against the National Optical Stores Company and Dr. Ritsholz Optical Company of Chicago. The order charges that special offers of glasses for \$2.88 or similar prices were advertised by the stores. Customers answering advertisements were given examinations by doctors "whose incomes were often guaranteed" by the stores, the FTC claims.

The doctors advised that the advertised glasses would not be satisfactory for the customers examined, and "the salesmen are thus enabled to sell them glasses for much higher prices."

"Very frequently," the commission continues, "the glasses so sold are the same or approximately the same as those offered by the terms of the advertisements, the only substantial difference being that the glasses are sold at many times the advertised price."

It's Obsolete

Dr. Norbert Wiener of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, author of the book on "Cybernetics," has spoken out for socialism.

He said that machinery controlled by "electronic brains" would within a decade wipe out the assembly line, but he saw mass unemployment resulting instead under present conditions. "We can no longer fear the word 'socialism,'" he said.

Cost of Economy

Representative Ralph Gwinn (Rep., N. Y.) is a strong believer in government economy. He said so, in 2,913,000 pieces of literature which he sent out postage free in the first three months of 1949. This cost taxpayers about \$87,000.

Embarrassed

Republican National Chairman Gabrielson called the Florida vote in which Smathers defeated Pepper a "trend toward sound Republican doctrine." Democrat Smathers resentfully replied that the primary election was a battle among Democrats only. Answered Gabrielson: "I'm sorry my comment... caused you any embarrassment."

Pretty soon no one will know which party who is in where. Gabrielson couldn't embarrass a labor party that way.

New Nirvana

In Calcutta, India, a man advertised in a Buddhist newspaper that he was available to organize a union of the temple sweepers that would be "just like John L. Lewis'."

Etiquette

Flair magazine, the new snooty periodical, gives ladies and gentlemen advice on how to get around in Spain.

"All political discussions should be shunned if only out of courtesy," it counsels.

"Papers should always be carried, particularly a harmless little document called a 'triplico'... Marked on entering and leaving any hotel, asked for automatically on signing the register, it is the Spanish way of checking the moves of foreigners. On leaving the country, the triplico is turned in, with every day and every change of address accounted for." Clearly, it's impolite to object to Franco.

They're Out!

A group of workers in Mexico City who call strikes every working day, recently called another one...

Baseball umpires, this time demanding more pay.

Breathtaking

An SEC study made at the request of the Celler committee of the House has brought out that J. P. Morgan partners sit on the boards of directors of corporations with assets of over \$25½ billion. "Rather breathtaking," said Congressman Celler. Donald C. Cook, the SEC member reporting, agreed with him that probably at no time in the history of the country has "one concern, through its board of directors, wielded such financial power."

It's Normal Now

Dr. Shields Warren, director of the Atomic Energy Commission's Division of Biology and Medicine, recently told a congressional committee that apart from burns, eye cataracts, infections and a tendency to bleed, the survivors of an atomic attack could expect to go on living "a reasonably normal life."

Which might remind one of the story about the man who was torn limb from limb by a bear, every bone cracked, etc., and then was asked sympathetically, "Does it hurt?"—"No-o-o," he answered, "only when I laugh..."

Remote Control

Not featured in the news reports of Chilean President Videla's recent visit to the States was the fact that he was able to get away from his own business at home only after settling a strike against the Chuquiama copper mine by promising that when he got to Washington "he will seek from the owner a wage increase and agreements on other grievances."

The mine is owned by U. S. capitalists.

Books Received

Received from the New American Library, publishers of Mentor and Signet pocket books:

ALIEN LAND, by Willard Savoy. A Signet book, 25 cents, 168 pages, published February 24.

THE NEXT DEVELOPMENT in MAN, by Lancelot Law Whyte. A Mentor book, 25 cents, 256 pages, published May 24.

HAVING A BABY, by Alan F. Guttmacher. A Signet book, 25 cents, 192 pages, published May 24.

By LEON TROTSKY

Marxism in the United States

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THE STORY BEHIND THE NEWS

The Background of Allied Policy in Germany —

Cold War Crime: Dismantling

On this page we present sections of an exceptionally interesting document bearing vitally on an important question of today: the rise of German nationalism under the occupation, both the reactionary neo-Nazi variety and the progressive aspiration for national independence which the best elements in German society are fighting for.

One of the elements behind the rise of hatred for the occupation in all sections of Germany is the crime of Allied policy with regard to the industrial dismantling program.

It is a story whose details are little known to the American people, who are belabored by the press with scare stories of a rebirth of Nazism and who are not told of what the occupation powers have been doing to help bring precisely this result about.

The dismantling program in Germany was originally launched and justified as a means of eliminating the country's potential for making war, and secondarily as a means of reparations. It was never either of these two things.

This first article presents one outstanding case of Allied policy in dismantling, as an example—the case of the Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl plant in the Ruhr. A second article will summarize the amazing facts about several others. A third will discuss the dismantling program more generally and point some conclusions.

The following, constituting the first article, is reprinted

July 15, 1949

The dismantling of Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl, or "Bochum," as it is popularly called, a small but highly important fine steel plant whose products are of especial importance to the mining industry, typifies in a microcosm the tragedy of the Ruhr dismantlings. The British, so far as I have been able to discover, do not have a leg to stand on when it comes to justifying the removal of this plant.

Its capacity of 7,500 tons of steel a year is negligible as a percentage of the aggregate. The engineering genius of its founder and manager for twenty-five years, Austrian-born Dr. Poeltzger, has led to the development of a long series of unique, one might say, "custom-built," products, some 700-1,000 in number. "Duplicate capacity" could be said to exist only in the sense that there are other fine-steel plants in the Ruhr....

The war left a shambles of the plant, but when it was taken off the dismantling list in the spring of 1948, these former workers set about restoring machinery and building with their own hands. Although the food situation in the Ruhr during these months was desperate, and 60 per cent of the workers had lost both homes and furniture through the bombings, they drove themselves on empty stomachs and no more pay than a cigarette a day, to dig their semi-ruined machines out of the rubble and reconstruct them, and to build, brick by brick, the walls of their plant....

Mr. Sabbas [assessor of the German Mining Control Board] pointed out the fact that since the mining industry is heavily dependent upon these products, the dismantling of Bochum would be followed by a substantial loss in coal production within a short time. Furthermore, said Mr. Sabbas, this plant is indispensable as a workshop for mining equipment repairs, especially of conveyors, power stations, water drainage and coke oven plants. Its location in the heart of the Ruhr coal mining industry enables it with its mobile smelting station and other workshops, to make repairs in the shortest possible time....

We commented on the fact that recently a long cable was received in this country from Dr. Ernest Reuter, lord mayor of Berlin, protesting at the imminent dismantling of Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl. If this company were to be removed, he said, it would cause the early breakdown of the electric works which we are erecting at much expense in the West sector of Berlin in order to make this part of the city independent in the future of Soviet sector supply. No other company in Germany, said Dr. Reuter, could supply the "critical parts supplied by Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl...."

July 21, 1949

Interview with the British

Yesterday morning at 8 o'clock, Major Wilson, town commander of Bochum, in a state of extreme intoxication summoned Dr. Poeltzger, managing director of Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl, to report to his office for an immediate conference.

When Dr. Poeltzger appeared, Wilson informed him that "all the game" about postponing the dismantling of Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl was now off. Orders had come down from on top that the dismantling would be put through at top speed. Wilson told him that an official three-man committee would visit his plant today to give official notice to this effect. Wilson asked that there also be present at this conference four members of the Betriebsrat of his plant. (The Betriebsrat, or factory works council, consists of the elected representatives of the workers in the plant.)

The significance of the request to have the Betriebsrat members present was clear—the British wished to assure themselves that no critical resistance would arise in connection with the dismantlings, such as has occurred in Bochumer Verein, the large steel plant adjacent to Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl. In Bochumer Verein, six (or eight)

verbatim from a document which has never been made public, and which jibes thoroughly with the story of dismantling that can be gathered from other sources.

Congresswoman Katharine St. George, a right-wing Republican from the Tuxedo Park area of New York State, assigned an investigator to go to Germany to report (to her) on the situation of the dismantling program. These reports of the investigator were mimeographed, presumably for circulation mainly among Washington officials. They were written in July and August of last year, and describe one facet of the continuing problem.

The dismantling program is still going on, though little is heard of it here. Whether the particular plant discussed this week has yet been dismantled is not known to us, though we understand it is at any rate still on the dismantling list. In any case, it vividly illustrates the background of the German problem today.

The dismantling scandal is a sore spot both for the German industrialists and the German working class, for quite different reasons. Congresswoman St. George's Republican angle on it can easily be conjectured. That of the German workers is also clear, and is indicated here too. Our stand is on the side of the German working class and its socialist movement, to gain real national independence in a workers' Germany which can be the best guarantee of peace in Europe.—Ed.

men were jailed by the British for resisting dismantling, and another group is to be tried on a similar charge within the next few days.

This was the first time that any worker representatives from Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl have met with the British, and I was interested in seeing how the latter would handle a human problem like this. I arranged to conceal myself, shortly before the meeting, in a tiny room where I could clearly hear all that went on through a connecting door.

At 10:45 this morning, three Britishers arrived at Dr. Poeltzger's office, where the Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl group were already assembled. The Britishers were: Major Wilson, town commander of Bochum; Mr. Bate, of the manpower division, and Mr. Crooks, a top RD&R figure. Crooks figured prominently in helping to set the level of industry for Germany, and to select those plants which were to go on the dismantling list.

The conversation lasted until 1:15. I will try to telescope it into a short summary.

British Bluff on Humphrey Report

The British first asked Poeltzger if he had received an official letter from RD&R, stating that the dismantling of his plant would start on August 1st. Poeltzger had not.

The British then said that it had now been decided at highest levels to set the date of August 1st, and that this date would be the absolutely final decision regarding the dismantling date.

Poeltzger protested that he had been assured that there would be no dismantling prior to September 1. He had orders on hand which would have to be filled to avoid a critical breakdown in mining and power station supplies.

The British: Gentlemen, no promise came to you from RD&R. You have had months to put your affairs in order. It was the responsibility of the Germans to place their orders where they could be filled with certainty.

Poeltzger: You must realize that Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl produces equipment that is one-of-a-kind in Germany. It is not possible to place orders elsewhere if no other plant is equipped for such production. Isn't it true that the Keenan Report said it would be impossible to find duplicate capacity elsewhere in Germany, and weren't we on every list of recommended relocations—the Humphrey Committee list, and that of the Collisson and Wolf Committees?

The British: Have you seen the Humphrey Report? Poeltzger: I not revealing the fact that Mr. Loesch, managing director of the Deutsche Edelstahlwerke, of which Hochfrequenz-Tiegelstahl is a subsidiary plant, had brought back a published copy of the Humphrey Report from the United States two weeks ago! Well, that's what we heard on the radio and read in the papers.

The British: I should not think the German newspapers or radio were a very reliable source of information. You Germans only make things harder for yourselves by clutching at such straws of unsubstantiated news.

The Human Side

Poeltzger: But isn't it true that the American Congress and some influential labor leaders in America and France are protesting the German dismantlings? The British: Gentlemen, we do not intend to be drawn into a provocative discussion of whether your plant should be saved or not. The dismantling list was compiled long ago at highest three-power level, the United States taking a major part in the decisions. There was later some reconsideration of whether or not certain plants should be retained in the interest of European recovery—I repeat, in the interest of European recovery. It was finally determined at Washington that your plant was not among those considered essential. This decision was made last April with complete agreement by the United States. All further discussions of the merits of the case are therefore of no point.

At this point, Schorn, leader of the Betriebsrat, broke in! You are speaking of production matters. As the leader of the 700 workers in this plant, I want to speak of the human, the "Menschlichkeit," side. We workers have been with this plant, most of us for many years. Some of us have had parents who worked here, too. This is our home. During the war the plant was bombed almost to nothing, and 65 per cent of us lost our homes and all our furniture. Then in 1946, we heard that we had been taken off the dismantling list. We started then to rebuild brick by brick, with our own hands.

The British tried to cut this off, but another Betriebsrat member broke in: We worked eight-ten hours a day at the plant, laying bricks and restoring what machinery was left. We had almost empty stomachs those days. We worked for only a cigarette a day. Then we went home and worked another six hours in the evenings, rebuilding our houses. Three of our men were killed, because they were not expert construction men.

You speak of the recovery of Europe. That is what we believed in, too. We did all that we could with our own hands to make our own contribution.

The British: We appreciate that that is so. You must remember, however, that we British have scars from this war which we cannot so easily forget. I can assure you gentlemen that England is not a very pleasant country in which to live just now.

Betriebsrat member: That is true. But you must remember, also, that some of us were sitting in concentration camps while the British were sitting in Wilhelmstrasse.

The British: Gentlemen, I think we are wandering rather far afield. This kind of conversation could go on all day.

No Charity—a Chance to Work!

Betriebsrat member: We Germans do not want to receive charity. We ask nothing but a chance to work, to earn our living with our own hands. But what are we to work at now, if you tear down our plant? 5,000 men are already out of work at the Bochumer Verein. This is at least 15,000 people including their families, and the number of unemployed grows larger every day. If we were single men perhaps we could get through. But we have families. What are we to do now?

The British: You may be sure that we appreciate the distress that will result from the dismantlings for a while. But you must explore all possible avenues. Some problem is invariably the task of shoving aside the propagandistic remarks, always heavily larded with optimism, as well as other irrelevancies to the main line of the conference itself. More often than not, this takes some time until we can see, in reality and in practice, what the various decisions look like.

At London, however, no real decisions were made and there is more than the usual amount of verbiage and "enthusiastic squeals of unanimity." But the main trend is there: the mobilization of Western Europe, within the next few years, both politically, economically and militarily, for what is considered the inevitable boiling over of the "cold war" into its "hot war" phase.

But this poses the great dilemma of Western Europe once again—guns or butter? The material and economic phases of the Marshall Plan are now about over—or so American imperialist reasons. It is time to talk of armaments, of divisions to hold the line in the West, of sacrifice and diversions of productive capital into war-producing industries, of coordinating efforts under a central command at Fontainebleau, or a region closer to the Iron Curtain, etc.

Then the Betriebsrat member again appealed to the British: Couldn't you arrange for a delegation of our workers to go to the British Parliament and lay our case before the British labor leaders? We are sure that if the British workers know our difficulties, they would change their minds about the dismantling of this plant.

The British said they would take this up with General Bishop (governor of North Rhine-Westphalia): We appreciate the merits of your proposal, but of course you realize that General Bishop is a very, very busy man, and this is only one of the countless problems that crowd his attention every day.

Then the British rose: "Well, gentlemen, we will await your decision on Tuesday." Then they left.

STALIN'S BEST LITTLE HELPERS You will find no consideration of these problems in the communiqués from the London Conference. In fact, it may be remarked that the London Conference showed not the slightest concern, interest or even understanding of the real problem of

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French Forced to Propose Steel-Coal Pool With Germany to Bolster War Preparations

By SAM FELIKS

The Big Three conference of the foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain and France which ended on May 14 had for its primary consideration the bolstering of the economic and military establishments of Western Europe in preparation for a showdown at some future time with Russia and its satellites. This was the only point on the agenda, and there was not even the pretense of talking peace.

The meeting of the Big Three and the subsequent meetings of the North Atlantic Pact Council are a standing tribute to the bankruptcy of capitalism today. For all their talk of the championing of democracy and morality, the

only answer that they have for Stalinism is the hurried preparations for the Third World War. While they recognize that to a decisive extent the fight against Stalinism is political, the only solution actually offered is the protection of the A- and (perhaps) H-bomb.

It was in this framework that on May 9 the French cabinet offered a proposal for the linking and coordination, under a single authority, of the coal and steel production of France and Germany and any other European countries which wish to join. This French proposal represents the removal of the last official obstacle to the further inclusion of Germany into the military plans of the Atlantic Pact nations.

It does not in any sense mean that France is going to give up the attempts of the last five years to control German heavy industry, but rather this is the best means under the present unfavorable circumstances to continue this attempt. It has been French policy to follow the most severe course of action toward Germany, varying with the particular stage in the resurgence of German industrial power and the developments of the cold war.

HOW TO USE GERMANY?

The French government has fought a losing rear-guard action for reparations, dismantlement of industry, disarmament and against the return of heavy industry to German hands. Failing in this be-

cause of the economic burden of having to support a destitute nation and contradicted by the encouragement given to the German industrialists by the United States, the French turned to attempts to have Germany participate in Western European organization, such as the Council of Europe, where it was hoped that political controls could be extended.

But this manifestation of French nationalism, like many other grandiose schemes, has fallen victim to the cold war. With the more or less sharp division of Europe into the two opposing war blocs, there arose the problem of how best to utilize German industrial power to bolster the Atlantic Pact military plans.

However, the problem was not merely the most efficient utilization of the German war potential as such; if this were the case, it could have been accomplished under the existing Occupation Statute of September, 1949. Rather the situation demanded that political concessions be made to the Adenauer government in order to enlist its support and to bolster this right-wing regime. The danger (to the U. S.) is that the Germans might decide to sit out the cold war, or else support a government which might be more difficult to handle than Adenauer's.

REAL FEARS

The reaction to this in Washington is reported by the N. Y. Times diplomatic correspondent James Reston on May 11: "Dean Acheson had gone to Europe convinced that the 'cold war' was here to stay and that the Western nations must organize together to fight that war. But did M. Schuman agree? Was he trying to organize the West to fight the 'cold war,' or was he making some kind of a general offer designed to liquidate the 'cold war?' The French embassy hastily assured the frightened government officials that they need not have any fear."

ADENAUER'S TACTIC

And it is to be expected that these concessions will be forthcoming in the near future. The Allied armies will not leave Germany, the Big Three communiqué of May 14 announcing that there would only be the elimination of the "major practical inconveniences arising in the countries concerned from the state of war." But from the point of view of the Adenauer regime these are sufficient, for he stated on May 14 that he expected "rapid and great concessions" to be made in the next few months.

The Adenauer government evidently feels that the further developments of the cold war will necessitate even further concessions. It has even agreed to participate as an associate member in the Council of Europe after its earlier refusal because of the participation of the Saar with a similar status following the virtual annexation of this rich coal and iron area by France in March.

On the other hand, the Germans themselves have been applying pressure for greater autonomy within the limited framework of Allied policy. The Adenauer government, while not calling for the removal of the occupation forces, has been demanding a German foreign ministry. Thus Drew Middleton in the N. Y. Times, May 15, writes: "Indeed, it is because the occupation powers would rather deal discreetly with a German foreign ministry than have German foreign policy explained to all them by the chancellor in newspaper headlines that proposals for the creation of a German foreign

ministry received such support in the offices of the three high commissioners."

The actual details of the French scheme for the pooling of coal and steel resources have not at this time been made public and remain to be worked out. The text of the Schuman plan (French foreign minister) talked in generalities of securing investment markets, modernizing equipment, insuring sources of supply, living conditions and investment in Africa. The statement went on to say that it "will change the destiny of these regions which have long been devoted to the production of arms to which they themselves were the first to fall constantly victims." It also added that this organization would be "open to all countries that wished to participate in it" and that this steel would be offered to "all countries" on "equal terms."

But these apprehensions on the part of the State Department are real ones. They are manifesting themselves in the meetings of the North Atlantic Pact Council where there is growing resistance to the increase in military expenditures being demanded by the U. S. The Western European nations are maintaining that they cannot afford large war budgets and that these would adversely affect living standards at home, thus jeopardizing the present governments.

In addition the U. S. is pressing for the admission of Germany into the North Atlantic Pact. Germany is to rearm by entering the pact through the back door, that is, the proposal is that the pact be expanded to include a cultural and economic role. Under these circumstances John McCloy, U. S. high commissioner, said that it was "possible" that Germany might get an opportunity to join. Germany will be allowed to increase her industrial production, notably steel, and at the same time be allowed to take the first steps toward rearmament. Whether France can, in the face of this development, retain some controls on the German economy remains to be seen. The actual working out of the details of this pooling scheme, if it can be done at all, will clearly show the relative weight that Germany is able to command.

Marshall Plan Evolves at Big 3 Meeting — IS IT FOR GUNS OR BUTTER?

By HENRY JUDD

The London Conference of the Big Three is now complete and has moved on to another phase—a meeting of the twelve foreign ministers representing the Atlantic Pact nations, who will seek more coordinated political and economic planning for the purpose of strengthening the coming military phase of the Marshall Plan. At the new conference of the twelve, the problems of financing military rebirth of Western Europe and approval of proposed military plans in case of war will be furthered. Needless to say, the Big Three have already laid down the broad lines which answer these questions.

In attempting to sift the welter of details, reports and statements which issue from such gatherings as this latest London Conference, the main problem is invariably the task of shoving aside the propagandistic remarks, always heavily larded with optimism, as well as other irrelevancies to the main line of the conference itself. More often than not, this takes some time until we can see, in reality and in practice, what the various decisions look like.

At London, however, no real decisions were made and there is more than the usual amount of verbiage and "enthusiastic squeals of unanimity." But the main trend is there: the mobilization of Western Europe, within the next few years, both politically, economically and militarily, for what is considered the inevitable boiling over of the "cold war" into its "hot war" phase.

But this poses the great dilemma of Western Europe once again—guns or butter? The material and economic phases of the Marshall Plan are now about over—or so American imperialist reasons. It is time to talk of armaments, of divisions to hold the line in the West, of sacrifice and diversions of productive capital into war-producing industries, of coordinating efforts under a central command at Fontainebleau, or a region closer to the Iron Curtain, etc.

But, by and large, Marshall Plan funds and materials have not been used for such purposes until now. They have acted largely in the form of blood transfusions into inert bodies and have, on the whole, served their original purpose. How will the increasing of military budgets affect mass living standards in the West? A West where the masses, even those most consciously against Stalinist imperialism, show not the slightest enthusiasm or even interest in fighting for their present status quo, backed by America, as against the Russians?

What a conference! We are justified in our opinion that Stalin's criminal behavior (for example, the announcement that no more German prisoners of war will be repatriated because, we are informed, there are "no more"—they have evidently become "unpersons") which could be ripped to shreds and turned against him by a socialist opposition, will continue in its merry and tranquil way, assured that no matter how vicious and criminal it becomes, the Allies will surely divert the world from it by their own measure of imperialist violence, stupidity and criminality.

Characteristic of this is the Allied announcement on the subject of Germany. We leave aside for the time being the highly important question of the French proposal for a merger of French and Western German heavy industry—a proposal of such potential significance as to require more attention to details and method—not to mention objectives—before it can be properly analyzed. We are interested exclusively in the communiqué summarizing the thought of these super-thinkers on the subject of their attitude toward the German Bonn government.

This thought is expressed in the statement issued on May 14, at the end of the London Conference. It is hard to imagine a more unfortunate document, guided by the twin hands of bureaucratic nearsightedness and imperialist cynicism. In the struggle for the masses of Germany, the Big Three simply cannot reach even first base, regardless of how many wild pitches Stalin makes.

NO HOPE HELD OUT

Whatever in the way of concessions to the Germans that was proposed consisted of vague and unformulated promises of future action, all intended to lend a hand to the badly deflated regime of Bonn, and its unpopular head, the Christian-Democrat reactionary who serves the Ruhr industrialists, one Konrad Adenauer.

First, this document bluntly announces that "the supreme authority must remain in the hands of the Allied power," using as an excuse the division of the nation into East and West and inability to conclude a final treaty with the Russians. This, in a word, holds out the perspective of an indefinite and prolonged occupation, since the same document hardly holds out any hope of an eventual peace treaty.

In reply to the German demand—heard even among the most conservative circles of Western Germany—for the right to conduct foreign relations, the right of foreign capital to invest in Germany, increases in steel production and general relaxation of controls over shipbuilding and other aspects of German domestic life, the Allies have created a "committee," which is to report in September!

Little wonder that every German party, except Adenauer's, expressed disappointment in the vague occupation, which the statement transmits. But this committee will only "... make recommendations for eliminating the major practical inconveniences (!)

arising in the countries concerned from the state of war...." That is, the real "inconvenience"—the continued occupation after five long years—is not even to be considered!

The fact is that a most cursory reading of this document, even the tone in which it is written, will indicate that it was deliberately intended as a slap at German nationalism, in any and all forms (an important distinction, since the press never reveals the difference between the demagogic chauvinist "nationalism" of the Stalinists in the East; or the bourgeois-Prussianized-imperial "nationalism" of the ex-Nazis, industrialists and bankers; or the healthy, progressive nationalism of the masses who want to end the division and occupation). The U. S. intends to remain on indefinitely and its German policy is subordinate to its over-all needs in preparing for World War III—this was the declaration of the Big Three to Germany.

A sure way to prepare for the Stalinist behemoth; a guaranteed way to dig a deep and bottomless grave. London had nothing to say to the Western European masses; what it said to the German masses could not have been less welcome.

HELP!
From many parts of Western Germany we have received requests for Marxist literature in English. To help Germany's socialist militants, you can send unused or duplicate books to: LABOR ACTION, 4 Court Sq., Long Island City 1, N. Y. (Attn. H. Judd).

Big 3 to Garrison Germany —

(Continued from page 1)

In other words, the return of German national independence is indefinitely postponed until doomsday—literally.

Once again, the Western powers give the Stalinists weapons which those puppets of Russian totalitarianism could not possibly forge for themselves.

Once again, in the name of military considerations (which were the only decisive considerations for the world rulers who met at London), Western capitalism showed itself impotent to fight Stalinism in the only way it can be beaten for the advancement of democracy and freedom—by the POLITICAL weapon of permitting democracy and freedom to the people they wish to mobilize against the enemy.

Once again the Western capitalist powers saved the Russians from the hole into which they had fallen through their recent announcement that one million German prisoners of war will never be returned to their country.

BARBARIC INNOVATION

Chancellor Adenauer is gleeful at the prospect of concessions, but he is the chancellor of the German industrialists and not of the German people. The people will ask themselves: If Germany had been the victor in the recent war, had occupied the United States, and then had announced occupation in permanence, what would have been the screams of the capitalist democrats at this new barbaric innovation of Nazism, unheard of before in modern times?

The German people want independence, not merely elimination of the "inconveniences" of the occupation (what a term, invented by the Big Three conference, for the denial of a nation's liberty and sovereignty!).

They showed that so unmistakably at the time of the last German election that the U. S. press was full of agonized cries at the "rebirth of nationalism"—which was persecuted to neo-Nazism. Adenauer, in order to get himself elected, had to talk along those lines, vying with the Social Democrats in assertions of the country's right to freedom. All that has been as quickly forgotten by the German counterparts of Truman, Bevin and Schuman as the Atlantic Charter was forgotten by the Western rulers.

This is what will be exploited by the Russian rivals for dictatorship over Germany, in their own democratic and lying way. It will do only a minimum of good, however, to be able to prove with impeccable evidence that the Russians are lying and hypocritical in exploiting the issue.

What is the pretext for this neo-barbaric innovation of permanent occupation? So thin a veil was thrown over it that it would not even satisfy the cops at a burlesque show. The show at London did not even satisfy the New York Times correspondent, Raymond Daniell, who straightforwardly pointed out that the Big Three communiqué blatantly contradicted itself, in the crude manner hitherto supposed to be the peculiar talent of the Russians.

FLAT CONTRADICTION

Consider, for example, the following four key paragraphs from

Even before the Big Three meeting, Chancellor Adenauer of Germany made it clear that he had rattled on his anti-occupation demagoguery during the last German election. An interview with him in the May 19 issue of U. S. News & World Report, quotes him as giving the Big Three line:

"Question: How long do you think Western Allied troops should remain in Germany?"

"Answer: Until the world is quiet."

"Question: How long do you think that will be?"

"Answer: It's hard to say."

Adenauer's "until the world is quiet" is an even longer perspective for German freedom than the Big Three's mark of German unification.

the communiqué, the first of which flatly makes one statement and the last makes a diametrically contradictory one. One of them is a lie.

"This regime is imposed on the Germans and on the Allies by the consequences of the division of Germany and of the international position; until this situation is modified it must be retained in accordance with the common interests of Germany and of Europe."

"The Western powers desire to see the pace of progress toward this end as rapid as possible. Progress will depend upon the degree of confident and frank cooperation displayed by the Government and the people of the Federal Republic."

"In the first place the pace will be determined by the extent to which the Allies can be satisfied that their own security is safeguarded by the development in Germany of a desire for peace and friendly association with themselves."

"In the second place the pace will be set by the rate at which Germany advances toward a condition in which true democracy governs and the just liberties of the individual are assured. Therefore, the Western powers wish to emphasize most strongly that the natural desire of the German people to secure a relaxation of controls and the restoration of the sovereignty of their country depends upon the efforts of the German people themselves and of their government."

The first paragraph is the one which makes clear that the occupation will exist as long as Russia is in Eastern Germany. The last says its end depends "only" on the German people. In between is the threat that the German people had better "behave themselves." This open bullying threat is made in exactly those two words by what the Times terms "reliable sources"—who are quoted anonymously from Frankfurt, Germany, coincident with the arrival in that city of U. S. High Commissioner John J. McCloy.

THIN PRETEXT

Which is the truth?

"According to reliable sources, the security interests of the Allies in retaining the state of war is now frankly directed toward the Russians rather than the Ger-

mans."—N. Y. Times correspondent from Germany, Jack Raymond, May 16.

"The three foreign ministers said today, in a statement communicated to the Bonn government prior to publication, that the German people could blame Soviet policy for this delay."—N. Y. Times correspondent from London, Raymond Daniell, May 15.

The thin pretext used is that the state of war cannot be ended, a peace treaty signed, and the occupation ended, as long as Germany remains divided; this division is solely the fault of the Russians; therefore as long as there is a cold war with Russia, there must be a technical state of war with Germany.

This is simply nonsense, well worthy of the mumbo-jumbo in a Cominform resolution. There is no good reason why a treaty of peace cannot be signed with Western Germany separately, and with Eastern Germany in addition if possible. Acheson, Bevin and Schuman simply did not want to say openly: *We will remain in occupation in Germany because we want to, because we need Germany as an advanced military base, and it is for this reason that the German people cannot have their independence.*

But the German people (not represented by Adenauer) do not want to become the West's permanent base against Russia. And there is not one, but two, forces in Germany ready to capitalize upon this. We have mentioned the Stalinists. Their weakness is that the German people in their mass are not going to be convinced that Russia's intentions are any

more honorable. If the people's choice were limited to Adenauerism or Stalinism, there could be no way out for them.

SECOND DANGER

There is a second reactionary force which can capitalize on the role of Adenauer. This is the neo-Nazi movement.

Officially, the U. S. views this political tendency with horror. In practice, control of the commanding heights of German economy has been returned, by the U. S. occupation, to exactly the industrial and financial forces from which this movement springs, while it seeks to utilize the national-independence sentiment of the people. The Big Three declaration will bring grist to the mill not only of the Stalinists but of the organizers of reactionary nationalism—while the American press writes editorials about how the German people obviously can't be trusted—look how the neo-Nazis are blooming . . .

A struggle for national independence—the elementary democratic right of a people—which remains in Germany either in the hands of the Communist Party or of the reactionary neo-Nazi nationalists (or, as is not at all unlikely, of a working coalition of the two) would be a catastrophe for the German people. But the only progressive choice is right before them.

There is one and only one force in Germany which can and should lead the fight for an independent united Germany in a democratic direction. This is the strong labor and socialist movement.

During the last German elec-

tion, the Social-Democratic Party under Kurt Schumacher was unequivocal enough in its denunciation of the occupation and demand for independence. The only news so far reported on Schumacher's reaction in the present situation does not bear out the fiery speeches he made then, under the pressure of the people:

"He said it [the communiqué] gave no reason to become 'emotional' and deplored its failure to render specific plans on matters ranging from the limitations of shipbuilding to the all-German elections."

If that is all he says, it is up to the ranks of the Social-Democratic Party. The German socialist movement is the most powerful single organized force in the country. Better than anyone else, its militants know that Stalinism cannot be fought by any political tendency bearing the label of the Allied quiling camp. Better than anyone else, also, they know that the Allied occupation cannot be fought by any truck with the Communist Party and the camp followers of Russia.

In Germany, almost in Germany alone, the politics of the Third Camp is the immediate, clearly visible and key question of domestic policy, as well as of war or peace. And the politics of the Third Camp approach is indivisibly tied up with the demand for national independence, an end to the occupation, an end to the conversion of Germany into a permanent Allied garrison, a clear appeal to the people of Eastern Germany that the alternative to Russian oppression is not submission to national oppression but the West.

Railroad Strike --

(Continued from page 1)

son to believe that an arbitration board will find in favor of the union. As a matter of fact, even putting the claim before the board is most likely just a face-saving device to make the men believe something has been won.

According to all reports, the strike was solid when it was called off. The firemen were maintaining their picket lines and no back-to-work movement had developed.

The roads claimed to be running a few more trains on the sixth day of the strike than they had been running on the first day, but the work was being done by supervisory workers who were scabbing on the union men. Why, then, did the brotherhood chiefs call off the strike with nothing to show for it?

All we can do right now is speculate. There is little doubt that the pressure was on from all sides. Tens of thousands of workers were being thrown out of work due to the strike. Chambers of Commerce and other employer organizations were bombarding the government with the demand that Truman "do something" to end the strike. The union was being denounced by the daily press and all the other employer-controlled agencies of communication.

But that is not enough of an explanation. After all, even the most stupid union leadership in the world would have known before the strike was called that there would be plenty of heat.

WAS IT A DEAL?

Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that the strike was called off in the hope that this would lead congress to drop the Donnell bill. This bill, on which hearings are being held before a Senate Labor subcommittee, would make it illegal for railroad workers to strike, and would subject all labor disputes on the railroads to compulsory arbitration.

Chief arguments for the bill

have been that railroad strikes cannot be tolerated as they do too much damage to the "public." Three railroad presidents who testified before the subcommittee used the firemen's strike as an example of the kind of thing to be prevented by the proposed shackling legislation.

It is quite possible that the heads of the BLFE were pressured by the chiefs of the other railroad brotherhoods and by other labor leaders to drop their strike so as to render less likely passage of this bill. There may even have been some deal behind the scenes in which the railroad executives pledged themselves to stop pushing for the bill if the brotherhood would call off the strike.

That is just speculation. If it is correct speculation, it indicates the sorry state into which the unions have stumbled through their political policy of supporting friends and defeating enemies in the two old parties. It would mean that their friends and enemies could get together to crush any strike by simply introducing vicious anti-labor legislation in Congress, and then promising to dump it if the striking union would call off its strike.

NO JOHN L. LEWIS

Of course, if the unions were united and would stand fast, this procedure could be used in reverse. The unions could simply tell their friends and enemies in Congress that they will stay on strike, come hell or high water, until the anti-labor legislation is dropped. But for that kind of a policy union leaders are required who are courageous enough to stand by their guns just as firmly as the congressmen stand by the guns of the employers.

In a way, that is what John L. Lewis and the miners did during their last strike when everyone knew that whether or not the court would find the United Mine Workers in contempt, no coal would be mined. But D. B. Robertson, president of the Firemen, is no John L. Lewis.

If the above interpretation is rejected, what other one would hold water? There could only be two possible ones. Either the union heads were simply bought off, or six days of pressure was all they could stand. Neither of these two reasons for the abrupt end of the strike seems very likely.

Of course, the firemen are holding the sack, as usual. They went out on the picket lines and were ready to stand firm. But the constitution of their union is so rigged that they have absolutely no say in strike settlements. The ballot on which they vote to strike for their demands also contains a clause which gives complete authority to their officials to settle the strike on any terms they see fit. A fireman can either vote not to strike, or else he votes for strike AND for this undemocratic clause.

If the political reason for calling off the strike was in fact the chief one, it may serve as one more lesson in the futility of the kind of politics pursued by the railroad unions along with the rest of the American labor movement.

After decades of supporting their friends and defeating their enemies, decades of spending their membership's funds in helping various "pro-labor" Democrats and Republicans into office, every time the rail workers try to get a little something for themselves they find their friends standing over them with a club ready to beat their organizational brains in. Harry Truman did it in the 1946 rail strike, and Congress is threatening to do it again.

Sooner or later the rail workers are bound to learn from bitter experience that neither playing "good dog" in their disputes with management, nor "heeling" at the command of politicians pays off. When that day comes it will be a great one for the workers, and a very sad one for the hangdog officials who have been misleading them for so long.

POLITICAL-ACTION DISCUSSION

was initiated in LABOR ACTION last week. It will continue next week. Meanwhile we wish to remind contributors of our usual rules for such discussion articles.

Individual discussion articles are limited to 1,000 words. (Longer articles are candidates for submission to the Independent Socialist League discussion bulletin *Forum*. This is a public bulletin published in mimeographed form. Readers who wish to be sure to receive it regularly whenever new issues are put out may subscribe at the rate of \$1.50 for ten issues, by writing to the ISL office, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, New York.)

Discussion articles will be printed in the order in which they are received. We will generally publish no more than two per issue, even if a number pile up on a given week.