

EUROPE speaks**[Nachkriegsausgabe]***Edited by Mary Saran***No. 6****August 20th, 1946***[Seite: - 31 -]***Germany To-Day**

This article is based on a speech recently made in London by Willi Eichler, editor of the „Rheinische Zeitung“, and executive member of the Social Democratic Party.

THE position in Germany is overshadowed by the inability of the Big Powers to agree on a policy towards their defeated enemy. It does not lie within the power of the Germans, however, to improve this situation, so I shall not dwell upon it.

The state of mind of the German people is largely determined by their present undernourishment. They are usually too absorbed in ways and means of improving their meagre rations to be able to think reasonably. Thus any fantastic or preposterous rumour falls on fertile ground. The favourite subject is the dissension of the Allies, and many people even talk openly about the forthcoming armed conflict between them. They do not speak of it with horror, nor with interest in the question whether the Western or Eastern Allies are more worthy of support - their main concern is to be on the side of the victors next time. The grave danger in this attitude is obvious, and we plead therefore for improvement in the food situation, if for no other reason than to fit the German people once more for reasoned thought and to induce them to abandon such political foolishness as speculating on another war.

The Christian-Democratic Union

Three principal political parties exist at the present time in the British Zone, the Christian-Democratic Union, the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party. Although in the other Western Zones some of these parties have different names, their political constellation is roughly the same.

The Christian-Democratic Union (C.D.U.) is not really Christian or democratic, nor is it a union. It started with a fairly progressive social programme, but has now become the refuge of conservative and reactionary elements, and acts as the instrument of international political Catholicism. It is very unfortunate that the British and American authorities did not realise in time that Catholicism in Germany has always been a vigorous political force, pursuing a line bitterly opposed to freedom, progress and true international understanding. For instance, the first Bavarian government was set up by the Americans on the basis of advice received from an Archbishop - fortunately this government proved so reactionary that even General Patton **[1]** had to dispose of it on those grounds. Catholics inside and outside Germany have recently complained that authorities in the British Zone favour the Social Democratic Party to the detriment of the C.D.U. The fact that out of the twenty-four highest executive posts in the administration of the North Rhine Province not one is held by a Social Democrat and nearly every one by a C.D.U. representative gives the lie to this statement.

It is in the sphere of education that the C.D.U. and the Catholic Church make the

most exorbitant demands. They recently asked the education authorities to issue an order that teachers not belonging to a church should be prohibited from teaching religion, German language, history and geography. The demand of the C.D.U. for a strict division of all schools according to denominations had previously been conceded in principle after a plebiscite carried out under strong pressure exercised illegally by the Catholics. It is obvious that Catholic churches are used as political instruments, and parish journals for political propaganda. The Catholic Church in Germany behaves truly in accordance with the *Codex Juris Canonici*, which submits every human being in the world, irrespective of his religion, to the special jurisdiction of the Church, and which has never been revoked. The Church now tries to use the fluid situation in Germany to shape public life according to this code.

However, there is a progressive wing inside the C.D.U., led by the Berlin Christian trade unionist Jakob Kaiser [2], who recently stated that on economic and social matters his programme is very near to socialism. The view was promptly repudiated by another leader of the C.D.U., the former Mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, who was very anxious to make it clear that his party was far from adhering to socialist ideas. To what extent the left wing of the C.D.U. will abandon their own progressive policy, and whether they will split away from the main body of the party, remains to be seen. Socialists should closely watch developments in this field.

The Communists

The Communist Party in the West of Germany has been engaged during the last few months in a big propaganda campaign for workers' unity. An enormous amount of propaganda material is being used which certainly is not paid for solely out of Communist Party funds. At first it pressed for fusion of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties. When this propaganda signally failed to attract the Social Democrats, it was changed to the demand for "close co-operation" between the two parties. Co-operation is a fact in many spheres of administration and especially on local issues. Most important of all, it exists in the trade union. A recent example from Cologne will illustrate the methods which make co-operation with Communists as difficult in Germany as elsewhere. The Communist leader, Wilhelm Pieck, and the former Social Democrat, Otto Grotewohl, now one of the leaders of the Socialist Unity Party, spoke at a Communist Propaganda meeting in Cologne. The Communist paper in the Ruhr reported that they were given a speech of welcome by the Chairman of the Cologne Social Democratic Party. In fact, he was not even present at the meeting which was almost exclusively attended by members of the Communist Party.

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The main stress of communist propaganda throughout Germany is at present laid on the demand for the "Unity of Germany". To the Communists this means that the Saar and Ruhr should remain German, and they are greatly embarrassed if anybody asks: "What about Silesia and East Prussia?" It is clear to all thinking people that the social, political and economic problems of Germany cannot be solved if the present rigid zonal frontiers are maintained. Nor is their continuation necessary in the interests of world security. The so-called "secret rearmament" of Germany after 1919 was far from secret and took place with the connivance of the Big Powers; whether Germany is united or divided no German rearmament or war preparation is possible to-day if the Allied Governments are determined to prevent it. Thus the demand for a united Germany is one with which every sensible person can agree - but the idea behind the Communist

slogan is to unite Germany and then submit the whole to the economic and political system which prevails to-day in the Russian Zone. The Social Democrats refuse to fall in with the Communist propaganda on this issue, but do not cease to point out that the division of Germany is merely a device to keep Europe in separate camps, and that cutting off parts of Germany is no guarantee of peace. On the contrary, it diverts the attention of the people from the real issues on which war and peace depend.

Youth and Education

The Nazi system of mis-education has not corrupted the German youth so deeply as we had feared. It is indeed surprising that many young people are relatively unaffected by the intense and completely one-sided propaganda to which they were submitted. To-day they are searching for a way of shaping their own thoughts and building up their future on positive lines. Naturally they have a deep and wide-spread aversion to joining any party. At a very early age they had the experience of joining a party in which they believed and which they loyally served. For that they are now blamed by the whole world. They are constantly told that they must be "de-nazified", and are on their guard against joining another party only to be told in five or ten years' time that they need to be "de-socialised" or "de-communised". It was a wise decision of the Social Democratic Party, therefore, not to start a youth organisation closely attached to the adult party, but to found a Socialist Youth Movement open to every young person who wants to learn, to develop himself and to take part in the many urgent tasks of reconstruction. The Socialist Youth Movement has now received official permission to work.

The schools are a very difficult problem. In the big towns many school buildings have been destroyed, and a very big proportion of the teachers had to be dismissed because they were Nazis. The position at the universities is even worse. In Cologne, for instance, the medical faculty is staffed by professors, more than half of whom were Nazis. We would rather see no university at all than one where the young people are entrusted to teachers who supported a cruel and depraved system, and who cannot therefore be expected to encourage a new spirit of decency and humanity.

De-nazification

On this crucial issue for the reconstruction of Germany I can only state what is an unfortunate fact: It has by now become a bad and cruel joke. There have been so many instances of gross injustice in this matter that only the ignorant and naive still take de-nazification seriously. Let me just give two examples to illustrate this point.

The first is that of Dr. Hermsen [3], President of the People's Court in Hamm in Westphalia, from 1933, who sentenced hundreds of anti-Nazis. Instead of being treated as a war criminal, which in fact he was, Hermsen was appointed "Oberlandesgerichtspräsident" in Westphalia, one of the highest posts a German judge can hold. The outcry caused by this appointment led to an inquiry, in the course of which about 200 witnesses testified that not only had they been convicted by Dr. Hermsen for anti-Nazi activities, but their trial had been conducted in the most cynical and revolting way. Dr. Hermsen had to resign, but he retained so much influence that he managed to get a second hearing of his case. The court to which it was submitted exonerated him from the charges brought against him, on the grounds that he had never been a member of the Nazi Party and had received no promotion since 1933, and, most important of all, that he was a devout Catholic. The verdict was equivalent to saying that Dr. Hermsen was an anti-Nazi. He was then allowed to retire on grounds of

health and now receives the not inconsiderable pension of a high German official. But the real anti-Nazis in Germany are determined not to let the matter rest.

The other case is that of Dr. Lammers[4], who, after Papen's coup d'état on June 10th, 1932, which forced Dr. Grimme[5], the Prussian Minister of Education, to resign, became Grimme's successor. His first act was to issue a decree rescinding all discrimination against the Hitler Youth and exhorting teachers to make the German youth "colony-conscious" - in other words, to impress them with the idea that Germany cannot live without colonies. This man is now responsible for the education of German youth in the North Rhine Province. As in the case of Dr. Hermsen we shall use all means at our disposal to remove him.

The Press

There is a large measure of freedom of opinion in the British Zone, more so than in any other zone. We are allowed to discuss frankly all our grievances, and we make use of this freedom. The only forbidden topics are those which might disturb the relationship between the Big Powers. But since it is neither the task nor the intention of German socialists to do that anyhow, this restriction on the whole constitutes no ground for complaint. In the cases of Dr. Hermsen and Dr. Lammers, for instance, we criticised the occupation authorities quite forcibly, although we directed our main attacks against those Germans who suggested to the British authorities that these two men should be appointed.

The German Press is greatly handicapped by paper shortage, which is particularly acute in the British Zone. Many items worth publishing have to be omitted for this reason.

The relationship between the various papers and their readers is very lively, and it is extremely interesting to watch the reactions of the public. As the editor of a Social Democratic paper with a wide circulation (100,000 copies twice a week) I should like to mention that we receive dozens of letters every day, on the most varied subjects, a number of them dealing with the deeper issues and tasks facing us. I very much regret that lack of space prevents us from discussing in our paper one fundamental problem which interests an increasing number of people in Germany, namely the philosophical basis of socialism. In particular, there is a desire to extract what is good in the sociological theory of Marx whilst avoiding his errors of philosophy so that socialism may rest on new and assured foundations.

Self-Government

Despite restrictions inherent in Germany's position as an occupied country, development towards self-government is now in full swing. Local elections will take place in the British Zone during September and October. In the circumstances, however, we consider

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these elections premature. When people's minds are pre-occupied with the desperate struggle for elementary necessities of life, we cannot expect political reason to guide them at the ballot box. Apart from the food problem, an important factor in the present situation is the complete uncertainty regarding the future. Nobody can tell at present what is to happen to Germany as a country, or to the component parts of what formerly

constituted Germany. Nobody can foresee the economic, political and cultural conditions which will determine the results of any effort to build up some kind of existence from the physical and moral ruins. This general uncertainty plays into the hands of those who like to fish in troubled waters. The C.D.U. might gain at the forthcoming elections because it is able to win the confidence of those who now look back to the "good old days" when Hitler offered them jobs, positions, power, and even the prospect of winning a war. The Communists are attracting those other disgruntled elements who do not take the same view of Hitler and the "good old times", but who look to the East for salvation, believing in their despair the propaganda which says that conditions there are better than in the Western Zones. We think, therefore, it would have been infinitely wiser to postpone *all* elections until the situation is sufficiently stabilised for the various political parties to go to the voters with definite programmes which are not just so many words but have a chance of being put into practice.

Political Structure

Another important question is that of Germany's political structure. The Social Democratic Party desires a united Germany under a central government. But it realises that in order to awaken the spirit of responsible citizenship greater decentralisation is necessary. Germany should be divided into administrative units of roughly equal size and economic importance. Prussia should no longer have the dominating position which it possessed under the old constitution. The constituent parts of Germany should have a large degree of self-government and therefore more room for initiative than was the case in the old Reich.

It will not be altogether easy to apply this principle. Certain circles in the Party are inclined to extend the right of self-government so far as to make the central government unable to function in matters where planning and organisation from the centre is essential. But there is agreement on the general principle that the onus of proving the need for central control should lie with the central government and that in all other cases self-government should be the rule. For self-government is desirable not only in the interests of administrative efficiency but in order to develop the sense of responsibility of the German people.

If this principle is consistently applied, the fear of some politicians that self-government would encourage the trends towards separatism would be groundless.

The Social Democratic Party

No Party except the Social Democratic offers a straightforward socialist programme. This party has to-day 600,000 members in the whole of Germany, and about 300,000 in the British Zone. After first suffering severely from the mistrust of the occupation authorities, the Social Democratic Party in the British Zone is now receiving a certain amount of support from them. But, as a British journal recently pointed out, the benefits of this support will be doubtful if the British Government does not make sure that the party it is trying to encourage will be able to fulfil its promises. So far the whole economic and political situation in Germany does not warrant this expectation.

The position of the workers is steadily deteriorating. Prices are rising, but wages have fallen. A miner, for instance, receives an average weekly wage of 30-40 marks, which is not enough to cover even the normal minimum expenses, let alone any black-market purchases (where one loaf of bread costs about 100 marks). In the British Zone 60 per cent. of all employees earn no more than 100 marks per month. In Hamburg 50 per

cent. of the people depend on pensions or public benefits.

The first steps towards land reform have now been taken, and a Commission has been set up to work out a scheme. Judging from the composition of its members, the prospects of this scheme being satisfactory are good. Careful planning is essential. The overcrowded and starved Western Zones simply cannot afford rash experiments and the danger of decreases in agricultural output such as have occurred in the Russian Zone as a result of the way in which land reform was carried out.

A very capable socialist, Victor Agartz [6], has just been appointed head of the newly-created Central Economic Office. The view which he put forward at the Hanover Party Conference and which was agreed to by the delegates, is that the mistake made by the Social Democrats in 1918 must be avoided - at that time they believed that a broken-down industry could not be socialised.

Revival of Industry

The key question is the improvement of the industrial situation which depends upon the settlement of the coal problem, which in turn is connected with the whole question of the future of the Ruhr. The most immediate and urgent task is to allow German industry to function again. We need not at this point quarrel about what maximum capacity German industry should be allowed to have, and whether or not the provisions of the Potsdam agreement and the plan for German industry are adequate. At present only a fraction of the quota fixed for German steel production has been reached, and the problem is to improve on that. The stumbling block is the lack of coal. German industry cannot revive unless a much higher proportion of the coal produced in the next period is allowed to remain inside Germany. The vicious circle - no coal, no industry, no food, no coal - has to be broken somewhere. We suggest that the only effective way to do this is to grant a moratorium for the export of the Ruhr coal. This moratorium would certainly have an immediate beneficial effect on the actual rate of coal-production, because with industry re-started food imports could be paid for, and thus the miners be better fed. Better conditions for the miners would attract more workers to the mines; moreover one of the psychological factors for the low output of the Ruhr miners is undoubtedly this uncertainty as to where the coal goes and who benefits from it.

A number of plans have been made in England and elsewhere as to what should eventually happen to the Ruhr. The main concern of the Socialists in Germany is that the Ruhr industries should not be allowed once more to become a stronghold of monopoly capitalism - whether German or international. We view with some concern the fact that on the North German Coal Control Board too many reactionary people of the old management are in charge. But however important and interesting it may be to discuss plans for the future of the Ruhr, the first need is for an immediate decision regarding the production and distribution of Ruhr coal during the next few months. An improvement here might alter the entire course of politics in Germany within a very short time. Not only the outcome of the local elections in the British Zone depends on a satisfactory solution of this problem. More is at stake than to prevent millions of Germans from succumbing to a state of semi-starvation in the coming winter, or to stop the revival of nationalism and even militarism in Germany. On the solution of the coal problem may depend the whole economic and therefore the political future of Europe.

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German Trade Unions

By a Correspondent

This first-hand report deals mainly with the situation in the British Zone.

THE most positive and outstanding feature of the reconstructed German trade union movement is the fact that it is no longer divided on political or religious lines into Free, Christian, Democratic, Conservative or Communist sectors. That this big step towards unity could be taken was largely due to the co-operation between Christian and Free Trade Unions in the illegal period, and especially to the work of the socialist trade union leader Leuschner [7] and the Catholic Kaiser. Organisational unity was the first important step. It is now necessary to develop it into real organic unity. There are many difficulties, because on both sides a sufficient degree of tolerance is often lacking. But there is no doubt that the leading officials in both camps are anxious to develop good co-operation. They know that a new split would only benefit the reactionaries, and even the Nazis, who are by no means completely dead yet.

It is not yet possible to give a complete survey of the German trade unions in all zones. The picture is still far from clear. It was Military Government policy that the new unions should first be taught to walk before they could run, and therefore the greatest possible decentralisation was encouraged, both geographically and organisationally. Thus the development of the trade unions was somewhat disjointed and even chaotic. In Westphalia, for example, some unions are still waiting for permission from the military authorities.

At first most German trade unionists were strongly inclined towards establishing "Einheitsgewerkschaften", general unions for all types of workers, in each region, with sub-sections for the various industries which were to have no autonomous powers. But through pressure from the Military Government and urgent recommendations by the British Trade Union delegation, the trend was reversed in most parts of the British Zone and autonomous industrial unions grew up, though in a variety of different ways. It is now the task of the General Trade Union Council in the British Zone to unify them, a task which demands a great deal of time and effort, because many unions are opposed to changing the basis upon which they started.

A Trade Union Conference for the British Zone will meet in August to settle all these problems of organisational structure. At a conference recently held in Frankfurt for leading trade unionists from all four zones, it was almost unanimously agreed that the autonomous industrial unions would soon have to be joined together in a league which should have greater powers than were vested in the old A.D.G.B. (the German counterpart of the T.U.C.). For instance, it was suggested that it should look after benefits and unify the whole sphere of subscriptions. It should also have greater power of control and direction in questions which concern the whole trade union movement. The industrial unions should deal with the special problems relating to their particular industries. It is very likely that on such a basis complete agreement will be reached between the supporters of industrial unions and general unions. In fact it is only a matter of changing names, since in substance no real difference remains.

The main problem at present under discussion is the question whether manual and clerical employees should be organised in the same industrial unions, or whether, as in the past, there should be separate unions for them. On this question, too, different regions adopted different principles. In Hamburg, for example, a special union for clerical employees was founded. It shows a strong tendency towards a revival of the former right-wing "Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfenverband" (a Union for

Distributive and Clerical Workers. The head-quarter of that union was in Hamburg.

The forthcoming Frankfurt Congress is likely to decide in favour of *one* union for both types of employees, thus ending a distinction which has usually played into the hands of the employers by preventing solidarity between the "proletarians" and the "black-coated" workers. In the North Rhine Province and in Westphalia this principle has already been established in practice, and here about 750,000 of the 1,200,000 trade union members in the British Zone are organised. The decision to be taken in Frankfurt on this issue may well determine the development in the other zones, where no clear line has emerged yet.

The Present Functions

Officially the German trade unions have not yet started to function. In actual fact, however, the position is quite different. Each union has to run through three phases: Phase 1, when it applies for permission; phase 2, when it works out its constitution and elects its officials; and phase 3, when the Control Commission sanctions both. In the British Zone only one small trade union in Osnabrueck has so far attained the final goal of phase 3. [8] Nevertheless, the trade union movement already plays a very important rôle in public life.

One of its main spheres of activity is that of de-nazification. Upon request from the Control Commission, trade unions are prominently represented in the workshop sub-committees as well as in the main de-nazification committees and appeal bodies. These committees, it is true, can only give advice and make suggestions; all decisions lie with the Military Government. In addition, the trade unions have been entrusted with the task of watching over those Nazis who have so far been left in leading positions in industry and administration because they are considered irreplaceable.

In the Works Councils Law, recently issued by the Control Council, the trade unions are accorded a greater influence over these bodies than they possessed before 1933. They are to organise the works councils elections, and, together with the employers, they are now working out the general basis for the arrangements provided for in the Law.

After a hard struggle, trade union representatives are now allowed to sit on the administrative committees of the local and provincial labour exchanges. All these committees have only advisory powers. A Central Office for Labour is being established for the whole British Zone, with a former Christian trade union official as chairman, and on the advisory body which is to assist the work of this central office the trade unions will be represented on a parity basis with the employers.

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The leader of the Central Office for Economy (Zentralamt für Wirtschaft), or, as it is still called, the Advisory Economic Council, Dr. Victor Agartz, has come from trade union circles and enjoys the full confidence of the trade unions. Thanks to consistent public pressure, the former Economic Advisory body, which was completely under the control of the industrialists, has now been abolished, and will be replaced by one in which the trade unions have proper representation.

Other advisory bodies on which the trade unions are represented on the zonal, provincial and local level are committees dealing with food distribution, price control and similar questions. Trade unionists sit on borough and city councils whose members are,

however, still appointed by the Military Government.

In the main trade union sphere of activity, that of wages and collective agreements, very little can be done as long as the wage and price stop is maintained. The very limited scope for influencing wages which Military Government Law No. 13 permits is regarded as wholly inadequate.

On the question of workers' control in industry, the trade unions demand that they should be represented not only on the Board of Directors, but also on the management. The rôle played by the works councils delegates on the Board of Directors in the Weimar Republic was a mere farce. In the selection of delegates from workers' organisations considerations other than the limited factory point of view should be given weight. Discussion is taking place as to how this can be achieved. One suggestion is that the trade unions themselves and not the works councils should have the right of nomination for all leading positions in that field.

Wage Policy

As in Britain it is now necessary in Germany to adjust the whole wage and price structure which has been built up during the war to peace conditions. The German trade unions realise that this requires a co-ordinated policy. The leading officials at any rate know that demands for wage increases, which are now coming from certain trade unions with more initiative, cannot be satisfied without consideration for the interests of the whole economy. The Control Commission has therefore been asked to form a wage and price committee to work out a wage policy which is compatible with the public interest. A solution must be found soon because after the collapse of the Third Reich the price stop went by the board, while earnings have fallen considerably because overtime has been reduced and piecework discontinued. The gap between wages and prices, already very great, is widening at an accelerating rate. This development, besides the bad food position, has strengthened the impression that the cost of the crimes of the Third Reich and the Second World War will again be placed mainly upon the shoulders of the workers.

Economic Self-administration

For the new organs of economic self-administration, the trade unions suggest boards on a parity basis to take the place of the former chambers of industry and commerce. The plans which are now being prepared are likely to follow these proposals. In the Russian Zone tri-partite representation has been adopted by bringing on to these boards local and provincial self-government representatives besides those from the employers and trade unions. In the opinion of the Western trade unionists those bodies already have enough opportunities of making their influence felt, and for many reasons it is undesirable to strengthen them still further. The Western trade unionists are not afraid that under their scheme the influence of private capitalists would be too great because the quota of employers' delegates would include representatives of industries in public ownership or under public control as well as co-operative enterprises.

Besides the organs of economic self-administration, a central planning organisation will be set up. The employers are trying to fill the leading positions with people who were formerly engaged in work on behalf of their interests, as for example in the Chambers of Industry and Commerce. The trade unions are unfortunately short of trained people, and cannot therefore obtain weight commensurate with their social importance. The dangers which this situation involves are obvious. Shall we see a

repetition of what happened after 1918? Despite de-nazification, leading administrators are still to a large extent recruited from the old class of so-called unpolitical civil servants who have survived all systems and have been the backbone of the authoritarian State, of Reaction and German nationalism. The trade unions must try their utmost to fill the vacuum created in Germany by thirteen years of fascism; for on the solution of this problem depends the realisation of their whole programme.

The economic programme of the trade unions is being worked out at present and a detailed plan for the socialisation of the mines had already been prepared. The trade unions are also in favour of public ownership in other key industries such as iron and steel and public utilities.

Trade Union Education

The present public educational institutions and in particular the universities are in no way progressive, and the spirit amongst the students as well as the selection of the teachers causes general concern if not alarm. For this reason, and because the scope of trade union work is widening, the training of trade union officials through institutions controlled by the trade unions themselves must be undertaken on a far more extensive scale and much more energetically than in the past. The former trade union colleges, such as the Academy of Labour in Frankfurt and the National Trade Union School at Bernau, are to be reopened, and in addition plans are being prepared to establish in the British Zone a trade union university, to be followed by others as soon as financial means permit and an adequate number of really suitable teachers is available. In addition, courses and classes are being arranged everywhere in which members will not only listen to lectures but will work out the problems for themselves. Series of special lectures for workshop representatives are being held in many places already. Special departments are being established in the central bodies of the unions to develop this important function.

Relations with the Occupation Authorities

Generally speaking, relations with the occupation authorities have changed for the better in the British Zone. During the first six months of occupation it was evident that a number of officers (not only in the British Zone) were not at all interested in the reconstruction of the trade unions or were even hostile to it. The visit of foreign trade union delegations and changes at the top of the Control Commission produced a considerable improvement. Of course, innumerable difficulties still remain. The range of experience and interest of the German trade union representatives and of the British civil servants who have to settle these questions is completely different. A permanent delegation of the T.U.C. in Germany would have been a great help.

However, the recent establishment of a zonal trade union secretariat for the British one will at least make it easier to establish those closer relations with the British trade union movement which are so greatly desired by the German trade unionists.

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Whilst co-operation at the top as improved, the same cannot be said for the local level. It is still known for local commanders to dissolve trade unions and confiscate their funds because they take exception to trade union activity, and to interfere although they have no right to do so. Or they allow local unions which resembled Hitler's Labour Front rather than a democratic organisation. These cases, however, are exceptions which

nowadays can usually be put right without much delay.

Communist Influence

It goes without saying that the trade unions in the Russian Zone are completely under communist influence. In the Western Zones this is much less noticeable, though there are certain unions, such as the miners' and building workers' union, and in certain districts the metal workers, in which the communists are gaining control. The communists are able to get key positions in these unions, not because the majority of the members stand behind them, but because they work as a disciplined body in a democratic organisation and are as unscrupulous here in the choice of their methods as in all other countries. In some cases, elections to the executive have been carried out in members' meetings of which the greater part of the membership knew nothing, and at which only a handful of members were present. Often communists did not keep to the agreement of voting for common lists whilst the socialists did, and by giving out instructions to their members at the last minute that only their own party candidates would be voted for, secured unfair advantages for themselves. The non-communist members have now become more alert and have, for example, seen to it that the following provision was embodied in the procedure for works council elections: "The vote is secret. Each voter must vote for as many candidates as there are members of the works council to be elected. If more or fewer candidates are marked, the vote is invalid."

So long as the social and economic conditions in Germany are as desperate as they are to-day - and there are no signs that they will improve soon - we must reckon with at least a strong communist minority in the trade unions, for under conditions of mass misery the soil is fertile for mass hysteria and irresponsible elements gain influence. If we get zonal co-operation leading to organisational unity in the whole German trade union movement, the communist elements will probably dominate. For the three million members in the Russian Zone will act in a unified manner, whilst the three million in the Western Zones do not form a unified mass, and are pervaded by strong communist minorities. It is understandable, therefore, that the trade unions of the Russian Zone are strongly urging closer co-operation whilst those of the Western Zones are showing a certain reserve. At the conference which was held in Frankfurt on July 13th and 14th, the colleagues from the Russian Zone demanded an inter-zonal trade union secretariat with its seat in Berlin to enable it to have continual contact with the Control Council. This was rejected by the representatives of the other zones. At present, contact and exchange of information are maintained through the zonal secretariats.

Prospects for the Future

Although the development of the trade unions has proceeded more quickly and on the whole more satisfactorily than many dared hope six months ago, it must be frankly stated that nothing has yet been done to make a start as long as the people are completely absorbed by the effort to feed and house themselves. Unless they soon have at least some hope of early improvement, we fear that the apathy of the masses may reach such a degree as to endanger all that has been built up so far, against overwhelming odds, by the efforts of a small number of devoted and responsible workers.

Improvement in the food and housing position are the paramount need for the reconstruction of a sound trade union movement, but there are other ways in which

German trade union work might be supported. The speedy return from Britain of those war prisoners with a good record of anti-Nazi work (amongst whom there are many experienced and capable trade unionists) would be one possible step. The recent announcement by Grotewohl, Chairman of the Socialist Unity Party, that Russia would release 120,000 German prisoners of war as a result of pressure from his party, effectively increased communist prestige.

Another question is the return to the trade unions of property which was stolen by the Nazis. Members do not understand why there is delay, on formal legal grounds, in handling this problem, when on the other hand the majority of shareholders, including many formerly active Nazis, who profited out of Hitler's war, still draw dividends and keep their fortunes. British trade unionists could no doubt support the demand of their German colleagues for the restitution of their property, and thereby speed up a decision on the matter.

Few people outside Germany will probably realise to what extent the most elementary necessities for the organisational work of the trade unions are still lacking. Because there was such delay in permitting them to make a new start, they got in very late with claims for office equipment and accommodation. Local and provincial authorities and the Military Government had already seized most of the available facilities.

There is also a great dearth of material and information, both from pre-Hitler days (the German movement was robbed by the Nazis of almost all its literature) and current. The German trade unionists realise that the situation in many formerly occupied countries is probably similar. They hope, however, that a way will soon be found to solve some of these problems by an expression of practical solidarity and co-operation from the international trade union movement.

After the World Trade Union delegation's visit to Germany, German trade unionists felt it was too early for them to make any official approach to the international trade union movement for assistance. It is probable, however, that some of the international trade union secretariats, especially the Transport Workers' Federation, will soon establish closer links with the industrial unions falling within the realm of their industries.

Correction

We regret that in the article on Poland in No. 4 of Europe Speaks (April 5th, 1946), owing to a misprint the figure for the agricultural area owned by 0.6 per cent. of all farm holders was given as 73 per cent. of the total agricultural area instead of 43 per cent. The source quoted is Poland between the Wars by Ferdinand Zweig[9].

EUROPE SPEAKS aims, through the publication of reports, documents and articles, to help towards a better understanding of the Europe of to-day. It will be concerned to underline those developments which contribute to the achievement of social justice in the individual countries and the unification of Europe as a whole.

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Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - *Paton = George Smith Patton (1885-1945), General der US-Armee, im Zweiten Weltkrieg Erfolge in Nordafrika, Landung mit der 7. US-Armee auf Sizilien (1943), Befehlshaber der 3. US-Armee in Frankreich und Süddeutschland (1944-1945), Befreiung des KZ Buchenwald (1945), nach Kriegsende Militärgouverneur in Bayern (1945), Entzug des Kommandos wegen Verzögerungen in der Entnazifizierungspolitik, Tod nach Autounfall in Heidelberg (1945).*
- 2 - *Jakob Kaiser (1888-1961), deutscher Politiker (Zentrumspartei, CDU), Mitglied im Reichsvorstand des christlichen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (1924-1933), schloss sich dem Widerstand gegen die Nationalsozialisten an, Gestapo-Haft (1938), Mitbegründer (1945) und Vorsitzender der CDU in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone (1945-1947, abgesetzt), kämpfte gegen die Umwandlung der Ost-CDU in eine Blockpartei, Übersiedlung nach Westberlin, Gegner der Westbindungspolitik Konrad Adenauers, Mitglied des Parlamentarischen Rats (1948/1949), Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages und Minister für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen (1949-1957), stellv. Bundesvorsitzender der CDU (1950-1958).*
- 3 - *Ernst Hermsen, deutscher Jurist, Mitglied der Zentrumspartei, Landesgerichtspräsident in Koblenz (bis 1933), obwohl kein NSDAP-Mitglied: Präsident des Oberlandesgerichts in Hamm und gnadenlose Urteilspraxis im Sinne der NS-Machthaber (bis 1945), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg von der britischen Militärregierung als Präsident des Oberlandesgerichts in Hamm wiedereingesetzt (Dezember 1945). Geburts- und Todesjahr konnten nicht ermittelt werden.*
- 4 - *Dr. Lammers = Alois Lammers (1877-1966), deutscher Jurist und Politiker, Staatsanwalt in Berlin (1910-1914, 1920) Versetzung in den Ruhestand aus politischen Gründen (1921-1933), Ministerialrat, Staatssekretär (1925-1933) und Reichkommissar im preußischem Kultusministerium, nach dem Papenputsch als Nachfolger Grimmes mit der Leitung des Ministeriums beauftragt (1932-1933), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Leiter der Kulturabteilung beim Oberpräsidenten der Rheinprovinz (1946), Präsident der „Katholischen deutschen Akademikerschaft“ (1948-1952), zahlreiche weitere Ämter und Ehrenbezeugungen.*
- 5 - *Adolf Grimme (1889-1963), Pädagoge und Politiker (SPD), religiöser Sozialist, Schulreformer, Ministerialrat im preußischen Kultusministerium (1928), letzter*

Kulturminister einer demokratisch gewählten Staatsregierung in Preußen (1930-1932), stand deutschen Widerstandskreisen gegen das nationalsozialistische System („Rote Kapelle“) sehr nahe, Inhaftierung (1942-1945), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg erster Kultusminister des Landes Niedersachsen (1946-1948), Generaldirektor des Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunks (1948-1956), nach ihm ist der „Adolf-Grimme-Preis“ für besondere Fernsehproduktionen benannt.

6 - Victor Agartz = Viktor Agartz (1897-1964), deutscher Wirtschaftswissenschaftler und -politiker (SPD, DFU), Leiter des Wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Instituts (WWI) der Gewerkschaften (1948-1955), Entwicklung der Konzeption einer expansiven Lohnpolitik, wegen parteischädigenden Verhaltens aus der SPD ausgeschlossen (1958), Beitritt zur „Deutschen Friedensunion“ (DFU).

7 - Wilhelm Leuschner (1890-1944), Gewerkschaftler und Politiker (SPD seit 1910), Innenminister von Hessen (1928-1932), Vorstandsmitglied des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (1932-1933), Konzentrationslager (1933-1934), nach seiner Entlassung (1934) aktiver Kampf im gewerkschaftlichen Widerstand gegen das NS-Regime, Kontakte zum Kreisauer Kreis, Inhaftierung (nach dem 20. Juli 1944), vom Volksgerichtshof zum Tode verurteilt (1944).

8 - Fußnote im Original: It is interesting to note that at the "Germany under Control" Exhibition in London, "phase 3" was first shown as functioning nearly all over the British Zone. Later on "phase 3" was pasted over. - Ed.

9 - Ferdinand Zweig (1896-1988), polnischer Wirtschaftswissenschaftler, u.a. Autor des Buchs „Poland between the Wars. A Critical Study of Social and Economic Changes“, das 1944 erschien.“.