

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH RESIDENT (LÜBBECKE)

B. A. O. R.1

MONTHLY REPORT

(Period 16.9. - 15.10.1949)

Part I GENERAL

The effect of the devaluation of the Sterling and the Mark was noted particularly in the retail textil industry locally. Trade went up 100% in anticipation of price increases.

The present value of the Mark is attributed to Britain and France for reasons of competition, by local economical circles.

Other disparaging remarks concern the limited powers allowed to the Federal Government and the dismantling policy, all of which are alleged to affect the true democratization of Germany. Democratic principles are repeatedly brought to the fore in matters affecting individuals, particularly derequisitioning of private properties.

However, it is interesting to note that at an internal meeting of the SPD early in the month the speaker, Herr Deppermann of Bielefeld, in reply to a question concerning the drastic policy of the British Labour Government against German economy, replied that discussions on this matter should not be based on the past bitter propaganda concerning dismantling. Whilst he agreed that dismantling is a shortsighted policy, he stated that Germans should remember that the British are in a difficult situation themselves, brought about mainly by German aggression. He reminded his audience that the British had spent a vast sum of money on food for Germany despite their own shortage, and if they had not done so, thousands of Germans would have starved. He also referred to the Morgenthau Plan which was supported by some circles in England and which would have caused wholesale destruction of German industry and consequent misery if the British Labour Government had allowed it to be put into effect.

Furthermore the British Government have to consider public opinion and to improve the situation in their own country, and therefore it is not easy for a Government to embark on a policy favourable to Germany whilst the standard of living in their own country is so low. He concluded by advising his listeners to consider the circumstances in this light to appreciate present British policy.

Part II GOVERNMENTAL - Political

SPD

This party is far more active than the CDU. Many internal meetings have been held locally and in adjoining Kreise, and the following excerpts from meetings may be of interest:-

"Because 60% of voters are women, the wives of party members must become fit to propagate party principles and obtain adherents to the SPD.

The SPD is not hostile to religion which is a private matter, but priests must refrain from influencing Catholics in political matters. The CDU enlisted the priests to obtain a large proportion of their votes in the last election.

The SPD must include all classes in its ranks and not concentrate entirely on the working classes.

The cabinet of Adenauer is an outspoken right wing cabinet. It is to a certain degree fortunate that Germany is occupied, otherwise there would be the possibility of the right wing becoming too dictatorial. The situation will change, but at present the SPD is the only real bulwark for democracy, assisted by the bayonets of the Occupation Forces."

Criticism of the Labour Government in England has been very free at some meetings, and contrary to the opinion expressed by Herr Deppermann on page 1 of this report, other speakers consider that the present Labour Government is a menace to democracy in Germany, and strange as it may seem, the return of a Conservative Government would be welcomed by many leading Socialdemocrats in Germany.

The Gemeindeordnung has again been discussed and whilst some leading figures agree with the present British system, subject to minor modifications, others want a return of the old system, i.e. Landrat or Oberbürgermeister as paid officials. It would appear that about 50% of those present at the recent meeting in Bielefeld were in favour of the old system.

There seems to be a strong opinion that British methods of industrial output are out of date, and that personnel are extravagantly used. In fact, it is stated, that double the number are used as would be necessary by rational methods.

Representatives from this Kreis attended a meeting in Bielefeld on the 15th October 1949 to discuss refugee affairs of the SPD in RB Detmold.

The chief speaker was Herr Freiburg, SPD secretary of Land North Rhine Westphalia. He discussed the election results in general and especially in regard to the attitude of the refugees in the last election. Of the 720 000 refugees who were entitled to vote, only 150 000 voted for independent candidates nominated by Geistlicher Rat Göbel and the "Tatgemeinschaft". The decision of the Land Commissioner in not allowing the "Tatgemeinschaft" to have a licence was considered correct in view of the above figures, which had shown that the refugees used political common sense. Herr Freiburg further discussed the background of the "Tatgemeinschaft", he stated that the chairman is Gert Spindler of Hilden, and the manager Amtsgerichtsrat Langen of Krefeld. Spindler is a man of money and strong political ambitions. Prior to the election he gave 15 000 DM to Göbel for election finances. Göbel appears to be in debt to the extent of above 30 000 DM. The leading men of the "Tatgemeinschaft" are stated to have close contact with Otto Strasser in Canada, particularly Langen. It would appear that the "Tatgemeinschaft" act as agents for Strasser.

A new secretary of the SPD has been appointed for Kreis Lübbecke, he is Herr Huffmeier of Holzhausen, a native of Lübbecke and a painter by profession. The other candidate for this post was a refugee and a catholic, and although he is considered by some as a very able man for the post, the opposition against a stranger and his religion was too strong.

The Land Commissioner has been criticised for withholding his consent to various bills although they have been approved by the majority in the Landtag. This action is alleged to be undemocratic.

The SPD consider that there is strong opposition to Adenauer in the CDU ranks because he is making decisions without reference to his colleagues particularly the left wing of the party.

Dr. Köhler is accused of being unsuitable as President of the Bundestag, owing to his partial attitude.

#### CDU

This party have been very inactive of late due no doubt to the fact that harvesting has absorbed the attention of the majority of the members.

#### Espelkamp

Although it is understood that the Land Government have allotted 200 000 DM as a first instalment for the industrialization of Espelkamp and 1 300 000 DM for the housing of this colony, this money has not been taken up as there appears to be squabbles between the Interessengemeinschaft and representatives of the Evangelisches Hilfswerk.

#### Exits and Entries

It is not known what investigations are necessary before an Exit Permit is issued by the Exits and Entries Branch, Düsseldorf. The delay in issuing Exit Permits and Temporary Travel Documents appears to be far too long in most cases, and I am called upon repeatedly to assist applicants in obtaining their Travel Documents. For instance a manufacturer who employs about 3000 people locally, applied for a permit to visit Holland to purchase Java Tobacco.

He had obtained prior permission from the Dutch Authorities in advance to visit Rotterdam, but the Entries and Exits Branch appeared unable to produce the necessary Exit and Temporary Travel Documents in about 14 days. The British official to whom application was made did not consider the journey of sufficient importance to warrant any priority, whereas the applicant had to be in Holland before the 28th October 1949 to view and purchase the last of this seasons crop of tobacco which was being sold on the above date. His notification of the sale did not allow an earlier application to be made. The next consignment was not due until April 1950.

I interceded on behalf of Herr Blase as the purchase of tobacco was likely to affect the livelihood of employees in this big concern, and then was promised that the necessary Travel Documents would be available for collection in 5 days. Similar instances occur in connection with domestic servants who are invited to ~~in~~ England to work, and having given up their previous jobs are almost destituted before formalities are completed.

*EYE*

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