

'The Marshall Plan and West Germany' from Pravda (17 December 1948)

Caption: On 17 December 1948, the Soviet newspaper Pravda criticises the US aid granted to West Germany under the Marshall Plan and deplores the decision taken by the British and American military authorities of the Bizone for an eventual transfer to the Germans of the decision-making authority regarding the ownership of the steel and mining industries in the Ruhr (Law No 75).

Source: Pravda. 17.12.1948, n° 352. Moskva. "Plan Marshalla' i Zapadnaia Germaniia - sgovor magnatov uoll strita i magnatov ruhra", auteur:M. Marinin , p. 4.

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Last updated: 05/07/2016

The Marshall Plan and West Germany

Deal struck between magnates on Wall Street and in the Ruhr

If recent editions of pro-government French newspapers are to be believed, one may conclude that the law known as Law No 75 of the British and American occupying powers regarding the transfer of Ruhr industrial enterprises into the hands of their former owners hit West Germany like a bolt from the blue and came as a complete surprise. But such a conclusion would be as far from reality as the ground from the sky.

To those who have been closely following the manoeuvres of Wall Street's 'brain trust' on the German question, it has long been clear that the USA's goal has been to return the Ruhr magnates to power. This is precisely why the ruling elite in the USA has demanded that its partners in the Labour Party put a stop to the demagogic intrigues surrounding the 'socialisation' of the Ruhr. This was a result of the notorious decisions on the Ruhr taken at the London Conference by the USA, the United Kingdom and France.

The London decisions, according to the official statements, were about creating fictitious 'international' control over the distribution of Ruhr products — coal, coke and steel — but nothing was said about controlling production. This silence speaks volumes.

Now the words have followed with the promulgation of Law No 75. They incontrovertibly testify that the new 'law' is inseparably linked to the main military-political aims of the Marshall Plan.

It is already common knowledge that the Marshall Plan envisages the transformation of the Ruhr basin into the main US base on the European continent. The so-called priority of West Germany over Western Europe is the official American slogan and represents the essence of the Marshall Plan. The intention is to use the revanchist aspirations of the Ruhr magnates.

West Germany, according to US Secretary of State Marshall, 'is the heart of European economic life'. From this, Marshall's supporters conclude that the economic revitalisation of Western Europe should and can be resolved only in the Ruhr region. They claim that the economic problems in Western Europe cannot be tackled until the Ruhr basin has been fully restored as a military-industrial base. The economic foundation of the Marshall Plan rests on the notion that the economies of the rest of Western Europe are wholly dependent upon, and subordinate to, the Ruhr basin, that the interests of the Ruhr take precedence over the interests of Western Europe, that the economies of France, Belgium, Holland and the other 'Marshallised' countries are prepared to serve the revival of the Ruhr basin.

In line with this plan, the British and American occupying powers deliberately wrecked plans for reparation in the form of goods from West Germany, and not only did they stop the decommissioning of defence factories, they actually re-opened some of those which had been previously decommissioned. The mouthpiece of progressive Dutch circles, *Vrije Katheder*, states: 'Much has been written about the confidential British-American agreement on West Germany concluded in September of last year. But the actual content of this document became known only recently and then only in part. It turns out that Bevin and Marshall not only agreed to put a stop to the decommissioning of German enterprises which were previously used by Germans to manufacture military goods, but they even went so far as to put previously decommissioned plants back into service ...' The newspaper goes on to say that it is now known that the Americans made \$500 million available for the 'reconstruction', over and above the Marshall Plan loans.

With regard to these loans, the Hoffman Administration very recently reallocated previously approved estimates. As a result, loans to West Germany have increased by 25 % and the amount for other Western European participants of the Marshall Plan was cut accordingly. Therefore, approximately \$500 million has been allocated to the Ruhr basin under the Marshall Plan.

The British *Financial Times* reacted to this change in the allocation of funds with alarm. 'Behind these changes lies a more far-reaching issue of what role West Germany will be allowed to play in the Western European economy.'

The moralising speeches of these European ‘double agents’ do not bother those who designed the Marshall Plan. They stubbornly go about their business. The implementation of Law No 75 should provide a strong material base for the far-reaching deal being struck between magnates on Wall Street and their counterparts on the Ruhr.

However, these are not the only aims that the American ruling elite is pursuing in legitimising the position of its Ruhr partners. American diplomacy faithfully follows its double-dealing tactics. Returning the Ruhr magnates to power creates a real threat of the recurrence of German imperialistic aggression in the future. To provide a guarantee against possible encroachments by Ruhr magnates on European security, America’s ruling elite has proposed that the occupational status in West Germany be preserved indefinitely. As one of the mouthpieces of the American reactionaries, the magazine *Life*, wrote: ‘We should regard the occupation of Germany as one of indefinite duration.’

What lies in store for West Germany?

If, as the British weekly *The New Statesman and Nation* claims, the Bizone is currently a colony of the dollar, there can be no doubt that the policy enshrined in the Marshall Plan is designed to make West Germany’s colonial status a standard, i.e. to set it in stone.

Naturally, the deal with the Ruhr does not mean that the US monopolies will draw in their horns; quite the opposite, in fact.

The implementation of Law No 75 will have the inevitable effect of turning the US monopolies, which now have a tight hold on West Germany’s economy, into the sole masters of the military-industrial potential, using the Ruhr magnates as a ‘junior partner’.

As a consequence, the Marshall Plan, as it relates to the Bizone, creates a system of colonial exploitation on a scale that dwarfs similar such situations in other Western European nations.

To be convinced of this one need only look at the so-called bilateral agreement on the Marshall Plan, signed on 12 July 1948.

The British and US mass media kept quiet about the content of this ‘bilateral agreement’. But their attempts to conceal this document from the public were unsuccessful. Thanks to a number of foreign newspapers and magazines, it is possible to obtain a clear picture of what was termed the ‘agreement on economic cooperation’.

The first question to be asked is: who are the parties to this ‘agreement’? The two parties are the US Administration on the one hand, and the US and British military governors in Germany on the other. In other words, the ‘bilateral agreement’ on the Marshall Plan for the Bizone was signed on the one hand by General Clay and on the other ... by the same General Clay.

It is not difficult to see that, in acting on behalf of two parties, this brave general was not suffering from any kind of split personality. As a representative of the USA and of the Bizone, he remained true to the policy, plans and arrangements of the US monopolies.

All the aid provided by the US Administration to the British and US zones of occupation under this agreement will be based on claims with regard to Germany, as stated in the first article of the agreement on economic cooperation, which will remain in force until 1953. In layman’s terms, this means that West Germany is obliged to pay in full for all the ‘aid’ provided under the Marshall Plan, while the nature and conditions of this ‘aid’ are determined exclusively by the USA.

Where will the necessary funds to pay for this US aid, if one may call it that, come from? They will come from revenue from future exports and reserves from the US and British zones of occupation.

Consequently, the 'bilateral agreement' between General Clay and General Clay gives the US monopolies firstly an economic base in West Germany, and secondly West German exports, both now and in the future.

But the US monopolies' 'claims' on Bizone exports go even further. As has been pointed out in the foreign press, the 'agreement' places yet another obligation on the shoulders of the Bizone. It must stop all activity by any West German private or public business in order to 'restrict competition' and 'implement restrictions' in the international markets. In the Aesopian language of Wall Street, this means that German companies do not have the right to compete with US companies.

The irrepressible generosity of General Clay at Germany's expense positively knows no bounds. After exports, he got involved in West Germany's industry. On behalf of the Bizone, General Clay pledged to submit any industrial or agricultural production plans for approval 'when required by the US Administration'. The 'agreement' also stipulates that the military governors (of the Western Zones) would place German manpower at the disposal of the US monopolists.

The 'agreement' opens up unlimited potential for new US capital investment in West Germany. Private investment by US monopolies is thus given a 'double guarantee' — on the one hand from the US Administration, and on the other from the military governors on behalf of the Bizone.

What payment procedure is established by the 'agreement'? The military governors open a 'special account in the bank of the German lands' in their own name, into which they deposit the appropriate sums for 'aid' paid under the Marshall Plan, including sums to cover administrative expenses connected with the Hoffman Administration's work in West Germany. As for setting the price for goods supplied to West Germany, this is the exclusive right of the USA. Consequently, US monopolies have the opportunity first to decide exactly what products are to be sold in West Germany and secondly to dictate unilaterally the prices of these products.

In order to build up reserves for other purposes, the military governors are required 'to facilitate' the shipping to the United States of any materials produced in the US or British zones of occupation which are required by the United States of America.

Needless to say, the 'bilateral agreement' obliges the Bizone to provide any information at the USA's request, not to hamper the presence of countless US missions of various types, individual citizens, and so on and so forth in West Germany.

The content of the 'bilateral agreement' speaks for itself. The Marshall Plan promises West Germany colonial status, building upon the so-called occupational status.

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