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Fabian International Bureau

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# GERMAN RE-ARMAMENT FOR and AGAINST

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Rt. Hon. KENNETH YOUNGER, MP  
FRANK BESWICK, MP



Fabian Tract 294

Sixpence

KENNETH YOUNGER is Member of Parliament for Grimsby and was Minister of State at the Foreign Office from 1950-51.

FRANK BESWICK is Member of Parliament for Uxbridge and was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Civil Aviation 1950-51.

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September, 1954.

# **GERMAN RE-ARMAMENT**

**FOR and AGAINST**

**Rt. Hon. KENNETH YOUNGER, MP  
FRANK BESWICK, MP**



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GERMAN  
RE-ARMAMENT

On 26th June, 1954, the Fabian International Bureau held a Conference on German Re-armament in London. The speakers were the Rt. Hon. Kenneth Younger, M.P., and Frank Beswick, M.P. The two parts of this pamphlet are substantially the speeches that were delivered on this occasion. They are reproduced here as a further contribution to the discussion of an important subject.



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## KENNETH YOUNGER

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**T**HIS is one of the most difficult issues that has been before the Labour movement since the war—and it is very important. I want to plunge right into it and, at the risk of telling most people something they know already, to take up the first few minutes in reminding you of the situation at the moment about a German military contribution to Western defence.

You will remember that it was first mooted at the end of 1950 and then, after some 18 months or so of negotiations, two treaties were signed, within a day of each other, at Bonn and Paris. The political treaty signed at Bonn proposed to give to the German Federal Republic virtually complete political sovereignty. This was to be subject only to certain limitations which were inseparable from the existing international situation. Tied to it was a treaty whereby Western Germany would make a military contribution to the defence of the West within the European Defence Community. That was in May, 1952, over two years ago.

The EDC Treaty has been ratified by four out of the six Powers which were supposed to join the Community. The non-ratifying Powers are France, which is the more important, and Italy, which would probably come along if France were to ratify.

### **Britain and EDC**

The part we had to play was to decide whether or not to ratify certain ancillary instruments affecting our relationship with EDC and the relationship of EDC to NATO. The British Parliament was invited to go through that act of ratification towards the end of the summer of 1952 and it did so with the Labour Party in the House voting against it, on the grounds that the time had not yet come when EDC and the other treaty should be finally put into force. The only other thing Britain has done in relation to this is that, early this year, the Conservative Government published a statement about the readiness of Britain to be closely associated, and the manner in which she was prepared to be closely associated, with EDC. That was done presumably as an encouragement to the French to ratify that part of the Treaty. At the moment, there is nothing further for the United Kingdom to do about German rearmament.

If EDC were to go through in France, which seems less and less likely, and in Italy, presumably the whole thing would go ahead without any action being taken, one way or the other, by Britain; but if, as seems likely, EDC gets bogged down, and some other alternative policy towards Germany has to be considered, then, of course, all the Powers concerned in NATO, and we ourselves in particular as one of the Occupying Powers, would have

to take some other decision. In those circumstances presumably a decision by the Labour movement would again be important.

Although I am going to speak in favour of a German military contribution inside EDC I want to make it clear that my argument is not inseparably tied to EDC itself or to any one particular form in which the German military contribution might be envisaged. The aim of EDC is to put a limitation on the sovereignty and independence of action of the German forces that might be incorporated in Western defence. It also puts more or less corresponding restrictions on the sovereignty of the other Powers which would be taking part in the treaty. It has always been an open question whether this in fact would be the form of the German military contribution which would be adopted. My argument is going to be related more generally to the question whether there should be a Germany military contribution in any event, leaving open to a very large extent whether it should be done through EDC in its present form, or in some other way.

I want now to try to relate the decisions we have to take to the general framework of Western policy towards Germany since the end of the war.

### **Post-war Decisions**

The conception in 1945, just before the end of hostilities, and at Potsdam, was that there should be co-operation between the Four Great Powers and that, although Germany was to be split up for occupation into zones, nevertheless she was, for most purposes, to be treated as a single unit until the peace treaty. I think it is fair to say, though it is perhaps open to another interpretation, that at Potsdam no clear, long-term policy for Germany was laid down. All that was laid down was an immediate policy for liquidating the Nazi war machine and getting the occupation programme into being. Nothing was said about how long the occupation was to go on. Nothing of any binding character was settled about what the peace treaty would eventually contain.

In the last few months of the war there had been differing proposals for the sort of treatment that should be meted out to Germany after the war, among them various suggestions for a Carthaginian peace which would permanently put Germany out of the running as a great power. There was, for instance, the Morgenthau Plan for the pastoralisation of Germany. I do not think it was very long after the end of the war when these ideas faded out: the Morgenthau Plan ceased to be seriously considered fairly soon. People felt that they could not possibly face, in the post-war world, the proposition that 80 million Germans were to be kept as a kind of depressed slum in the centre of Europe, while other people were recovering. There were other proposals for dismembering or decentralising Germany and trying to revive, for instance, the State of Bavaria and for splitting off a Rhineland State. The French were particularly keen on the latter proposition. These ideas lasted a bit longer but they too, fell by the wayside and, after three or four years, no one any longer thought in these terms.

Therefore we had to begin to think of an alternative: of attempting to make a Germany which, one still hoped, would be united. And to try

and make a united Germany into a viable State with a considerable measure of industrialisation and with a democratic system of government. We were looking forward eventually to having some kind of peace treaty agreed by all the Powers which would lead to Germany becoming a member of the United Nations with all the privileges and obligations implied, among which, of course, is the right of self-defence associated with a sovereign State. Even at this stage I do not think anybody really knew how long it was going to be before the peace treaty was ready.

My recollection is that many people after 1945 talked of occupation for as long as 20 years. I myself never believed in that. I thought that in much less than 20 years the victorious Powers would wish to shed the burden of occupation and would feel that they were no longer doing any good and that they must put their former enemy into a position of independence, possibly subject to some treaty restrictions.

The breakdown of Four Power Agreement has frustrated so far any attempt to map out a peace treaty for the whole of Germany, so that we are now faced with a division of Germany which we had never intended; and, indeed, with the Iron Curtain which is dividing the whole continent of Europe, and which was equally unintended.

From about 1948, the Western Powers felt obliged to go ahead with their own plans for Western Germany—while always trying to keep the door open for eventual agreement on the unification of Germany. In the same year began the period which we now think of as the worst period of the Cold War starting with the Berlin blockade and the coup in Czechoslovakia, and remaining at great intensity until about the end of 1952. Since then tension has eased, but no one can claim that it is at an end. It was an inevitable consequence of the Cold War that the emphasis of Western policy shifted from the liquidation of Nazism and of the Nazi war machine to the problem of the defence of Western Europe.

### **The Birth of NATO**

During this period the Western Powers entered into the Brussels Treaty and NATO. Although there has been, I am glad to say, in the last 18 months a considerable easing of the fear of immediate hostilities in Europe which gave rise to the defence programme of the Western Powers, NATO is still accepted as the keystone of Western policy in Europe. That goes, I think, for all the countries in Western Europe, with only minor exceptions; and it goes, broadly, for all the political parties in those countries with the exception of the Communists.

One scarcely needs to emphasise the importance of the problem of Western Germany within a conception of this kind. One has only to think of Germany's geographical position, and of her population and economic potential, to say nothing of the very stormy and alarming history she has experienced in recent generations, to realise that one can hardly go very far with plans for a defensive or economic system for the whole of Western Europe without the question of Germany being raised in some form or another.

By early 1950 the Western Powers had got to the point of deciding that they should move, in the political sphere, towards ending the occupation. Proposals were put up at a meeting of the three Western occupying Powers in May, 1950, and sent, in the form of a document, to the Soviet Government suggesting a plan for liquidating the occupation. To this the Soviet Government sent no reply. So far as I know they have never sent any reply. At that time there was no direct proposal for re-arming Western Germany. That did not come until after the Korean war had broken out and the defence programmes of the Western Powers had begun to be implemented—in September, 1950.

### **Korea Sounds the Alarm**

I am not going to go over all the history. I hope people have it broadly in mind. It was proposed by the Americans and it was accepted, in principle by us and by the French, that there should be a German military contribution. **We accepted not because we thought a German military contribution was immediately essential, but because we thought that American participation in Western European defence was essential, and it seemed clear that the Americans were not prepared to play their part unless there was some provision for a German contribution.**

Certain conditions, which became known in this country as the Attlee conditions, were laid down. There is some argument as to whether these conditions have been fulfilled. Evidently, Mr. Attlee thinks they have. I do not propose to go into that because I do not think that the decision we now have to take depends upon analysing what someone said three or four years ago and deciding whether his wishes have been fulfilled or not. **We have to make up our minds, four years after the original proposal in principle was made, whether we still think that a German contribution has to be accepted and whether we think the time has come to go ahead with it.**

In those four intervening years Western policy has concentrated on the building up of the strength of Western defence through NATO. Although there have been, and still are in the Labour movement, arguments about the exact level of defence expenditure which should be faced, I think there has been no real challenge within the Labour Party to the necessity for going steadily on with the organisation of NATO.

**All military opinion in the Western countries insists that there is need, if Western defence is to be effective, for a German contribution in some form.** It may be argued that that conception on the military side has been made obsolete by the development of the atom and hydrogen bombs. All I want to say on that now is that I have yet to hear any statement which gives a convincing picture of the effect atom and hydrogen bombs are likely to have on warfare. I am not, as yet, prepared to base political decisions upon any particular assumption of the effect of both sides in the Cold War now having considerable reserves of atom and hydrogen bombs. I just do not know what the effect is going to be.

Despite military views about the need for a German contribution it has not, as yet, materialised. I think this is largely because, EDC, not only aroused opposition on the ground that it involved the unpalatable prospect



of re-arming ex-enemies, but because, in the particular form which it took, it also aroused opposition on different grounds.

For instance, the fact that it purports to be a supra-national organisation demanding a certain surrender of sovereignty not only by Germany but by France and others, is the reason why the French Right Wing have added themselves to other oppositional elements. Although most are in favour of a German military contribution, they are against EDC because they are not willing to accept restrictions on the French army. Similarly the Social Democratic Party in Germany are not opposed to a German military contribution as such, but they are opposed to some of the restrictions which EDC imposes upon their country.

A further argument, which seems to me the strongest for postponing the implementation of the German contribution, is the fear that if you go ahead with a West German military contribution you may rule out the possibility of an eventual agreement for the unity of Germany. I think that has been the main reason why the British Labour Party has been holding back and maintained that attitude right up to the Berlin conference.

### **The Only Solution**

I think we have to admit that, unless Four Power agreement, which broke down in the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1947, can be restored, all solutions for Germany are bound to involve danger. It has always been difficult to know the right solution for Germany, and if you cannot get agreement among all her great neighbours, and if you have to face the particularly dangerous feature of a divided Germany, then the difficulties become greatly aggravated. You have the difficulty of building up a healthy democratic political system inside a country whose internal political affairs are distorted by territorial division. You have the fact that Berlin, to which most Germans still look as their rightful capital, is isolated from the larger of the two zones. The division of Germany also greatly accentuates what was, in any case, a most dangerous thing about Germany, namely, that stands between East and West. There is a certain ambivalence in her policy which is turned now towards the East and now towards the West. If the Great Powers are divided, and their spheres of influence meet in Germany, you have the risk of Germany being in a position to bargain between the rival powers.

**Therefore, I am sure that we were right throughout this period, to try and avoid doing anything which, while building up the economy of Western Germany and loosening many of the restrictions put upon her in earlier years, would make agreement on her unity less likely.**

Then came the Berlin conference at the beginning of this year, which, on the face of it, had a purely negative result. The statesmen left Berlin having agreed nothing about Germany at all. It is rather surprising in the circumstances that the disagreement did not appear to raise international tension. On the contrary, both the Berlin and Geneva conferences have so far tended to cause a lowering rather than a heightening of tension. Nevertheless, it was, on the face of it, an entirely negative result as regards settle-

ment of the German problem. Many people say that no negotiation took place at Berlin at all. I think that is the wrong way to put it. I think it was, in its opening stages, a fairly normal negotiation in which each side set out its position and there was a very wide gap between them. As the weeks went by neither side put forward any modification of its original position which brought it near enough to the other side to offer any prospect of agreement. Although it was a negotiation which failed, it showed a good deal more clearly than before what were, in fact, the positions to which each side attached cardinal importance.

### **What Happened in Berlin**

Here we come into the field of imponderables and individual judgments, and what I am going to say now, I am aware, cannot be proved. Nor can it be disproved. All I can do is to give you my judgment of the negotiations at Berlin.

I think it became clear as the conference went on that the issue of EDC and the West German military contribution was not, as I had thought it might be, the fundamental issue. Mr. Eden put forward his plan for the unification of Germany in six stages through free elections. I think that if that procedure had been adopted, EDC, although he did not exactly say so, would have been held up. I doubt whether anything effective would have been done about arming Western Germany in face of this prospect of the unification of Germany looming only just ahead; and if at the end of the negotiations a unified Germany was achieved, then the Government of the unified Germany was going to be free to choose whether or not it would adopt obligations to either side. Even if the Western part of Germany had, in the course of the negotiations clinched its part in EDC, that would still have been an open issue when the new, unified German Government came into existence. I think it is clear that under the Eden plan it would have been very simple for the Soviet Government to see that during the negotiations little or nothing was done about the West German contribution.

What appeared to be the real deadlock was that the West demanded the unification of Germany through free elections and the Soviet Government rejected it. I think it was as bald and simple as that. It was nowhere suggested, as far as I am aware, by the Soviet side that they might have changed their attitude to free elections and the unification of Germany if the West had dropped EDC. I thought that that was the sort of bargain which might well have been put forward, but I do not think it was hinted at by the Russians. I think it is arguable that, on our side, that particular proposition should have been put forward. It was never put straight to the Russians in those terms, and many people think that was a tactical mistake. The only reason why I personally do not attach very great importance to the tactical mistake is that, having read the proceedings very carefully more than once, and having read the Russian speeches, I am pretty convinced, and most of those who were at Berlin are convinced, that had the proposition been put to the Russians it would have made no difference to Molotov's point of view. **I think that what became quite clear at Berlin was that in**

ny event, quite regardless of the whole issue of EDC, the Russians are not at present prepared to loosen their hold on the Eastern zone of Germany. They know that if there were free elections in the Western sense with rival candidates and everyone having a fair deal during the campaign, they would lose the Eastern zone. Therefore free elections were 'off,' regardless of what might have been said about the military contribution.

The Soviet delegates made it particularly clear in the Austrian negotiations that their instructions were to stay put in the military sense. They were not going to move their troops anywhere. There may have been a period, perhaps a year ago, when the Soviet thought of taking a more flexible attitude, but they ceased to hold that view after the Berlin riots and their trouble with their satellites last summer. Therefore the crucial thing that comes out of the Berlin conference is the realisation that we have to face a fairly long period in which there is no prospect of a unification of Germany through free elections.

Previously I had thought it worth hanging on because the next conference might produce some solution. I have ceased to believe that since the Berlin conference.

If it is a matter of a year or two how do we envisage Western Europe? What sort of policy do we think of pursuing in that period?

#### **Future Status of Germany**

I think there is no doubt that we have to go on building Western strength at whatever pace we think appropriate, through NATO and through the various economic forms of co-operation which were started in 1947 and have been going on since. As Western Germany is one of the strongest elements in the whole of the West of Europe we cannot possibly leave her out of this. I think it is time for her to get the sort of equality envisaged in the Bonn Treaty of 1952, whether she gets it through the operation of that treaty or by some other means. I always thought it unwise to tie the political treaty to the EDC Treaty. **Whatever may be done about a military contribution, it would be most unwise to keep Germany much longer under political restrictions and in her present state of inferiority. I think it is necessary to bring this to an end both for the health of political life in Western Germany, whose grievances can lead to a dangerous nationalism, and for the health of Western Europe because, after nine years, it is high time for the artificial relationship between Germany and her neighbours to be brought to an end.**

Does this conception of equality for Western Germany necessarily involve a military contribution from Germany or not?

I myself think it does, for several reasons. Firstly, **I think that in an armed world, where other powers have not disarmed, and where a very big emphasis is put on joint Western defence, some form of contribution to that joint defence is an essential part of equality.** Western Germany cannot be said to be playing a normal role in Europe, which it is now time for her to do, unless some obligation for defence is put on her among all these armed neighbours.

My second reason is that, **whether we like it or not, nearly all our allies in Europe think it is essential for their security that Western Germany should make this contribution.** That is not always accepted in this country, but I am certain that it is true. It is true of the Dutch and the Danes and, I think, also of the Belgians and the Norwegians. All of these peoples have reason to be afraid of a revival of German militarism but are, nevertheless, unanimous in their wish that, if they are going to be called upon to play a burdensome part in defence, Germany should be called upon to do the same. They are not convinced that western defence will be a serious proposition unless and until we have a German contribution, and they are not prepared to go on for any prolonged period of time bearing what they feel are unnecessary burdens which could be lightened if the considerable resources of Germany were thrown into the balance. Moreover, they are not prepared to protect Western Germany while she does nothing to protect herself.

**You may challenge me on the question of why it is necessary to have equality for Germany. You may ask: why not hold her down? I would reply that on democratic or Socialist principles it is questionable whether you can, ten years after the war, properly seek to impose some kind of second rate status on an ex-enemy country.**

But, almost equally important, with a country the size of Germany, you could not do it in practice unless you had unanimity among the powers co-operating to do it. We know that the Americans and the Canadians are not in the least interested in keeping Germany in any position of inferiority. They are not going to help: nor are the Western Powers with, I suppose, the possible exception of France. But even in France I notice that M. Mendes-France, while having an open mind about EDC, assumed that the great majority in the Chamber were in favour of some kind of military contribution by Germany. And, even in France, I do not think there is a majority which would be prepared to lift a finger to keep Germany in a second-rate status. Therefore, the will is not there to do it.

**My argument accordingly is that sometime, somehow, Germany will move forward to equality. I do not think that conception can exclude the idea of some defence forces, and we would do better to set this course in the most favourable and least risky circumstances, rather than simply to strike attitudes on the subject which, I am convinced, will be wholly ineffective.**

Anything you do is a risk. I do not deny that the future of West German democracy is, at the moment, still uncertain. The eventual attitude of Western Germany say ten or twenty years hence if the Cold War is still going on is also uncertain. I reject, however, the defeatism about Western Germany which seems to have become rife in this country. It would be wrong to assume that the development of Western Germany must eventually be towards a new Nazism and military aggression, and to repeat the parrot-cry: 'We have fought them twice in this century. Are we going to build them up only to have to fight them again?' I believe that there are more points of difference between the German situation now and the situations before 1914 or 1939 than there are similarities.

Therefore we must not adopt a purely negative and restrictive policy towards Germany. I believe that the best assurance we can have for the development of genuine democracy in Western Germany is that there should be a strong, viable Western Europe with Western Germany playing a part in it commensurate with her resources, shouldering obligations something like those shouldered by her neighbours and, above all, that she should be treated so far as possible as an equal. While Germany is divided there will be danger in her situation, but a policy of this kind is less dangerous than any other.

### **The Question of Unity**

There only remains the question of timing. If we go ahead, does it mean that we have ruled out for ever the possibility of German unity?

I no longer believe this since the Berlin conference. I think a great deal was clarified at that conference, and I do not believe that the military contribution is the stumbling block to unification. If the Russians are ever to be brought to any compromise over Germany they are more likely to do it if we show them that, in the absence of agreement, we will go ahead in our own way than if we adopt the opposite course of granting them a veto on Western policy, by saying, 'However unreasonably you may act, we are simply going to sit and wait for you to change your minds.'

There have, of course, been many very disappointing things in international affairs since the war, particularly the Cold War and the defence burdens which followed from it. I think that the overwhelming majority of the Labour Party in this country and in the countries of Western Europe have, with great reluctance, accepted the unpleasant facts and the burdens which flow from them, and have gone on, building up strength in Western Europe. I believe that the chances of negotiation have been strengthened, and not weakened, by this policy of accepting unpleasant facts and building up our strength. I do not believe that Germany can any longer be excluded from this conception.

**I think that if the Soviet Government is really willing to co-operate in some system of European security with a united Germany she has a perfectly simple way of indicating this. She has only to say that she will co-operate if we will drop the idea of a Western German military contribution. She has only to announce it. She did not say anything of this kind at Berlin. She did not say it because it was not part of her policy. If it becomes part of her policy, she has only to say so. But I do not think we can go on waiting indefinitely meanwhile.**

Unless we face that unpalatable fact, I do not think we shall get either adequate Western defence or agreement with Russia. We shall fail to hold Western Germany as a partner and ally, and we shall fail even to hold our allies together, because I am certain that a very large majority of them believe that the sort of policy I have outlined towards Germany is an essential part of their own security.

## FRANK BESWICK

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WITH much of what Kenneth Younger has said I do not disagree at all. I do not intend even to try to controvert any of the early history which he gave of this matter. In fact I particularly agree with one or two things he said.

I agree when he says that when the Labour Government first accepted that there should be a German contribution to European defence we in Britain, in the Labour Government as it was then, accepted only because the USA made it clear to Mr. Bevin that only upon those terms would she continue to take any part in the defence of Europe. Our original agreement therefore was not because we thought German re-armament was a good thing in itself, but because it was a condition of the bargain with the United States.

I agree with Kenneth Younger also, that no matter what we may do or decide in the Labour Party, it will make no difference at all to any executive action in this matter. That to me makes it all the more surprising that Labour policy from Transport House should agree to vote sums of money to organise regional conferences up and down the country on this issue.

An American writer said recently that France was so uncertain and divided about EDC that 50 per cent. of those who were 'for' were really against it and 50 per cent. of those who were 'against' were really for. The position is not dissimilar from that which obtains in our own country and on this platform this afternoon. Kenneth Younger speaks for German re-armament, but it would be impossible to read what he said in his Fabian pamphlet<sup>1</sup>—which is, I think, the best reasoned exposition of the German problem produced in recent years—without believing that, if not quite 50 per cent. of his ideas are against German re-armament, nevertheless he has important reservations about the way this policy may work out.

Although I am speaking against German re-armament, and although I passionately believe that it would be wrong to agree, as the Labour Party officially does, that the time is ripe to put arms in the hands of Germans again, nevertheless, I do not accept all the arguments of those who have campaigned or are campaigning against it. **I do not, for example, accept what we might call the racial argument. I do not believe the German people can, for all time, be kept in a second-rate society. I do not accept this argument for the Germans any more than for the Kikuyu, or the Chinese or the people of Guatemala. I believe that the Germans, equally with the other peoples of the world, of whatever colour or race, have the right to**

<sup>1</sup> *The German Problem*. Fabian Tract No. 292.

be accepted on terms of equality with the rest of humanity. Herbert Morrison is on very strong ground when he argues this aspect of his case—which is one reason probably why he ignores other and much stronger objections to further re-armament at this time.

**What is more relevant is the fact that many Europeans and potential allies, especially in France, find it, as yet, quite impossible to accept the view that we should now re-arm the Germans.** Some of us had the opportunity of listening this week to M. Auriol. He said something like this: that when they talked to him about re-arming the Germans he had a picture in his mind of naked men filing into a room for the purpose of being gassed. The ex-President of France would not be dismissed as an emotionalist. But that apparently is his reaction when the possibility of German re-armament is discussed. I think sometimes that when our American friends say with such indignation that we do not try and understand their anti-Chinese sentiment against the background of their losses in Korea, that they should be given a full statement of French losses at the hands of the Germans. Indeed it may well be that British civilians killed and wounded in German air raids exceeds the total of American casualties in Korea.

### **Is Germany a Reliable Ally ?**

No matter what we may say about the desirability of Germany taking her part again in the comity of nations, if we are considering this matter, as many people are in terms of defence, we have to realise that in France there are many on the Left, on the Right, and in between, who have said publicly that, even if their Government ratifies this treaty they themselves will continue to fight against it. After our experience in World War II I do not think that, weighing up this case in terms of military effectives, we should necessarily be better off if France was divided against herself.

I am not going to pursue the point that there are Germans in control of affairs of the West German State who can be considered as doubtful risks. A lot of literature has been written on the subject, and I have no doubt that most of you have read some of the pamphlets published by the Union of Democratic Control, for example. **I press the matter no further than saying that, at this moment, there is reason to doubt the trustworthiness, if you like to put it that way, of the German people as a military ally. These doubts, for better or worse, are felt, no matter what resolutions may have been passed at some of the conferences on the continent. These reservations and doubts are felt by many good men on the continent, including West Germany itself.**

On arguments about there being safeguards in EDC, Aneurin Bevan made one of the best remarks recently when he said: How can you pretend that you are going to control these people when you have armed them if you admit that you cannot control them if you deny them any arms at all?

Kenneth Younger has already brought up the point about the reunification of East with West Germany. But there is also the question of the lost provinces of East Prussia and Silesia. The fact is that if there is in the whole world to-day one country which has territorial demands to make of

any consequence that country is Germany. I often remember listening, before the war, to young Germans denouncing the 'unjust and impossible peace' created by the loss of their colonies. When they fought, they said, 'Wir werden recht haben.' If they could convince themselves then that they had the right to fight to regain their lost colonies, how much easier for that right to exist in their minds for fighting to-day, or to-morrow, for their lost provinces.

### Germany's Lost Territories

Nowhere in the Transport House pamphlet, *Defence and Peace*, and nothing that Kenneth Younger has said to-day, explains how the re-unification of East with West Germany, let alone the recovery of those Prussian provinces, is going to be made easier, or possible without bloodshed, if West Germany is re-armed and integrated with the Atlantic power bloc.

Kenneth Younger himself is conscious enough of this danger, for he wrote on page 14 of his pamphlet:—

'This is the more dangerous because Western Germany is to-day a highly dissatisfied power, far more dissatisfied than Germany after Versailles. She has lost enormous areas of territory which have been German for centuries, and as a result is faced with the problem of resettling some fourteen million refugees from the lost areas in the already densely populated community of Western Germany. As her strength grows it is certain that Germans of all parties will seek to use it to gain the very specific objective which they are already talking about—the restoration of German unity.'<sup>1</sup>

Walter Lippman wrote some words on the same subject which I would like you to bear in mind in connection with another point about the regaining of lost territories:—

'The West German leaders believe that the German people will not enlist, nor should they be asked to enlist in an army which is formed for the strategic purpose of holding a defence line between the Elbe and the Rhine. Naturally enough, if one thinks about it, they are bitterly opposed to the idea of making Western Germany the main battlefield for the defence of Britain, France and North America.'<sup>2</sup>

He also said:—

'They—and that I am convinced means all the influential German leaders who would support re-armament in any form . . . only if we can prove to them that we have the military power and that it is our strategic purpose to carry the war immediately and swiftly beyond the Vistula River.'<sup>2</sup>

**The most tightly organised pressure groups in West Germany to-day are those of the emigrés from the East. Inevitably, and indeed understandably, they will campaign and press and scheme for the return of their homelands. As and when Germany becomes more powerful these pressure groups will become less patient.**

**How can we imagine that an armed West Germany, a powerful partner**

<sup>1</sup> *The German Problem*. Fabian Tract No. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Guns for the Germans*, by Walter Lippman.



**On Western defence arrangements, will be an element making for toleration and compromise with the Soviets.**

And when we consider that a re-armed West Germany will lead to a more powerfully armed East Germany, how can we think it will all make for an easement of tension?

The Transport House pamphlet starts off by saying:—

‘The question is whether the time has now come to fulfil the promise of the Potsdam Declaration and allow democratic Germany’—that is, the Federal Republic—‘to take her place among the free and peaceful peoples of the world. This question lies at the heart of the current argument about European Defence Community.’

I do not accept that at all. I think we are fooling ourselves if we believe that this is the fundamental purpose behind the great effort now being made to get the German peoples armed again. I do not believe that that statement is any more true than the statement which Cabot Lodge made in the United Nations when he said, that the invasion of Guatemala was the result of Russia using Honduras as an agent provocateur in order to give an excuse for Russian intervention in the American continent.

I believe—and I say this, I hope, without unduly criticising those political colleagues of mine for whom I have a great respect—that in these matters the military leaders speak more simply, more directly, more clearly, and much nearer the point than do some of the political leaders. Kenneth Younger said that all Western military opinion insists that a German contribution is essential to Western defence. Of course. To them it is a matter of deploying forces against a pre-determined enemy. There are some who harbour the delusion that if the West deploys sufficient force the Communists will collapse in time. There are others who think it is only a matter of time before the fighting starts.

**Who Defends Freedom ?**

I would quote some words which were used by Field Marshal Montgomery. He said:—

‘The battle is between democracy and Communism, good and evil, call it what you will. It is absolutely certain that a showdown must come.’

Recently I had the opportunity of listening to a General formerly on Montgomery’s staff, a man of great authority, on the defensive arrangements for Europe. He was speaking about EDC and was rather less optimistic than Transport House. His was the view, also expressed lately by Robert Boothby—that EDC had been killed in France by the French Prime Minister. But the General went on to say that he was not really concerned whether France came into this or not. He said that the French had not got it in them to fight but the German was a good fighting man, and ‘we want to see him on our side.’ That, really, is the driving motive behind this arrangement.

To many people, it is as simple as that, although I am bound to say that I thought that this particular General was overlooking the fact that

we have also claimed that the Germans lost two world wars precisely because they were fighting for the wrong political principles.

**However we step around this problem, the central factor we have to face up to is that the present motive for getting EDC, or at any rate an armed German contribution to the West, is the same motive as that which has led the United States to compel Japan to break the treaty which she had forced upon her, and to re-arm. They seek allies of any kind for what they consider to be the fight that must come.**

I do not, myself, feel any enthusiasm for this German contribution of 12 divisions, for I see Germany as one of a list of allies now lined up for the defence of the free world—not only Germany, Japan and Italy, but Syngman Rhee, Chiang Kai Shek, Bao Dai and Franco. I do not think, in the long run, that these allies will necessarily give us undiluted strength, any more than the compulsory incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Russian defensive pattern really added to the fundamental strength of the Soviet Union.

But, of course, all these matters were considered at great length in local Labour Parties, in the Parliamentary Labour Party and at the annual conference of the Labour Party, and we still came down, by a majority vote, on the side of a German contingent in EDC.

But—and there was a great ‘but’—qualifications were made and provisos were laid down and the question really is whether those provisos have been met.

Now, the Margate resolution has been quoted at different times lately, and it is quoted in the new pamphlet but it has not been quoted in full. Let us just look at some of the things to which the Labour Party unanimously agreed in its foreign and Commonwealth policy resolution. This is what we said:—

‘Conference welcomes recent indications of an easement of international tension but deplors the failure of the Western Powers to maintain the initiative in efforts to break the East-West deadlock. Labour pledges itself to make every effort to foster an improvement in international relationships and to end the Cold War.

Conference urges renewed efforts to convene at the earliest convenient date a Four Power conference at the highest level in order to seek out any possibility of agreement on outstanding issues.’

And on the specific question of a German contribution it says:—

‘Conference urges that there should be no German re-armament before further efforts have been made to secure a peaceful reunification of Germany.’

Attlee stressed in the speech with which he moved this resolution that it would be necessary to have what he called further efforts for ‘full talks’ with the USSR and other countries to try and settle these matters together before there should be any question of the re-armament of Germany.

**What it all boils down to is whether all the efforts we had in mind at Margate to get full discussions with Russia and the other nations to try and reach a peaceful settlement have been made,**

**I say that they have not,**

What has there been? There has been, since the Margate conference, the Berlin Conference, to which Kenneth Younger referred. But are we really certain that the Berlin Conference was what we wanted? Is that what we had in mind when we talked, at Margate, about 'full talks?' I do not believe it was. What we had been talking about at Margate was the meeting that Churchill called for on May 11th of the same year, when he wanted talks with the heads of States, without agenda, and, as he said, without hordes of officials. That is what we wanted, and Berlin was a substitute for it. In the debate of December 17th, 1953, before the Berlin conference, Attlee himself said, '. . . this meeting at Berlin is perhaps a thing of not very great moment. It is not what we wanted.'

I agree with him. It was an illusion to think that we could get a settlement on this narrow, single question of the reunification of Germany.

### **An Overall Settlement**

Of course the Russians acted as they must because they know something about what is the real position in Germany. If there were free elections in Germany there would be a strengthening of the Western side and a weakening of the Russian side; in other words, it would increase the insecurity which Russia, like ourselves, feels so acutely to-day. I do not think there was any possibility of getting agreement unless at the same time we had been able to bargain on other matters outstanding between us in other parts of the world. And that is what Russia wanted. Russia asked, before the Berlin conference, that there should be wider talks to cover other matters, including the question of China. It was the wider talks that Churchill had asked for. That is what Attlee asked for. Russia wanted the same thing as Churchill and Attlee, and it was, I regret, Mr. Eden who, when Molotov asked again that the agenda should be widened to include other matters of outstanding interest said—to quote the words he used in the House—'this was a conference in Europe about Europe and therefore we should concentrate on Germany and Austria.' But that was not the type of conference that any delegate at Margate wanted. Those were not the 'full talks' for which Mr. Attlee had called.

The American Press had been quite outspoken that Berlin was not only unlikely to be fruitful but they did not even want it to be fruitful. The *New York Herald Tribune* put it bluntly:—

'From the Western point of view the sooner the Four Power conference is held and proved to be futile the sooner France will be obliged to decide about EDC.'

There are plenty of other things which the American Press said which one could quote to the same purpose.

*Time*, which is not uninfluential in America, said:—

'Western strategy, according to word in Washington and London will be to expose Russia's unwillingness to make a settlement, trumpet it to the world, then adjourn the conference in the hope that Europe might thereupon unite in firm purpose. But with the Russians that sort of thing has never been very easy.'

I am maintaining that after the Margate conference and up to the time the vote was taken by the Parliamentary Labour Party in February, the Berlin conference was the only attempt to get agreement with Russia. Before it took place British leaders had said it was not what we wanted; before it took place the American Press said: 'If we are to have it, let's get it over with as quickly as possible.' I believe it was quite wrong to say after the Berlin conference that the conditions laid down in the resolution we had agreed upon at Margate, had been fulfilled.

What has happened since?

### **Bolting the Door on Russia**

We have had Geneva. Do the proceedings there suggest that we should now give up the possibility of getting a settlement with the East? If one reads the American Press one gets the impression that before Geneva took place at all, it was their intention, as they hoped, to show up Russia and China as being nations with whom one could not possibly get agreement. Then they would go back to the Western allies and say once more, 'We must now strengthen our own armed defences.'

**I do not think that what has happened at Geneva justifies us in saying that we should now bang and bolt the door on the possibility of a settlement with Russia, and that is what the decision to re-arm Western Germany really means.** In the foreign affairs debate of 23rd June, the impression that I, and I think most of us got, was that even Mr. Eden did not think that Dulles had been very enthusiastic about getting a settlement with China. Before he set sail for Europe Dulles said his intention was not to appease Red China, by which he meant negotiate peace, but to bring her before the bar of world opinion. Well, both China and the USA came before that bar, and it was not China which went away with a lowered reputation.

**The point of view I put to you for your consideration is that there is at this time a profound difference in approach as between the United States of America and ourselves. The difference is this theory of co-existence. They just do not accept the possibility of co-existence with a Communist Power.** I heard on the radio the resolution passed by the American Senate in which they said they would not tolerate the establishment of any Communist state in either of the two continents of the American hemisphere. That is their outlook, and I think it is a dangerous one.

One of the most popular authors in the Pentagon, I am told, is James Burnham. In his new book *Containment or Liberation* he sets out in some detail the arguments for the policy of liberation as against containment. For example, he says:—

'There is nothing mysterious about the policy of liberation, no matter how complex and difficult may be the details of its application. Its goal is freedom for the peoples and nations now enslaved by the Russians as centred in the Soviet State system—freedom for all the peoples and nations now under Communist domination, including the Russian people.'

But, if it is felt that I am exaggerating the importance of Mr. Burnham and that he is not a good witness, I will quote the Assistant Secretary of State

for Far Eastern Affairs, Mr. Walter F. Robertson, who recently gave evidence to the House Appropriations Committee, and was asked the following questions by Mr. Coudert, Republican, of New York:—

Mr. Coudert: 'Did I correctly understand you to say that the heart of the present policy towards China and Formosa is that there is to be kept alive a constant threat of military action vis-a-vis Red China in the hope that at some point there will be an internal breakdown?'

Mr. Robertson: 'Yes, sir. That is my conception.'

Mr. Coudert: 'Do you believe that that posture can be maintained for an indefinite number of years?'

Mr. Robertson: 'I think we must maintain it until there are some indications that the Communists have changed their objective.'

Mr. Coudert: 'Fundamentally, does that not mean that the United States is undertaking to maintain for an indefinite period of years American dominance in the Far East?'

Mr. Robertson: 'Yes, exactly.'

That, I think, is the underlying attitude and approach of a very important section of American opinion on foreign policy, and it is against that background that, I think, we have to view the possibility of a German military contingent.

EDC, of course, means something very different to Transport House and to the British Labour Party, or that part of it which believes in the idea of a German contingent; but what we want is, I think, probably something very different from what we shall get.

### **The Hydrogen Bomb**

I wish to make just one other point. Kenneth Younger said he had no clear idea of what difference the hydrogen bomb will make in military policy. But the fact of the matter is that he and I, and the rest of us in the House of Commons recently, expressed something very clearly when we stated that we recognised that the hydrogen bomb, with its immense power constitutes a grave threat to civilisation, and we united in demanding a renewed effort to get talks about it between the heads of the Big Powers. That was a resolution which commanded great support throughout the country, and it was passed unanimously by the British House of Commons.

I think the spirit behind that resolution is completely contrary to the action implied by the proposal to re-arm Germany.

**The spirit behind the April 5th Resolution on the hydrogen bomb is that we must either have co-existence or we run the risk of ending human life on this planet. EDC, or any proposal to re-arm Germany in any other way at this time, is the antithesis of co-existence.**

We said at the Margate Conference last year that we should try and get further talks between the Heads of the Big Powers. In one of the greatest speeches he has ever made Mr. Attlee made a renewed plea for such

talks on April 5th of this year. The whole House of Commons supported him.

The Geneva Conference does not suggest that such talks would be fruitless. Indeed, as far as Russia and China are concerned, the Geneva Conference adds weight to the demand for renewed talks.

**Of course the German nation cannot indefinitely be kept as a conquered nation. But why should any Socialist argue that the only test of national freedom is the right to carry arms?**

If we say that more arms now, in one of the danger spots of the world, would set back the possibility of re-uniting Germany and would increase the tension between East and West; if we say that we are going to make another and supreme effort to get a settlement with Russia, why should the Germans regard that as a slight against their dignity?

The whole point and purpose of the re-armament programme for which the Labour Government of 1950 sacrificed so much, was that we could climb to a position where negotiations with Russia might be successful.

Surely we have now reached that position. Let us not, at this moment of time, start the world on another lap of the arms race.

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