

Trade Union Leader Revives Schacht Program for W. German Workers

Heinz Oskar Vetter, the chairman of the West German Trade Union Confederation and a former Trilateral Commission member, has been making headlines throughout West Germany over his call for a shorter work week with less pay to relieve unemployment. Under Vetter's plan, employees would work fewer hours with no compensation in wages, and the time and money saved would help establish make-work jobs for West Germany's more than one million unemployed.

Top industrial sources have already compared the plan to the slave labor programs of Nazi Finance Minister Hjalmar Schacht. "In the early 1930s, people like Franz von Papen, banker Max Warburg, and the Braun Commission elaborated an entire program which Vetter is just plagiarizing," said one source. "Schacht merely took up von Papen's labor program, and that's what Vetter wants now."

Predictably, Vetter's only support comes from fellow Atlanticists and assorted labor counterinsurgents. Free Democratic Party (FDP) parliamentarian Otto Graf von Lambsdorff endorsed Vetter's plan, as has FDP chairman and West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher. Norbert Bluem, a member of the opposition Christian Democratic Party (CDU)'s Social Policy Committee, has been defending Vetter's plan on the grounds that it will avoid the danger of setting up real public works slave-labor jobs!

Aside from these few individuals, there is broad opposition to Vetter's call for slave labor, opposition which has isolated him politically, and formed the nucleus of a joint industry-union push for new skilled jobs as the way to fight unemployment. Adolf Schmidt, a

Social Democratic Party (SPD) parliamentarian and the chairman of the Miners and Energy Union, has countered Vetter with his union's program of more energy-intensive jobs through the construction of nuclear power plants. The Printers Union and the White Collar Employees Confederation (DAG), both influenced strongly by the SPD, rejected Vetter's call. Even the Metal Workers (IGM) chairman, Eugen Loderer, another former Trilateral Commission member, has been able to support Vetter only hesitantly because of the opposition in his own union to slave labor.

The most searing criticism of Vetter's slave labor plan — and all other such programs — appeared in a Jan. 6 editorial by Hans Mindorf in *Handelsblatt*, the West German financial daily. Mindorf attacked Vetter by name and lashed out at all deindustrializing schemes that would destroy West Germany's major economic asset — its highly skilled and productive labor force. "Rationalizing jobs away...is just not what the market economy is about," Mindorf said. "...Limiting productivity and progress would cost too much because industry would have to create 250,000 new jobs just to limit progress at the level used today. The problem with all these solutions is that they are not compensated for by increased productivity; they would only be sensible in theory."

Mindorf concluded by reminding Vetter that even his own unions have rejected his call. "Vetter, by the way, provoked strong protest from the individual trade unions over his proposals to shorten the work week with no compensation pay, and these individual unions know their members better than Vetter does."

Debre Forms 'Committee of Public Safety' to Lead Gaullist Drive for Power

Following the French Constitutional Council's controversial Jan. 5 ruling that the election of a European parliament does not contradict the Constitution of the Fifth Republic authored by the late

General De Gaulle in 1958, former French Prime Minister Michel Debré has announced that he will officially create a "Committee for the Independence and Unity of France." The new Gaullist committee,

announced by Debré at a Jan. 20 press conference, will act to stymie President Giscard d'Estaing's plans to integrate France into an Atlanticist-dominated "political Europe," and to frustrate former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's stated desire to make accommodations with the president on this issue. Debré has already stated that he will challenge careerist Chirac's leadership over the Gaullist RPR party, and possibly found a new party dedicated to the implementation of a rigorous national independence policy.

In anticipation of his press conference, Debré said in the Jan. 14 issue of the French newsdaily, *Le Figaro*, that his fundamental goal is the formation of an emergency "public safety" government, whose function will be to save France from general economic collapse and

Atlanticist control. Debré stated that this government must, at the latest, be formed immediately after the municipal elections, scheduled for the end of March.

Already, several Gaullist personalities and groups have voiced support for Debré's initiative. RPR member Alexandre Sanguinetti said last week that, should the European election plan go through Parliament, Giscard's government would lose all "legitimacy, even though it would still be legal in the technical sense of the word."

The Gaullist youth group Union des Jeunes pour le Progrès issued a Jan. 11 communique declaring itself "ready to join all those, including the Communists and the Royalists, who would like to thwart the disastrous and dangerous Giscardian initiative."