

RESEARCH PAPERS

The International Socialist Labor
Movement and the Elimination of the
“German Problem”

A comparative view on ideas, politics, and policy
of the French, English, Swedish and US Labor
Movement

Ursula Langkau-Alex



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The International Socialist Labor Movement and the Elimination of the “German Problem”

A comparative view on
ideas, politics, and policy
of the French, English, Swedish
and US Labor Movement

Ursula Langkau-Alex

A shorter version of this paper was presented at the session on *The Politics of Twentieth-Century European Labor Movements in Comparative Perspective* at the One Hundred Twelfth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association in Seattle, WA, January 8-11, 1998.

This article discusses two different items of my actual research project on the International Socialist Labor Movement and the concerns for a (re-)democratization of Germany after the Nazi-period. While most of the literature which deals with this matter focuses on the years after 1945 taking the (last years of the) Second World War as “introduction” or “prelude”, this project aims at comparing the ideas and patterns which in the years 1933-1945 were developed by Socialist/Social Democratic parties and trade unions, some collateral organizations and sympathizing individuals of France (including French Resistance and Exile), Sweden, England and the United States of America.¹ Point of departure are the international organizations, above all the Labour and Socialist International (LSI), the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) – their guide lines, resolutions and debates on Fascism/National Socialism with all its implications and challenges to Democracy and Peace. Questioning the basis of the agreements as well as their transformation into politics on the respective national levels will enlighten the concurrences and the diversities of ideology, terminology and policy. This will also indicate the reasons for the decline of Internationalism at the eve of World War II as well as the reasons for – or against – a new Socialist Internationalism and Germany’s place therein, the discussion of which already started during the war.

1. The working title is: “Von der Diktatur zur Demokratie. Ideen und Modelle zur Umgestaltung Deutschlands in der sozialdemokratischen/sozialistischen Bewegung nach 1933 in internationalem Vergleich” (From Dictatorship to Democracy. Ideas and patterns within the International Socialist Labor Movement on the democratic transformation of Germany after the Nazi-period, 1933-1945).

As it seems to be, the notions of “the Germans” and, consequently, the ideas of how to (re-)democratize and (re-)integrate them into the international order of civilization, furthermore, in the thirties, of how to prevent the War and – in the forties – how to win the Peace, were not merely expressions of the different national political “cultures”. To a high degree they were bound up with the structure, the status and the policies of the respective national organizations in their own country, and with the foreign or the peace and war policy of the governments concerned. These aspects, however, cannot here be dealt with in detail.²

The first part of the following will deal with party policies in 1938/1939, the second one with the post-war planning of trade unions.

I

The Labour and Socialist International and the Fight for Democracy and for Peace

Since the January 1938 meeting of the LSI Executive a special discussion on “the problems of the Labour Movement connected with the ‘Fight for Democracy’” had been or should have been an item on the agenda of the respective next meetings.³ The idea had eroded after several Executive members had reported on the persecutions and executions in the Soviet Union and the communist policies in Spain, including the bolshevization of the Socialist Party, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, on a possible “socialist concentration” of the Austrian and the German Social Democratic and Socialist groups in order to create an allied, democratic counterpart to *and* partner with the communists in the struggle against Fascism in its various forms. Despite the Soviet Union’s politics and the Communist International’s and its sections’ policies, the Austrians, above all, were convinced that only a united front of the labor organizations and its co-operation with a co-ordinated foreign policy of England, France and the Soviet Union would be able to overcome National Socialism, the worst of all Fascist performances.

The pressure on the LSI Executive to react, even though only verbally, to a series of political crises had caused one postponement of the discussion after another. However, the *Anschluss* of Austria with Germany; the Japanese aggression on China; the losses of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War; the handing over of Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland to Germany by the Munich Accord; all these events had increased the dimension of the problems, when at least in January 1939 the debate took place.

2. The necessity of taking these aspects into account was in general already stressed f.i. by Gerard Braunthal, “The Anglo-Saxon Model of Democracy in the West German Political Consciousness after World War II”, in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XVIII (1978), pp. 245-277.

3. Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG), Amsterdam (International Institute of Social History), Archive Sozialistische Arbeiter-Internationale (SAI)/Labour and Socialist International (LSI), 530/3: C[ircular] 60/38, June 11th, 1938, To the Secretaries of the Parties Affiliated to the LSI and to the Members of the LSI Executive, signed by Fr[iedrich] Adler (quotation); see also for the following: Ursula Langkau-Alex, “*Der Kampf für die Demokratie und den Frieden*”. *Die Debatte in der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale 1918/1939* (IISG Research Papers, 2), Amsterdam (IISG), 2., um Literatur erweiterte Auflage 1992, “Einleitung” (2nd, enlarged edition 1992, “Introduction”).

Eventually, the issue “Fight for Peace” had been added to that of “Fight for Democracy”, after the General Council of the IFTU had presented its resolution “Action for World Peace” to the Bureau of the LSI. By proposing that the two Internationals together should program a conference of all States, including Nazi Germany and Japan, in order to aim at really maintaining World Peace, the authors expressed the view that “Munich” by no means had taken off the sword of Damocles, i.e. a Great War started by Nazi Germany, and, furthermore, that the League of Nations, having lost the membership of the aggressors and being paralyzed by the appeasers, was no longer able to take action.⁴

It is open to argument whether the idea of a conference of States was diametral opposite to the World Peace Congress which the communist inspired *Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix* (International Peace Campaign) had organized in Brussels in September 1936. The RUP/IPC had officially been founded by the English Pacifist Lord Robert Cecil and the French Radical Socialist Pierre Cot on the occasion of the Abyssinian crisis in autumn 1935, the intention being to push “from below” the League of Nations to active measures for peace. Yet after the *Wehrmacht* had occupied the demilitarized Rhineland and, even more threatening, after in Spain the armed upheaval of the generals against the democratically chosen republican government had turned out to a Civil War, with Germany and Italy supplying the rebels notwithstanding the nonintervention treaty, the 4500 delegates of organizations from 35 countries and of international organizations at the World Peace Conference had anxiously stuck to the position of “integral pacifism”. The delegates of the German exile section of the RUP had been excluded in the vain hope to obtain the participation of official delegates from Nazi Germany.⁵ With regard to the exiled, LSI and IFTU which in 1936 had refused to participate as organizations because of the so-called communist influence, but had conceded individual participation, in 1939 would have acted just the same way if the suggestion had been realized.

At the January 1939 LSI Executive’s debate on “The Fight for Democracy and for Peace” 27 members were present. Statements by eight affiliated parties and one paper with merely “personal” theses by the President of the LSI, the Belgian Louis De Brouckère, had been circulated beforehand.⁶ On the whole, the debate demonstrated that Democracy and Peace were seen not as isolated nor abstract philosophical ideas but as twin challenges to policies in all fields of civilization: administration, law, economy, social securities, education, arts... Yet the differences lay in details, of which the question of *Socialism* and the definition of *Democracy* proved to be major items of divergence because of their connotations with Fight against Fascism, Revolution, Liberty, Equality, Welfare.

While for instance the exiled Menshevik Theodor Dan and his companions propagated Socialism to be the immediate goal of a revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against capitalist reaction in order to prevent Fascism in every country, the French Socialist

4. IISG, SAI/LSI, 530/14-15: C. 124/38 To the Members of the Executive of the LSI, December 14th, 1938, signed by Fr. Adler; *The International Trade Union Movement*, Official Organ of the International Federation of Trade Unions (Paris), Vol. XVIII (1938), p. 199.

5. Ursula Langkau-Alex, “Das Rassemblement Universel pour la Paix, die Sektion der deutschen Exulanten und der Weltfriedenskongreß in Brüssel 1936”, in Sigrid Bock, Wolfgang Klein, Dietrich Scholze (eds, under the auspices of the Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Zentralinstitut für Literaturgeschichte), *Die Waffen nieder! Schriftsteller in den Friedensbewegungen des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin (Akademie Verlag) 1989, pp. 201-210 and 330-332.

6. See documents 1-9 in U. Langkau-Alex, “*Der Kampf für die Demokratie und den Frieden*” (see note 2).

Salomon Grumbach attacked this view pointing to the weakened position of the socialists; instead, the defense of the French bourgeois democracy even in its actual condition by a broad alliance had to be the order of the day.⁷ The paper of his more leftist companion Jean Zyromski raised the “problem of the *Popular Front*”, the mass movement which in 1936, after having come to governmental power by parliamentary elections, in the *Accord Matignon* had achieved some of the socialist aims the SFIO had stood for, thus had strengthened Democracy in the sense of emancipation of the working class. A new Popular Front led by “Socialism”, so Zyromski, should create – obviously after general elections – a

“transitory regime which Marx has described as the *dictatorship of the proletariat* which necessitates a restriction or even the suspension of certain ‘democratic’ rights and liberties; but these measures imposed by the conditions of the fight itself could never form part of a stable and permanent system of government”.⁸

What we see here within the SFIO and with the Menshevik Dan, can generally be observed within the LSI as a whole, namely: the interpretation of *Socialism* as a movement that – one day – would transform the political (bourgeois) democracy into a Social Democracy, and *Socialism* as the ultimate goal that really would represent “organised liberty”, “complete democracy” and thus guarantee Peace – as De Brouckère had formulated.⁹

De Brouckère, a true Internationalist, rejected the idea of a general State Conference as vehemently as he rejected neutrality to which his own governing party along with the Danish party recently had joined notorious neutralist nations as the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. Instead, he associated himself to the resolution which the SFIO Extraordinary Congress, held from 24 till 26 December 1938, had adopted by majority. Besides its approval of the recent efforts to rearmament taken by the Daladier-government – which was contrary to the SFIO’s refusal or at least hesitations to rearmament when in power –, the party Congress had plead “for an initiative taken by France, Great Britain and the United States of America acting in complete agreement, or even by France alone”, for “calling an international conference”. De Brouckère even went further when demanding regional defence treaties against Germany¹⁰ and requiring that all appeasement measures like “to retrace certain frontiers or to effect new partition of colonies, of markets and of raw materials” should be refused. The frontiers had to be lowered, “to make them easier

7. See document 10, the report of the Austrian Oscar Pollak, in *ibid.*, here p. 56.

8. Quotation from the original English translation of Zyromski’s paper (document Nr. 7 in German in *ibid.*), IISG, SAI 541/4: C.16/39, “Thesis on the Fight for Democracy”. By Jean Zyromski.

9. Quotation from the original English translation of De Brouckère’s theses (document nr. 9 in German in U. Langkau-Alex, “*Der Kampf für die Demokratie und den Frieden*”...), IISG, SAI 539/17-24, C. 7/39, here 539/24.

10. Otto Bauer, Theodor Dan and Jean Zyromski in their pamphlet *Die Internationale und der Krieg* (Mit einem Vorwort von Friedrich Adler und einer Erklärung von H.N. Brailsword), Wien 1935, had already demanded that International Socialism should support regional defense treaties in order to prevent an attack of Hitler Germany on the peace, yet in doing so should watch the danger that “all such treaties could become a means in the hands of capitalist states to imperialist policy of enslaving and conquering”. (Translation of the last part of item 5 on p. 9 by U. Langkau-Alex; an English translation of the pamphlet was not available).

to cross for goods, men and ideas, and to ensure to all national communities the necessary autonomy, to all men, whatever State they may live in, the same essential rights".¹¹

This latter point of view in fact anticipated essential parts of the Atlantic Charter, which on 14 August 1941 would result from the Conference between US-President Delano D. Roosevelt and Great Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

The Social Democratic Labour Party of Sweden (SAP – Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti), since 1914 the most successful party of the country and since the 1932 elections (again) in power (with the exception of the short period from 19 June 1936 till 28 September 1936), end September 1936 had formed a coalition government with the Agrarian Party. By this, SAP leader and Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson had set a step nearer to the realization of his idea saying, that with regard to Sweden neighbouring two totalitarian states – i.e. Communist Soviet Union and National Socialist Germany – a national consensus would be the best guarantee for the safeguard of the country's democracy and territory. Guided by the SAP's affinity to Neo Socialism or People's Socialism and by his own *Gemeinschaftsideologie*, Hansson in his function of Prime Minister since the 1932 elections, after Hitler had come to power in Germany had succeeded in averting the threat of National Socialism in Sweden by the integration policy of his "People's Home program".¹² Hansson's message said: "There is nothing National Socialism in Germany can do by Dictatorship that Swedish Social Democracy can't do better by Democracy; in short, Fascism is not needed in a country like Sweden".¹³

With regard to foreign policy, Hansson and his companions tried strictly to separate SAP's party and inner-Swedish policy from state politics. For instance, the government signed and respected the nonintervention treaty concerning the Spanish Civil War, while within the LSI and the IFTU the representatives of the party and of the Confederation of Trade Unions, *Landsorganisationen* (LO), protested against this policy and largely contributed to various solidarity funds; they even helped to equip the International Brigades with volunteers.¹⁴

The communication of the Swedish delegation to the LSI Executive's debate on "The Fight for Democracy and for Peace" which was approved by the Danish delegation, maneuvered between the side of the *labor* party and its national and international aims and the side of the *ruling* party and its specific governmental responsibilities. Obviously the

11. All quotations from De Brouckère's theses (see note 9), here SAI, 539/23-24.

12. The People's Home program – *folkhemms model* – is defined as: "the emergent Social Democratic state should be like a home, a family, in which solidarity is natural and mutual help instinctive", quoted from Gøsta Esping-Andersen, "The Making of the Social Democratic Welfare State", in Klaus Misgeld, Karl Molin, and Klas Åmark (eds), *Creating Social Democracy. A Century of the Social Democratic Labor Party in Sweden*, University Park, PA (The Pennsylvania State University Press) 1992, pp. 35-66, here p. 42.

13. Translated quotation from Alf W. Johansson, "Den svenska socialdemokratin och fascismen på trettioalet. Några reflexioner", in Mats Bergquist, Alf W. Johansson och Krister Wahlbäck (eds), *Utrikespolitik och Historia. Studier tillägnade Wilhelm M. Carlgren den 6 maj 1987*. Stockholm (Militärhistoriska Förlaget) 1987, pp. 91-101, here p. 93.

14. See Alf W. Johansson and Torbjörn Norman, "Sweden's Security and World Peace: Social Democracy and Foreign Policy", in Klaus Misgeld *et al.*, *Creating Social Democracy* (see note 12), pp. 339-373, esp. pp. 346-348. There are many more articles in this book which enlighten various aspects of the Swedish Social Democracy.

authors doubted whether the LSI would be able to prevent Germany from starting the War, divided as the International was between divergent national states and interests of the affiliated parties. But because the International could hardly declare that the War was inevitable, the authors defined the tasks which realistically could be done: the LSI should

- respect the policy of the national organizations whatsoever;
- intensify the propaganda for democracy and peace;
- advance the communication with and between the affiliated parties;
- coordinate “the economic and social measures between the countries which in face of a war, are linked together by common interests”.¹⁵

In anticipating later events, I would like to add, that the last item became essential after the Second World War was broken out. In order to prevent dumping prices, SAP and LO tried to come to agreements against the abandonment of working conditions and hour standards in the war production (in one or the other) of the belligerent and neutral states, via the links with the Emergency International Trade Union Council, the IFTU war-time headquarters in London, and, directly, with the British Trades Union Congress (TUC).¹⁶

William Gillies, head of the Labour Party’s International Department, in his oral communication even beat the pragmatic view of the Swedish statement on politics and policy.¹⁷ Though the Labour Party was not in power, Gillies – as the Austrian Oscar Pollak reported – demonstrated “the full self-confidence of an old democracy and the full traditional aversion of the English to ‘theories’”. Instead of fruitless debates on Democracy, Gillies demanded practical actions of the Democrats to end the war in Spain and to help the emigrants in and from Czechoslovakia. His demand for a troika of France, England and the United States to prevent a material and moral victory of Germany, Italy and Japan over Western values in a possible future war, met with the above mentioned recent resolution of the SFIO. On the whole, Gillies demonstrated that the Labour Party’s internationalism in fact was foreign policy – as a German exiled politician had clearly observed earlier.¹⁸ With regard to a fascist/national socialist threat within the country, Gillies considered Fascism – and obviously he covered with this term Bolshevism, too – to be the result of a dictatorial policy which was based on the false construction of class antagonisms being irreconcilable. But, so Gillies, parliamentary democracy, and only parliamentary democracy could solve the antagonisms and pave the way from Political

15. Quotation from the original English translation of the communication by the Swedish delegation (document nr. 4 in German in U. Langkau-Alex, “*Der Kampf für die Demokratie und den Frieden*”...), IISG, SAI 536/13-15, C. 103/38, here 536/15.

16. See the correspondence of the International Department of the LO in: Landsorganisationen i Sverige, Stockholm, Archive Landsorganisationen, Fackfr. Internat. [Fackföreningsinternationalen] – Internationella Sekretariatet, 1941-1944.

17. A useful sociologically based comparison between the policy of the Labour Party and the SAP from the inter-war period till the eighties is: Malcom B. Hamilton, *Democratic Socialism in Britain and Sweden*, Foreword by A.H. Halsey (University of Reading European and International Studies). Basingstoke, Hampshire and London (The Macmillan Press Ltd.) 1989.

18. IISG, Collection Neu Beginnen, 8: Letter by Evelyn Lend (that is Evelyn Anderson) to Tony Sender, April 22, 1934.

Democracy to Socialism; and he characterized the Labour Party's policy as being "one of humanity, of reason, of democracy, and of agreement".¹⁹

To conclude this short review on Democracy, Socialism and Peace at the eve of World War II: Despite the general judgement on Nazi Germany as being the worst enemy to the democratic ideals and socialist goals the LSI – and the IFTU – had always stood for, and despite the judgement on Nazi Germany as being the incarnation of War, the majority of the parties and their representatives focused on "fascist" or – to choose the overlap term – totalitarian adversary within their own country. The respective concepts to eliminate the "German" problem outside their borders – that is to say to overcome National Socialism in Germany *and* its moral influences on and physical threat to Democracy and Peace in Europe (and the World) – only were based on the experiences at home and on traditional foreign policy in the interest of the "balance of power". Yet with view to the latter, there is one difference to the period previous to World War I. Though the Labour Party, the SAP and the SFIO eventually had consented to re-armament or even had stimulated it, there hardly was any readiness for war.

In May/June 1940, after the *Wehrmacht* had defeated France and had raided the neutral neighbouring countries Belgium, Luxemburg, The Netherlands to the West and Denmark to the North, the LSI completely collapsed. Nearly all continental socialist parties establishing their exile headquarters in London; the Labour Party having entered a coalition government with the Conservatives; the SAP having formed a multiparty, "national" cabinet governing Sweden in dubious neutrality – all these facts definitely impeded to take joint actions. Already in the period since the debate on "The Fight for Democracy and the Fight for Peace", the affiliated parties more and more had proved their incapability to bridge the antagonism between the national interests in view of Nazi Germany, the war and early peace conditions. Already in May 1939, Louis De Brouckère and LSI's General Secretary Friedrich Adler had resigned because of the lack of Labor Internationalism. The Belgian Camille Huysmans took over the presidency, after the first successor of De Brouckère, the Dutch J.W. Albarda, had resigned because of his appointment as Minister of Traffic. In his London exile, Huysmans concentrated on Belgian policy; with regard to Germany, he turned to Vansittardism, thus isolating himself from the socialists who, with the idea to eliminate the "German problem", were in favor of re-creating the International after the war.

In this constellation, the IFTU or to be correct, its Emergency International Trade Union Council (EITUC), which was established in London after the Paris headquarters had to be abandoned, developed new international elan. Britain's TUC became the centre of co-ordinating the trade unions' activities against "Fascism" all over the world, and TUC's Secretary Sir Walter Citrine, who remained President of the IFTU/EITUC, was the driving force. A "French Trade Union Centre in Great Britain" was constituted in 1940, followed

19. All quotations translated from Oscar Pollak's report (document 10 in U. Langkau-Alex, "*Der Kampf für die Demokratie und den Frieden*", here p. 58) by U. Langkau-Alex; a more detailed account of Gillies' communication was given by the representatives of the SAP, Rickard Lindström and Allan Vougt in "*Rapport från Socialistiska Internationalens exekutivkommittés sammanträde i Bryssel 14-16 januari 1939*", Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (ARA), Stockholm, Archive SAP, F 07:2: Rapporten frå sammenträdan i Socialistiska Arbetarinternationalen 1934-1939.

by the “*Landesgrupe deutscher Gewerkschafter in Großbritannien*” and other exiled unionist organizations from occupied countries in 1941. A “British-Soviet Trade Union Committee” was established late in 1941, and, as the American Federation of Labor (AFL) refused to work together with representatives of the Soviet Union, an apart “Joint Committee Representative of the British TUC and the American Federation of Labor” was consented after the German’s raid on the Soviet Union in June 1942. Till the autumn of 1943, the Swedish LO practically stood aside, yet, more or less, stimulated discussions of German and other exiled unionists in its country.²⁰

II

IFTU, Post-War Economic Policies and Educational Reconstruction

To start with this part of my communication, I would like to sketch how the unions reacted to the victory of the Nazi regime in Germany. The main focus here lies on the US-unions because in contrast to the Socialist Party under Norman Thomas they were a real political factor in the US. Furthermore the international influence of the American Federation of Labor increased when its President William Green was elected Vice-President of the IFTU in 1939.

From 1921 onward, the AFL more or less had operated in “splendid isolation” from the post-war new founded IFTU and from Europe. The AFL and its affiliated unions concentrated on vehement but mere trade unionist struggle within the United States’ capitalist system, yet Socialism as a technical term and, above all, as a social system they detested. The Eastern European family background of a number of leading American trade unionists and the experiences with Russia’s, then the Soviet Unions’ politics surely was one of the reasons. When in 1937 the AFL at least re-entered the IFTU, the leading motive, however, was to withhold the recently split-off Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) from joining the International.²¹

Already at its Convention in October 1933, the AFL resolved “to rally the membership [...] for the fight against fascism in Germany and elsewhere”. It “declared a boycott against German-made goods and German service”, as long as “the German government” prohibited “bona fide trade unions” and persecuted “Jewish people, merely because of their religious beliefs”. Moreover, the AFL initiated a “Chest for Liberation of Workers of Europe”. Yet the support remained on the level of unpolitical solidarity. In the name of “Liberty”, the AFL, in the words of its President, was “not [...] fighting any political order set up in

20. See the documents in the Archives of Landsorganisationen, f.i. Korr. Storbritannien – Tyskland 1943-1947 [27], Storbritannien 1945-1947 samt Brittiska ambassaden 1943-1947; cf. Helmut Müssener, *Exil in Schweden. Politische und kulturelle Emigration nach 1933*. München (Carl Hanser Verlag) 1974, pp. 119-134.

21. See Hans Gottfurcht, *Die Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung im Weltgeschehen. Geschichte, Probleme, Aufgaben*, Köln (Bund-Verlag) 1962, pp. 32, 75-80, 133-135; cf. A.P. Coldrick and Philip Jones, *The International Directory of the Trade Union Movement*, New York (Facts on File) 1979, pp.1226-1286; Peter Lösche, “Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika”, in Siegfried Mielke (ed.), *Internationales Gewerkschafts-Handbuch*, Opladen (Leske + Budrich 1983), pp.1157-1192.

Germany”.²²

It was Sir Walter Citrine who in his address to the AFL San Francisco Convention in October 1934 and on a following speech-tour through trade union centres in the United States, tried to make understand the American unionists what the victory of Nazism *politically* meant not only to the labor movement, to the Jews and to the citizens of Germany in general, but to Democracy and Peace in whole Europe. In a *tour d’horizon historique*, he explained the main political, economic and psychological reasons for the rise of Italian and German Fascism, and he warned his audience of the “poisonous growth of Fascism” that might develop even in the United States and jeopardize its freedom and security.²³

In March 1939 the AFL stimulated members of the “right wing” of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD – *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) to organize the German Labor Delegation (GLD).²⁴ Yet despite these relatively close contacts and despite several more trips Sir Walter Citrine and IFTU’s General Secretary Walter Schevenels made to and through the United States, the AFL remained nearly blind and deaf for the *political* changes in Europe. The published *Proceedings* of the Annual Conventions reveal, that the AFL’s “foreign policy” more and more focused on Japan’s military policy against and in China and its possible challenges to the United States. “Pearl Harbor” in 1941 was seen as a verification as well as a justification of this view. However, the “Battle of Britain” already had waked up the AFL to the military aggression of Nazi Greater Germany and the danger to racial minorities, religious beliefs and general morale on the one hand, and the need of arms production in the United States on the other hand. In any case, the Battle had provoked an enormous solidarity with “lonely” Britain: arms, food and clothes were shipped nearly day and night. But only after “Pearl Harbor” the AFL was willing to support the United States’ military engagement not only in the Asian region but also in Europe. Yet the US Government’s joining the War Alliance between Great Britain and the Soviet Union by no means brought about a change of the AFL’s vivid anti-communism.

Contrary to the AFL, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was political and – in the specific American way – socialist minded, its ideal of the socio-economic order being *industrial democracy*. Its policy fitted pretty well in the New Deal. There was a close linkage with the Roosevelt Administration, then – after the CIO as a whole had overcome

22. William Green, President of the AFL, in his foreword to “Labor Under Hitler”, published by the Chest [for Liberation of Workers of Europe] on March 13, 1935, Document No. 3, in: American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (ed.), *German-American Trade Union Solidarity in the Struggle against Fascism: 1933-1945. How the American trade unions helped their persecuted German colleagues. A Report* (Publication Number B-84), Washington, DC, April 1985, pp. 22-23.

23. British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES)/London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Walter McLennan Citrine Papers, 1/17: America 1934, Vol. 1: Visit to America, 14th September, 1934, to 19th November, 1934, the “Address” to the AFL San Francisco Convention is printed, 17 pp.

24. See *Mit dem Gesicht nach Deutschland. Eine Dokumentation über die sozialdemokratische Emigration. Eine Dokumentation über die sozialdemokratische Emigration*. Aus dem Nachlaß von Friedrich Stampfer ergänzt durch andere Überlieferungen, hrsg. im Auftrage der Kommission für Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien von Erich Matthias, bearbeitet von Werner Link. Düsseldorf (Droste) 1968; cf. Albrecht Ragg, *The German Socialist Emigration in the United States 1933 to 1945*. Ph.D., Loyola University of Chicago, Ill. 1977.

its pacifism – with the Office of Strategic Services and the Office of War Information (the latter is true for the AFL, too). The political affinity to and co-operation with left wing Social Democrat and Socialist exiled Germans as well as with the American Friends of German Freedom surely made the CIO alert of the immense threat National Socialism meant for Germany, for Europe, for mankind and humanity.

The American Friends of German Freedom had been founded in 1935 by leaders of the Jewish Labor Committee and left liberal intellectuals; its Chairman became the protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, its main task was to aid in the active fight against Nazism inside and outside Germany.²⁵ In the summer of 1944 the American Friends changed its name into American Association for a Democratic Germany and concentrated on supporting, sponsoring and promoting the recently established German exile organization “Council for a Democratic Germany” and its plans and guiding rules which covered all essential fields of future German administration, economy, social and cultural life.²⁶

From the summer of 1944 onward, however, both CIO and AFL – the latter denounced the Council as being a communist organization – had lost their interest in the exiled. Supporting morally and by hard working the war efforts of their country and its Allies, they backed up the war aims and the hard plans for Germany which the Allied increasingly concreted at different conferences. The hard opposition of most of the exiled against a territorial division and a possible transformation of Germany into a de-industrialized agrarian country, was blamed as being originated in nationalism. The request of the exiled for mercy with the common German people, done not at least in the interest of a durable peace, AFL, CIO and Jewish Labor Committee hardly could comprehend after having heard of the atrocities which the German military and civilian forces had committed in occupied countries, and more over, after having heard of the Holocaust.

Yet at least one more reason for the diminishing concern of the US unions with exiled Germans and with post-war planning for Germany has to be mentioned. The more the war productions and general war efforts increased, the more the unions focused at the “War at Home”. Big Business and Roosevelt Administration both tried to intervene in the unions’ policy for purchasing-power parity. They tried to cut the freedom of collective bargaining and to generally force the prohibition of strikes, whereas the unions “with but minor exceptions” had kept the pledge of a “not-strike policy” after Pearl Harbor.²⁷ “Totalitarianism”, even “Fascism” were the invectives, leaders of the AFL as well as of the CIO characterized this (attempted) policy with.²⁸

25. University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR, Maurice J. Goldbloom Papers, 1/15: Confidential Memorandum: History of the American Friends of German Freedom, n.d.; the epithet “American” was added in 1940.

26. See Ursula Langkau-Alex and Thomas M. Ruprecht (eds), *Was soll aus Deutschland werden? Der Council for a Democratic Germany in New York 1944-1945. Aufsätze und Dokumente* (Quellen und Studien zur Sozialgeschichte. Hrsg. vom Internationalen Institut für Sozialgeschichte, Amsterdam, Bd. 15). Frankfurt/New York (Campus Verlag) 1995.

27. See Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor’s War at Home. The CIO in World War II*. Cambridge, MA etc. (Cambridge University Press) 1982. The problems the CIO was confronted with were the same the AFL and others had to meet, cf. f.i. – also for the following – the Address of David Dubinsky, President of the Internal Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), to the 25th Convention of this union in May 1944, in *Twenty-Fifth Convention of the ILGWU*, n.p., n.d. [Jersey City, NJ 1944], pp. 7-18.

28. See f.i. the pamphlet *The Little Steel Formula. Position of the American Federation of Labor Members of*

For the post-war period, the unions – and here I give the example of the CIO – were concerned with organizing the transformation of the war economy into one of “full peacetime consumption, employment and production”, which had to be planned by a “federal agency” and “headed by a policy board, with representatives from agriculture, labor and business”.²⁹ Further problems in creating a “Good Life at Home”, thus strengthening and guaranteeing democracy and making the United States “once more become the symbol of freedom”, were:

- the incorporation of the veterans returning from the battle fields and adult education;
- the balance of wages and prices and extending of social security;
- the stimulation of “the gumption of the American citizen”;
- the “grass roots common sense of local communities in town or country”.³⁰

Looking abroad finally, the CIO Post-War Planning Committee argued:

“The rebuilding of democratic unions in territories liberated from the Axis should be encouraged by our occupying forces. Unions were the greatest bulwark of democracy before the coming of fascism and were among the first victims of the dictators. [...] As a basic democratic institution, they will contribute to the growth of political democracy.”³¹

Germany was not directly mentioned – a phenomenon which is more often to be observed in statements of other unions -, and perhaps it was not included either, when it was said, that the “period of military government should be kept to a minimum”, and: that

“Nazi economic institutions must be destroyed, and democratic self-government restored as soon as possible. Revived and strengthened democratic unions can be the foundation for revived and strengthened democratic nations, and collectively the free nations of the world can build a world society based on law, not on force.”³²

In order to realize its vision of world-wide peace due to Democracy and Welfare based on “Labor participation in national and international agencies”, the CIO, contrary to the AFL, participated in building up a World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). This should include the communist unions outside and, above all, inside the Soviet Union. In this

the National War Labor Board, as presented to the Board Hearing Sept. 26th, 1944 (= Statement of Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and Statement of Vice President Matthew Woll), The George Meany Memorial Archives, Silver Spring, MD, George Meany Collection, Collection 7: Office of the Secretary-Treasurer, AFK – George Meany (1941-1952), Box 0003, Folder 013: II. War Time Files: Labor-Management Conferences 1941-1945.

29. See f.i. Department of Research & Education of the CIO (ed.), *As we win*, Report No. 1 of the CIO Post-War Planning Committee: John Brophy, Clinton S. Golden, J. Raymond Walsh, with a Foreword by Philipp Murray, CIO President, dated: January 1944. Washington 1944, quotations p. 14.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 29, also for the following quotation.

respect the CIO met with the TUC and the French *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT).

In 1943 the French communists had re-united to the socialist CGT, after having been expelled or having withdrawn themselves following the conclusion of the Hitler-Stalin Non-Aggression Treaty of August 23, 1939. In 1936, under the sign of the Popular Front, the communist *Confédération Générale du Travail Unifié* (CGTU) had for the first time merged with the socialist CGT and received its name. In the thirties as well as in the *maquis* of the forties, the CGT successfully organized German partial and trade union exiled. It was one of the most experienced trade unions in the fight against what generally was called Fascism: National-Socialism in (Greater)Germany, Francoism in Spain and, last but not least, in France itself the Leagues and the *Action Française* in the thirties, the German occupation and – but at the last – the Vichy regime.³³

The CGT affiliated to the *Conseil national de la Résistance* (CNR – National Council of the Resistance), which in April 1943 was founded as head organization of the various, heterogeneous and wide and isolated spread resistance groups of France. Along with activists of the clandestine Communist and, above all, the Socialist Party³⁴ the CGT determined the economic and social issues of the Action Program (*Programme d'Action*) of the CNR. It was adopted in March 1944. With regard to economic reforms being the key stone of (re-)building and guaranteeing Democracy, the CNR Action Program proved a similar vision as the US-unions. Yet the CNR avowed Socialism and voted for far reaching nationalizations and state planning, the aim to intensify the national production being only one of the reasons. The field of social policy resembled that of the CIO; it began with “the right to work and the right to rest” and ended with the right of equal education for all children regardless their social state. The most concern, however, was paid to the rural workers and the structure of agriculture.³⁵

In principal the programs of the CIO and of the CNR/CGT should apply to the working

33. A short review, but based on documents as well as literature, of the “tendencies” within and the policies of the CGT is given by Henk Reitsma, “Mixed Hopes and Losses. Aktivitäten und Ergebnisse in Frankreich 1945-1950”, in Horst Lademacher (ed.), *Gewerkschaften im Ost-West-Konflikt. Die Politik der American Federation of Labor nach dem II. Weltkrieg* (Kasseler Forschungen zur Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 1), Melsungen (Walter Schwarz Verlag) 1982, pp. 143-191, here esp. pp. 147-154; cf. more detailed and for the whole period, Henry W. Ehrmann, *French Labor. From Popular Front to Liberation*, New York (Oxford University Press) 1947.

34. See the “Proposition de principe d’un programme commun à la Résistance française” which the General-Secretary of the *Parti Socialiste Clandestin*, Daniel Mayer, had redacted as the common document of the clandestine PS and the London exilegroup *Comité de liaison des socialistes français en Grande Bretagne (Groupe Jean Jaurès)* in May/June 1943, document nr. XIV in: Daniel Mayer, *Les Socialistes dans la Résistance. Souvenirs et documents*, Paris (Presse Universitaire de France) 1968, pp. 218-223; Office universitaire de recherche socialiste, Bibliothèques et Archives, Paris (OURS): *Comité de liaison des socialistes français en Grande Bretagne (Groupe Jean Jaurès)*, Procès-Verbal de la séance du 21 Juin 1943, pp. 158 ff.; cf. Ursula Langkau-Alex, “Daniel Mayer, le Parti socialiste (SFIO) et le ‘problème allemand’ en vue d’une ordre européenne post-fasciste, 1940-1945”, *Matériaux pour l’histoire de notre temps* [1998, forthcoming].

35. The Program of the CNR is published in M. Michel/B. Mirkine-Guetzévich (eds), *Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance (Documents clandestins – 1940-1944)*, Paris (Presses Universitaires de France) 1954, pp. 215-218.

class of other countries, too. But at the World Trade Union Conference, which was organized by the TUC and held in London in February 1945, German trade unionists in exile were excluded though they had participated in the post-war planning of the Emergency International Trade Union Council. Far reaching programs of reconstruction to democracy were only presented and discussed for the victim countries.³⁶

In his long speech Sir Walter Citrine, when dealing with Germany, declared:

“Germany must be democratised, by the establishment of such political and economic conditions within which the framework of the institutions of free citizenship can be developed, under stringent guarantees, including particularly the re-establishment of a free Trade Union Movement, freedom of political and cultural associations, freedom of the press and public meetings.”³⁷

However, this was meant for a far future. Most of the delegates agreed, that after the military defeat and unconditional surrender, the Germans had first to be punished. Punishment was discussed as a sub-question of the agenda item “Reparation”. Different views whether the German people should be treated with the same methods the Nazi regime handled in using the peoples of the occupied countries for its war industry showed up. Though Citrine acknowledged the right of the victim countries to claim the service of German workers for rebuilding and repairing the damages, which the German armed forces had deliberately caused and the reconstruction of which was essential for the return “to civilised life”, he rejected forced labor:

“We cannot contemplate, as trade unionists, whatever our nationality that labour of any kind shall be degraded to the level of slavery. There will be an obligation upon Trade Unions in the countries where German labour is used for these reconstruction purposes to see that it is not exploited or forced to carry on under inhuman conditions.”³⁸

Whereas the CIO-delegate James B. Carey favoured rather hard measures³⁹, the French Socialist Louis Saillant, in his quality both as President of the CNR and candidate for the vice-presidency of the newly to be founded World Federation of Trade Unions, declared that the French delegation refused to identify the working class of whatever a nation with

36. See the documents in IISG, Collection IFTU, 310-315; the origins and general political problems of the World Federation of Trade Unions which was officially founded at a following conference in Paris in October 1945 are discussed in Horst Lademacher/Jürgen C. Heß/Herman L. Langeveld/Henk Reitsma, “Der Weltgewerkschaftsbund im Spannungsfeld des Ost-West-Konflikts. Zur Gründung, Tätigkeit und Spaltung der Gewerkschaftsinternationale”, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, XVIII (1978), pp. 119-215, see esp. pp. 119-138; cf. John P. Windmuller, *American Labor and the International Labor Movement 1940 to 1953*, Ithaca, NY (Cornell University) 1954, esp. chapters I-VI.

37. “World Trade Union Conference. Item II – Trade Union Attitude to the Peace Settlement. Speech by Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E.”, dated on the last page (p. 9): “8.2.45” (February 8), IISG, IFTU, 311, quotation p. 2.

38. *Ibid.*, quotations p. 8 and 9.

39. IISG, IFTU, 311: Labour and the Peace settlement. Address by James B. Carey, Secretary of the United States Labour Delegation, before the World Trade Union Conference in London, England, February 10, 1945.

the fascist dictatorship, which had ruled the country.⁴⁰ Saillant, who in the name of France had also been in favor of the participation of German (exiled) delegates at the Conference, represented a country which was victim as well as, partly at least, perpetrator, collaborator of the Nazi regime. Within the Socialist party and unionist groups in the already liberated parts of France, in the Resistance and in the exile centres the discussion on guilt, purge, punishment or forgiveness was already going on. When comparing the French and the German common people and, in particular, the comportment of socialists in both countries, a majority of the old and some of the younger French Internationalists perceived a good deal of resemblance. These feelings *and* the fear for a revival of German aggressiveness determined them to reflect on Germany's admission to the newly to be founded International Labor organizations as soon as possible after the defeat of the Nazi regime by the Allied forces.⁴¹

The delegates at the London World Trade Union Congress finally agreed “with the inflexible determination expressed by the heads of the three Allied Powers at the Crimea Conference⁴² to destroy German militarism and Nazism”, and expressed their confidence in the capability of the occupying authorities to “take all necessary measures”. They rejected “slave labour” and demanded that “the employment of German labour, if used in restoration work, must be placed under international supervision with Trade Union participation”. Further, they considered it the task of the German workers to liquidate “completely and irrevocably the German ‘Labour front’”. The establishing of “a democratic Trade Union Movement in Germany”, “under international Trade Union supervision”, should be undertaken “as speedily as possible during the period of occupation”.⁴³

Meanwhile, the Germans – like the peoples of the victim countries – should begin with (re)socialization and (re)learning democracy by establishing producer and consumer co-operatives. The co-operative movement in Germany, which had once been one of the strongest in the world, had been destroyed by the Nazi regime. Re-establishing the co-operatives following the Swedish model, Max Eastman had written, would lead to “social democracy,” and only social democracy, where “the carrying through of such measures as the nationalization of the coal mines in France, and the deep-going reforms planned by the British Labor Party” had their place, would lead to a post-war Europe of welfare and peace.⁴⁴

From the end of 1943 onward, the Swedish LO vividly had corresponded with the IFTU/EITUC, the TUC and the French socialists and unionists in English exile on matters

40. IISG, IFTU, 314: French newspaper clip, dated: Londres, 8 février [1945] (A.P.); cf. Gottfurcht, *Die Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung im Weltgeschehen*, p. 172 (see note 21 above).

41. OURS, Collection Parti Socialiste – Secrétariat Internationale (1945-1955): Documents des Conférences des Partis Socialistes Européens: Sujet d'actualité: Problème allemand, la Paix, la Réconstruction, Londres, 3-5 1945.

42. The Crimea of Yalta Conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, their Secretaries of State and the respective Chiefs of Staff, had taken place 4-11 February, 1945.

43. IISG, IFTU, 311: Trades Union Congress: World Trade Union Conference. Declaration on the Trade Union Attitude to the Peace Settlement.

44. Max Eastman, “The Notion of Democratic Socialism. Is Free Enterprise the Only Firm Guarantee of Political Freedom?” [first article of a series of 3 on the question “Is Democratic Socialism Realizable?”, in answer to, among others, Sydney Hook's discourse on the Future of Democratic Socialism in *The New Leader*, October 4, 1944], *The New Leader*, January 27, 1945, pp. 5-6, quotation p. 6.

of post-war economy based on tri-partite agreements (State, Big Business and Capital, Labor/Unions). In the autumn of 1944, LO together with the *Kooperativa Förbundet* and the *Samarbetskommittén för Demokratiskt Uppbyggnadsarbete* (SDU – the Swedish Joint-Committee on Educational Reconstruction) had started organizing co-operative courses for the German, also for the Danish, the Norwegian, the Polish exiled unionists.⁴⁵

In fact, despite the ideological and political differences the unions I am here dealing with, had one idea, or say: one experience in common. They all regarded Fascism and especially German National Socialism and its victory as the result of failures on the level of economic and social circumstances, and the lack of good education to self-respect and social responsibility. AFL and CIO delegated the concern for post-war reconstruction, not only in occupied and destroyed countries but also at home, to special Educational Reconstruction Committees and Institutes. These committees and institutes – one institute for instance at New York University, New York City – took over the tasks of planning and discussing in detail. They were composed by economists, sociologists, educators and representatives of the unions; in the highest Educational Reconstruction Committee the Roosevelt Administration was represented, too. From the United States the idea and the institutional organization of Educational Reconstruction Committees spread to England, to French socialists and unionists in London exile and to Sweden. Especially the English and the Swedish socialists worked together with German exiled comrades.⁴⁶

To conclude this second part: In trying to solve the “German problem” – and their own post-war ones – the trade unions, apart from their social economic struggle, went back to the very international issue, which from the beginning had been a matter of great concern to the IFTU: Education.⁴⁷ Yet they shared the planning and the responsibility with political parties, and learned and governmental institutions. In how far the transfer of ideas and models from the Educational Reconstruction Committees contributed to national and cultural programmatic divergency or, instead to re-unification and “globalization” on the longer run remains a question for further research.

45. See the documents in Archive LO, f.i. Fackföreninginternationalen – Inkomna skrivelser 1943-1945; on the co-operative courses see Müssener, *Exil in Schweden*, pp. 129-132 (see note 20 above).

46. See f.i. New York Public Library, New York, NY, Rare Books and Manuscript Division: Collection “Central and Eastern European Planning Board. Records (1942-1945); Public Record Office, Kew, Richmond: Foreign Office, General Correspondence, F.O. 371, 35402; University of Warwick Library, Modern Records Centre: Trades Union Congress, MSS.292/793/2; Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv og Bibliotek (ARA), Stockholm, Collection “Samarbetskommittén för Demokratiskt Uppbyggnadsarbete – SDU”; Riksarkivet, Stockholm, Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet: UD 19 20 / HP 1738: Stormaktskriget 1939 – Svenska deltagande i återuppbyggnadsarbetet efter kriget.

47. See f.i. the records on educational work and organizations within or in connection with the IFTU, IISG, IFTU, 139-147.