Organization for European Economic Cooperation

IN THE CONFUSED MONTHS following the last Great War, the economic life of western Europe was sick and chaotic. The gears of production were worn and broken; the flow of international trade was reduced to a trickle. What could be done for this ailing patient? Where was the path to health, strength and freedom?

Then in the Spring of 1947 came Secretary of State Marshall’s great answer and challenge. The hand of the United States would be extended in aid—but this aid would be fruitless unless the free nations of Europe, in mutual cooperation, found a way to help themselves.

Europe’s reply was soon forthcoming. In September of 1947, the challenge was accepted; 16 Western European nations, with one voice, declared their intention to work together in mutual selfhelp and productive effort. In order to do so, they blueprinted an international organization which would chart western Europe’s course to recovery and submit to the United States requests for the aid needed beyond the limit to which they could help themselves. The job could be done, they hoped, by 1952.

THUS JUST over a year ago, in April of 1948, was born in Paris the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC)—a group of representatives from the 16 Western European Nations plus the Bizonal Area and the French Zone of Germany. They formed a Council, of one member from each participating area, which would be the supreme deliberative body. An executive committee of seven national representatives was created to handle day-to-day business, while policy and technical committees were established to perform the staff functions for the Organization.

The manner in which OEEC meets its commitment is characteristic of the sincere thoroughness that has marked its efforts. The Council, in its "long term program", first set economic milestones and objectives along the four-year path to viability. The various participating nations then evolved their own programs, starting with the first year, and showing what they could produce for themselves, what surpluses they would have available to help their partner nations, and what they would require in aid from other European nations or the United States.

These separate programs were then discussed in OEEC and the maximum degree of harmonization achieved. Following this, the requirements of the participating nations from the United States were given to the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which then met these requirements to the fullest possible amount.

Bizonal Germany has been represented in this effort from the day in April of 1948 on which General Robertson, acting also for General Clay, signed on behalf of the Bizone the Convention for European Economic Cooperation. In the deliberations of the OEEC Council, the economic advisers to the US and UK Military Governors—Mr. Laurence Wilkinson on behalf of General Clay, and Sir Cecil Werr for General Robertson—have presented the Bizone’s case, and will continue in this task until the German authorities can assume this responsibility.

A Bizonal delegation, composed of US, British and German personnel, was sent to Paris. The first chief Delegate, Mr. Robert Trier of Chicago, has now been succeeded by Mr. Malcolm R. White of Colebrook, Conn. The staff of the Delegation is small, numbering about two dozen persons in all, but is supplemented from time to time by technical experts from Frankfurt and Berlin in the fields covered by the scheduled OEEC committees meeting.

UNTIL RECENTLY, the burden of negotiations within the OEEC on the Bizonal Delegation’s part has been borne by the US and British, with the German representatives attending as observers. However, with the recent Washington declaration of the foreign ministers providing for full German participation in the OEEC coincident with the formation of a Western German government, emphasis is being placed on increased direct German participation. They are to prepare and defend their own programs, assuming increasing responsibility for their economic recovery and the economic rehabilitation of a democratic western Europe. In the words of the United States and United Kingdom Military Governors:

"As the representatives, for the time being, of the Combined Zones at the OEEC, it has been the responsibility of the Military Governors to supervise the preparation of the German programs submitted to the OEEC, to press for the adoption of policies which would permit the most effective use of German resources for German and European recovery, and to sign the final agreements reached, on behalf of the Combined Zones.

"Now, following upon the historical agreements on German policy just reached between the Governments of the US, UK, and France, the people of Western Germany are preparing to set up a government of their own, and this government will then directly assume the responsibilities heretofore exercised by the Military Governors in carrying out Western German undertakings toward the ECA and the OEEC. That they will do so with energy and enthusiasm seem certain."
Because of the failure of his back-yard crop last year, Mr. Murray D. Van Wagoner, OMG director of Bavaria (right), received expert advice from the Bavarian agriculture minister, Dr. Alois Schloegel, in planting his potato patch this spring.

Director Van Wagoner had told an agricultural extension service dinner several weeks ago about his inadequacies as a farmer because of the failure of his potato crop last year, one of the most successful potato years in Bavaria's history. Dr. Schloegel offered his professional advice. In mid-May, the two met in the Van Wagoner backyard and, as the German agriculture minister gave instructions, the OMG director cut up 12 potatoes, dug up the ground and planted the hills. The potatoes, Irish cobbler, had been sent Mr. Van Wagoner by a Detroit (Mich.) friend, who had obtained them from Ireland.

News Types of Schools

The Curriculum Workshop in Bavaria is working on plans for the curricula to be used in five new types of high schools, to be known as the "Realschule." These schools will emphasize general education, commercial subjects as preparation for business careers, the trades, home economics and agriculture.

Freight-car Deliveries

The Reichsbahn received 4,500 new freight cars from four European countries up to May 12, Railways Branch of Bipartite Transport Group announced. These foreign deliveries represent around 30 percent of the 16,830 total being constructed in Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Italy, Austria and Hungary under contracts sponsored by JEIA last August and September.

Airlift Fliers' Gifts for Berlin Children

Because of the airman who first had the idea of aiding Berlin children, 35,000 Berlin boys and girls are happier today for having thousands of items of clothing, soap, candy and toys.

Last October, a small group of officers and men of the 1420th Air Transport Group, US Air Force (now known as the 313th Troop Carrier Group), decided they would like to do what they could to help the children of Berlin. As part of the airlift personnel stationed at Fassberg, an airlift terminal in the British zone, they were well aware of the bleak prospects the winter 1948-49 held for most German families living under the blockade.

The men decided that each of them would write an appeal to his hometown newspaper asking for gifts for blockaded Berlin children. Somehow they conveyed to the people of America a picture of children growing up in a city where candy is almost non-existent; where clothes are ill-fitting and threadbare; where many games and toys are unheard of, and where mothers can't keep grainy knees and hands clean for lack of soap.

Other US newspapers picked up the story, and Americans began wrapping and sending gifts to thousands of children they had never seen. Shortly before Christmas and for weeks afterward, gifts began pouring into Fassberg—not only for the children but sometimes for parents as well. They came from every part of the United States—women's clubs in Maine, schools in California, a brewery in Wisconsin, and children in Tennessee.

In all, 300 large canvas mailbags and 75 bulging cartons of gifts arrived: warm wool sweaters, coats and trousers; toys and games; candies, chocolate and soap. There were so many presents that C-47's were pressed into service to deliver the mountain of packages to Tempelhof airport.

In Berlin, GYA representatives were asked to help in the problem of distribution. The American Women's Club of Berlin sorted and rewrapped gifts. They worked 20 women at a time from morning until late afternoon to keep up with deliveries.

The Public Welfare Branch, OMGBS, in consultation with German welfare officials, prepared lists of those children whose needs were greatest, including children in institutions and others deprived of home care. They also assisted in the actual delivery to the thousands of surprised and grateful Berlin families.