As I See America

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This article on his impressions of the United States was written by the governing mayor of Berlin at the special request of the Information Bulletin. Mayor Reuter's most recent visit to America, from Feb. 22 to March 8, was a tour sponsored by the Americans for Democratic Action.

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from my third tour of the United States. It lasted only 14 days, but each day was filled from morning to night with discussions, speeches and conversation with hundreds, perhaps even thousands from all strata of the population; with sightseeing, interviews, broadcasts and television programs.

From New York the route led to Cleveland, from there to Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Washington, back to New York and to Philadelphia. In Washington, I enjoyed a lengthy talk with President Truman, and had a number of discussions with leaders in US politics. Meetings with numerous senators, representatives, and leading men of the Department of State and other authorities kept me busy. These days of my sojourn in the States during which, from dawn till dusk, and sometimes until late at night, I spoke, discussed and argued have left profound impressions which it will take some time to sort and straighten.

Some of what I saw and experienced in the United States is as certain and solid as a rock. This country, the size of a continent, is not only great from the geographical...
point of view or because of its economic potential, not only because it is about to develop great military strength in all fields: no, this country is great because it has realized its task and because it is determined to tackle it.

This perception and this determination are what I encountered wherever and with whomever I spoke. The people of this country are open-minded: wherever opportunity offers, they endeavor to learn from experience, both past and present. America has gained immense political maturity, through her historical development and through her bitter experiences in two world wars.

This impression, of all that I gained during my stay on the other side of the ocean, stands out. It is a fact that is all the more important since America is a real democracy and boasts a public opinion that is shaped neither by propaganda nor by pressing a button to make people follow a given line. In the United States people strive to comprehend significant problems. Hundreds of thousands, even millions, concern themselves with economic and political questions; they discuss them, they try to hear the views and opinions of other parties, and then they judge and form their own opinions.


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THE UNITED STATES' POLICY of the past is finished. I know, of course, that words like "isolationism" have not vanished. As a matter of course a nation of 150,000,000 persons includes individuals with all shades of views and political philosophies, and there are unquestionably people, even today, whom we might call "isolationists." However, as a result of recent events, in particular the brutal attack on Korea, the majority of the American people have awakened, and have made up their minds to build up the strength needed to ward off the dangers that threaten not only the United States but all of us.

Thus, without twinges of conscience, we can say that isolationism no longer counts as one of the decisive factors of American politics, and that it is a matter of the past. It is the present which Americans understand, and the future for which they are determined to work.

This current was so strong that I felt it everywhere. The last time I was in the States — during the Berlin Blockade — I was cordially welcomed wherever I went. At that time I sensed that the hospitality was accorded in tribute to the courage of Berlin's people, who showed so much fortitude during the siege. It was cordiality and respect for a city whose struggle was essentially impressive, but at the same time it was a cordiality not yet mixed with any strong feeling of union, nor with the realization that Berlin stood for more than its own independence and freedom.

It was the latter type of cordiality and respect that I found this time; yet there was another element, namely, an understanding that the struggle waged by Berlin at that time and continued today is a struggle in which the United States is both directly and indirectly involved. Realization of our common cause is now widespread.

I felt on this visit that the people of the United States hold our needs and hopes to be part and parcel of their own, that they are imbued with the decision to master fate jointly, and to support with all their strength the free peoples of the world who are struggling for existence.

THIS IS BASICALLY why the atmosphere in the United States has changed. Of course, the United States is still a rich country, with whose wealth — plainly displayed in shops and stores — only very few countries can compete. But throughout the country one observes a determination that was by no means gained easily or gaily. It is the determination to become as strong as possible.

This determination requires plenty of sacrifices and restrictions, and in this regard the American people do not differ from other nations: they do not like and rejoice at burdens, restrictions and financial sacrifices. Still, they have struggled to comprehend that it is necessary if their liberty and the freedom of the world are to be maintained and defended. Americans have come to realize that this course must be pursued to its ultimate end.

Americans have also become aware of the fact that the globe has grown smaller, that events on other continents — whether in Europe or in Asia — concern them directly. This is the reason why they feel today that the struggle in Berlin, like the struggle of any free nation against the powers of tyranny and oppression, is their own cause as well. And this is also the reason why Berlin is not only respected, but is considered a sort of vanguard and outpost in a struggle that is also an American affair.

It would be wrong, very wrong, to presume that enthusiasm prevails in the United States concerning the necessity of building strength in all fields at high speed.
This development certainly will bring about a boom. The whole country produces the impression of a huge, busy factory in which all the wheels are turning at top speed; but we know that booms also bring future disadvantages and difficulties. People in the US are not very keen on making sacrifices and surrendering giant sums in taxes. Yet they have abandoned the illusion of 1945, when they believed that the epoch of peace and understanding had begun. And since they have come to understand the present, they march along their new road as the only one that leads to the heartfelt aim of all reasonable people with good will: to prevent war through strength and firm will.

The majority of Americans — we have to underscore that, time and again — do not want war, nor do they want to buy peace by appeasement which, when hardly pronounced, will be followed by new demands.

TWO WORLD WARS and the events in Korea have been a warning and a lesson to the American people. Yet the events in Korea have not diverted their attention from Europe, which remains today the theater of decision. Americans know their fate is tied up with the destiny of Europe. They know that the loss of Europe would be a fatal loss to the United States and to the entire Western world. Therefore, from the American point of view, Europe must be held and defended under all circumstances.

In a democracy like the United States there is naturally a wide range of opinion on the policy to be pursued. I may say that this is good, for unanimity would mean uniformity; yet unanimity of opinion on the general trend, idea and purpose of US foreign policy is so strong that it will impress everybody who converses with American political leaders. Senators of both the Republican and Democratic Parties, responsible men in the government, of the Marshall Plan administration, of the labor unions — all firmly expressed the clear conviction that there can be no return to the policy of appeasement, nor any surrender to the powers of tyranny and oppression.

The illusion that peace can be gained through appeasement is gone. It has been replaced by the earnest and determined will to make peace-time efforts that will equal or even surpass what the United States accomplished in two world wars.

This determination and this will have impressed and convinced me that the American people recognize their historical task, and are willing to shoulder the burden of being the leading power in Western culture, the main defender of the principles of freedom, peace and independence.

CONSIDERING THAT THE PERIOD in which the US did not take active interest in world politics was at a high point only a few decades ago, the development of America's national consciousness is tremendous. American recognition that the two oceans are no longer ramparts behind which wealth and prosperity can develop, uninfluenced by events in other parts of the globe, is so important a factor in world politics that that fact alone suffices to strengthen and encourage us in Europe. I know that the help extended by the United States to Europe is not completely selfless. But what nation would not also think of itself and its well-being when making up its mind to help others?

The strength of the ties uniting the Western world, of which the United States regards herself as an integral part, can no longer be doubted. Acknowledgment of this fact is the foundation of all that is being done in the United States today, politically and economically. The precedence foreign politics takes over home politics has been generally accepted.

For this reason the United States is arming herself in time of peace, and is spending huge sums for the reinforcement of her army, navy and air force — sums that can be raised in the United States, as in other countries, only through an immense burden of taxes. Even in a country so rich in raw materials as the United States this cannot be accomplished without restrictions on the production of consumer goods, control of raw materials, and economizing in various other fields of consumption.

This nation, which until now had introduced and tolerated compulsory military service only in times of war, is now supporting a program of military service for all young men of 18, a program which will take youth out of vocational training and jobs for almost two and one-half years. So impressive an invasion of private family life indicates that this measure cannot be overestimated as a yardstick of the firm determination of the American people.

I repeat: the impression that the United States is irrevocably committed to stay on the road now recognized as the right one until the very end, is the profoundest and strongest impression I gained during my travels.

FROM THIS VERY CLEAR POSITION of the United States can be drawn clear and simple conclusions. We are jointly confronted with an adversary who scored successes not only by the application of force, but also by means of threats, propaganda and subversive activi-
ties. Resistance often seemed to be futile, and it was this hopelessness which helped the representatives of tyranny to overcome obstacles. The feeling that the struggle was hopeless has hitherto been the enemy's strongest ally in this struggle, which has been waged not only with material weapons but also with ideas.

The unmistakable attitude of the United States has initiated a decisive change of position in this struggle. Europe knows that the United States is ready to play for the last and highest stake. There can be no more doubt; this alone has tremendously strengthened the front of resistance. As a result, not only elements of defense, but also of counteraction, have been awakened and made stronger.

All peoples of the globe are inspired with new hope. In addition, in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, people know the cause of freedom has mighty followers and sponsors. Everywhere the hope has been kindled that the crusade for freedom will gain in power, strength and might so that some day it will irresistibly tear down the walls and ramparts dividing the world into two halves.

The idea of a free and unified world, of a free, peaceful Europe, contains the fulfillment of a dream of mankind to which people of good will have adhered at all times as an ideal worth striving for. That this dream remain not only a dream but may become reality is the hope the world's peoples draw from the inexorable will of America.

It will not suffice that the American people alone mobilize all their strength and courage to attain this unheard-of accomplishment. Every nation, every individual favoring freedom and peace, independence and a community of nations must make contributions to the greatest degree possible in the light of his knowledge and ability.

That a great nation with immeasurable technical and material skill has adopted our cause is a long step forward on the road at whose end stands our common goal: untroubled relations between nations living in prosperity, peace and freedom.

Trade Group Assumes Defense Role

The German-American Trade Promotion Company (GATPCO), the "dollar drive" organization made up of leaders of West German industry, business and foreign trade, has informed the ECA Special Mission to Western Germany that it is expanding its role to include cooperation in the Western defense program.

The assurances of support were contained in a formal letter to Jean Cattier, chief of the ECA Mission to Western Germany and director of HICOG's Office of Economic Affairs, from W. A. Menne, chairman of the board of directors of GATPCO and vice-president of the Federal Association of German Industry.

No specific listing of new functions was contained in Mr. Menne's letter, which said, in part: "Representatives of the German economy, such as the offices of the Federal Association of German Industry, have repeatedly stated in public their decision to stay with the West and their willingness and readiness for cooperation in Western defense. As the vice-president of the Federal Association of German Industry and as chairman of the board of directors of GATPCO, I have emphasized the preparedness of German industry to render a contribution to secure peace. "In consideration of these facts," the letter added, "the scope of our company has changed and grown."

In a reply to Mr. Menne, Mr. Cattier stated, in part: "I was particularly gratified to note that the GATPCO is prepared, in addition to its trade development activities, to participate actively in the implementation of measures contributing to Western defense. The experience, capabilities and widespread representation of your organization make it uniquely well-suited to give valuable assistance to industry and trade in their efforts to supply the needs of Western defense.

"My staff and I wish you success in your important dual understanding and stand ready to give the benefit of our counsel and advice."

The German-American Trade Promotion Company, officially formed in June 1950, was designed solely to aid German producers in their efforts to export to dollar areas, and to assist businessmen from such areas to locate sources of supply of German products. It is making energetic efforts to reduce the dollar gap, and its activities have the support of the federal ministries of economics and ERP as well as the ECA Special Mission.

GATPCO, a non-profit German organization, has its headquarters in Frankfurt and a branch office in New York. On its advisory committee are well-known German business executives and financiers. The scope of its activities covers every major industry in Germany. Its officers are working closely with the various associations representing industry, to bring together potential buyers and sellers, and to stimulate interest in increased trade.

Loan Fund to Aid DP's

Creation of a special fund to promote the integration of displaced persons remaining in Germany has been announced by the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and the Expellee Bank Corporation of Bonn, an agency of the German Federal Government.

The agreement will enable a limited number of refugees under IRO protection to borrow up to DM 5,000 ($1,190) from a fund established in the Expellee Bank by the UN Special Agency.