I AM LEAVING GERMANY after two years as director of the Office of Labor Affairs of the Office of the United States High Commissioner for Germany. In the time I have spent here I have been impressed by the progress made in digging the country out of the ruins in which it found itself when the Nazi regime collapsed in 1945.

Progress has been made not only in the physical sense. Germany has, I believe, also made considerable progress in finding the way from dictatorship to a democratic community. By this I do not mean to say that democracy in Germany is permanently established. But a sound foundation has been laid and there is reasonable assurance that the extremists both from the left and the right can be kept in check, if not eliminated.

Having spent most of my active life in the trade union movement, I am, of course, especially proud of the support which the trade unions in Germany are giving to the democratic state.

One thing must be clear to anyone who has studied the German situation. The industrial machine has been practically rebuilt. It is necessary now to raise the living standards of the wage earners. Nothing is more effective in strengthening the fiber of democracy than to provide for the average citizens standards of well-being which are worth defending.

I HAVE SAID THIS before and I want to emphasize it again: German employers have been able to rebuild their enterprises largely with the aid of foreign assistance and at the expense of low wages and high prices. Now that they are financially able, they should not so stubbornly resist demands of the workers acting collectively through their unions for an increase in real wages. As far as I can see, the unions need not hesitate to demand the establishment of decent living standards.

The current practice of increasing the worker's take-home pay by letting him work overtime on a regular basis is deplorable. With still 1,276,000 unemployed, efforts should be made to reduce the present 48-hour work week rather than consistently work in excess of the 48-hour standard.

Labor and management should jointly explore the possibility of increasing productivity for the purpose, on the one hand, of increasing the real income of the workers and, on the other, of making available to the consumer better goods at lower prices. Such a step will be most effective in combating Communism and Nazism.

I, for one, will certainly recommend that any further United States economic assistance to Germany shall go primarily to those industries and employers who commit themselves to share the benefits of such aid with their employees and the consuming public. I shall do this because in my opinion the time has come, in fact it is overdue, where US dollars going to Europe to assist in rebuilding and integrating the economies of the free countries must, to an increasing extent, be used where they will benefit the wage earners and not a favored few.

THE GERMAN TRADE UNIONS are still not tough enough on advocates of totalitarianism within their ranks. In some unions considerable progress has been made to clean out the agents of the Kremlin, especially from positions of influence. But too many unionists, including officers, still believe that a Communist can at the same time also be a good trade unionist. They should know, of course, that every Communist is under instructions to divert the union in which he is active into a tool of the Communist conspiracy.

I want to say a few words about the internal trade union structure. To the extent to which the unions develop an organizational structure which will permit the rank and file members full opportunity to participate in determining union policy and to assume responsibility for such policies, they will strengthen the influence of organized labor in shaping the development of Germany. They will thereby also train the membership in their responsibilities as citizens in their recently won democratic state.

Local union meetings are the universities of the working people. Here they learn about the issues which affect them as workers and as citizens and here they can make the decisions which affect these issues. Such meetings must be held in union halls and not within the four walls
of the employer's plant. An overcentralization of the union structure will destroy this opportunity for action at the local level.

I sincerely hope that the unions will find means of integrating the work of the works councils and the unions to assure a healthy climate for local union activity. As presently legally organized the works councils seem to me to assume functions which should be the functions of the local unions, such as contract interpretation, grievance handling and discussion of local working standards.

WHAT DISTURBS ME as much as anything else in present day Germany is the educational system. It is my concept as a democrat that all children must be given equal educational opportunities within practical limits. This is not the case in Germany. The German educational system still seems to provide education on a class basis. I hope the progressive forces in Germany will have the determination in bringing about the necessary changes.

One of these changes must provide full-time schooling beyond the eighth grade for the children of the German workers with proper basic instruction in the social sciences.

An extension of the compulsory school-leaving age will, of course, automatically solve another basic problem. That is the practice of sending children at the tender age of 14 years into industrial plants.

In spite of what may be said about the effectiveness of the German system of apprenticeship training, I believe that both from a social and economic point of view it would be to the interest of Germany if the general school-leaving age were extended at least two years. From my practical experience in industry I know that a 14-year-old boy is not developed sufficiently, either physically or mentally, to enter the labor force.

In conclusion let me say that I shall continue to follow with deep interest further developments in Germany. The progress made I shall judge by the extent to which the worker is given a fair share of the proceeds of his industry and by the extent to which labor is given the opportunity to participate in shaping the country's destiny.

---

Bremen to Get DM 4,000,000 Vocational School

The people of Bremen have received a grant of DM 1,961,241 ($466,775) from the HICOG Special Projects Fund for construction of three new buildings of a Vocational Education Center.

The money is made possible by the American people as an aid to the building of modern German educational, cultural and social institutions. The fund is not a charge against occupation costs. Approximately 85 percent of Bremen's young people are dependent on vocational schools for any formal education beyond elementary school (Volkschule) or the age of 14 years.

The HICOG grant will be matched with a similar amount from the city of Bremen. In addition to the regular classrooms there will be libraries, an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium and other recreational facilities.

Bremen Senate President Wilhelm Kaisen (left) smilingly accepts HICOG Special Project Fund check for DM 1,961,241 from Rear Adm. Charles R. Jells, US Navy (Ret.), state commissioner for Bremen. The city will provide additional DM 2,000,000 to build new Vocational Education Center.

The housing of many different vocational schools in one area will make possible inter-vocational cooperation due to the development of understanding among the various groups.

The educational program will include courses and activities designed to prepare youth to assume the responsibilities of competent citizens in a democratic society.

In presenting the check to Bremen Senate President Wilhelm Kaisen, Rear Admiral Charles R. Jeffs, US state commissioner for Bremen, said, "The plans which have been developed in Bremen state are of such excellence as to promise that this Vocational Education Center will become a model for all of Germany and for those in other countries who are making efforts to improve their programs of vocational education. These plans should enable the citizens of the community to make of the school a real community center of educational, cultural, social and political interest."

The largest grant from the HICOG Special Projects Fund went to a library in West Berlin. This amount was second, with another DM 1,176,450 ($279,995) going for the building of Radio Bremen.

Opposition Blocks Improvement

At a recent meeting of the city council of Kronach in northern Bavaria near the Soviet Zone border, the only woman member criticized the unsanitary condition of the lavatory in the local school building. However, her motion to remedy the condition was voted down by a majority of the male members who pointed out that the lavatory had always been dirty—had been in that condition when they themselves had been youngsters.