

GERMANY

U.S. - P.M. Monday, May 23, 1949.

A new flag is flying in Europe today -- the banner of the Federal Republic of Germany. The black, gold and red flag was hoisted into the sunlight over the public buildings of many of the larger cities of Germany at twelve o'clock today. This as the new German Republic officially came into existence.

The new Federal Germany includes all the German states in the U.S., British and French occupation zone. With a Constitution so framed as to allow the states in the Russian zone to join later, if they wish.

The Federal Republic of Germany has no working government -- not so far. It is merely headed for the moment, by eleven Minister Presidents. But soon, within three months, elections will be held, to create a parliament, and a Federal president.

Meanwhile, for the German people, outside the Soviet zone, the black, red and gold flag represents the

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beginning of a new era -- the Federal Republic of
Germany. Not an entirely new flag. It was the flag
of the Weimar Republic.

BERLIN STRIKE

Two were killed today, as Russian police fired on a Berlin crowd of strikers trying to storm an elevated railroad station in the British sector.

Shortly afterwards, the Allied military commanders issued an order to the police of Western Berlin -- to occupy any elevated station where there is fighting.

The railroads in Berlin are under Russian jurisdiction although they circulate in the Allied zones. And the railroad workers are striking -- to be paid in Western marks, which the Russians refuse.

Since Friday, the strikers have occupied twenty-one city stations. From some of these the Russian police expelled them -- by force -- wounding eighty.

This afternoon, the Soviet Police Chief in the Russian sector threatened death for any Germans found damaging railroad property or attacking the police. But General Frank Howley, our Berlin Commander, says

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the Soviet police will not be allowed to take strikers out of the Western sectors for prosecution by Soviet courts.

LOUIS JOHNSON

Defense Secretary Louis Johnson is asking Congress to give quick approval on that new bill for the unification of the armed forces. He says that he hopes to be able to save a billion or a billion and a half dollars when the improvements, allowed by the bill, are in, what he calls, "full flower."

Sec. Johnson, we hear, is so enthusiastic at the prospect of bringing real unification to the armed forces, that he asked ^{the} a Senate Armed Services Committee to give this bill priority over all other legislation. The Defense Secretary considering the unification bill more important than those bills for a seventy group air force, and a radar screen ^{around the rim of} ~~to girdle the~~ ^{our} continent. ~~of America.~~ So he wants quick action from Congress -- to help him save more than a billion dollars.

BIG FOUR

The Big Four meeting in Paris today opened in an atmosphere of cordiality. Smiles and hand-shakes all around -- and a surprise. Much of the cordiality, as well as the surprise, came from Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vishinsky. He behaved like a true representative of Old World courtesy.

In the conference room of the Pink Palace, Vishinsky was about to sit down when he noticed Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Vishinsky immediately walked around the table and shook hands, saying in English, "I am glad to see you here." Then, in the hall outside, he noticed Mrs. Bevin, wife of the British Foreign Minister. So he walked over to her, bowed low from the waist, and kissed her hand. That from the fuming, fire-eating, epithet-throwing Vishinsky.

According to the news dispatch, Vishinsky remained cordial throughout the opening session; cordial even when he sprang his surprise. Which was that a peace treaty for Japan, as well as the problems of Germany, should be considered at the present Paris meeting.

And even this was framed in a cordial vein. After pointing out that nearly four years had passed since V-J Day, Vishinsky said he did not insist that Japan be put specifically on the program. But, he added, that in his opinion some thought should be given to a Japanese treaty and to a conference of Foreign Ministers on the subject of Japan, before the present conference ends.

Whereupon Secretary of State Dean Acheson pointed out that the Potsdam Agreement did not include any notion of the Big Four drafting a treaty for Japan. That, said he, should be done by the Far Eastern Commission which sits in Washington.

So the matter was dropped temporarily, and the Foreign Ministers of the four nations adopted a four-point program to be covered during this conference. The items: Germany's political and economic unity; the Berlin problem, including the question of a unified currency for the whole city; the German peace treaty; and

an examination of a treaty which would restore the independence of Austria.

When the Austrian treaty was discussed, the Ministers agreed that if they could reach an agreement on Austria, this agreement must hold good, no matter what happens regarding Germany. At this point British Foreign Minister Bevin turned to the Soviet Foreign Minister and said: "A lot depends on you, Mr. Vishinsky."

Vshinsky smiled, and said that in a four-power meeting everything depends three times as much on three as it does on one. More cordiality from the Soviet representative who has built himself up a reputation as a master of invective.

Observers at the Pink Palace, where the Foreign Ministers are meeting, warned that it is much too early to draw any conclusions -- that the first session proves nothing. But that Russia's suggestion of a peace treaty for Japan indicates that the Kremlin wants to settle the Cold War -- all over the globe.

ATOMIC

A report circulated in Congress today that the mysterious Scientist X -- as he is called -- who is alleged to have given A Bomb secrets to a Red spy, is now supervising Atomic Fellowship students. So Scientist X is to be subpoenaed -- to testify before a House Sub-Committee.

All this as the Congressional Atomic Energy Committee heard Senator Hickenlooper demand that David Lilienthal resign as Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. With Republican Senators Wherry of Nebraska and Bricker of Ohio backing him up.

Committee Chairman Brian McMahon promises to look into the matter -- after investigating that loss of a small quantity of Uranium 235 from the laboratory in Chicago. ~~Chairman~~ McMahon says that may take a rather long time.

MARSHALL PLAN

The House Appropriations Committee today ordered fifteen per cent cuts in Marshall Plan funds, and other money for occupied areas. This because the European nations are making ~~considerable and~~ unexpected progress ^{toward} ~~in their~~ economic recovery. And also because our domestic prices are falling. And those fifteen per cent cuts mean a saving to the taxpayer of nearly eight hundred million dollars.

FORRESTAL

President Truman has cancelled all social appointments ~~at the White House~~ -- and proclaimed a period of national mourning, until Wednesday, when he and his Cabinet will attend the funeral of James Forrestal, at Arlington. The funeral to ~~be~~^{be} a simple one. Only a small military escort, with attendance limited to top government officials and close friends.

In Congress today, speakers in both Chambers paid tribute to James Forrestal's work as this country's first Defense Secretary. Senate Republican leader Wherry predicted that when the history of this period is written, Forrestal will be given a special place of honor. Senator Flanders spoke of the former Defense Secretary giving everything ~~he had~~ to his country, and draining himself ~~in~~ in so doing. Others spoke of the intense energy he gave to his work. Chairman Vinson, of the House Armed Services Committee, just as did so

many others, spoke of Mr. Forrestal giving his life for his country as surely as did the thousands and thousands of young Americans who died fighting in the war.

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In Washington tonight Captain George Raines, a Navy Psychiatrist, told of going to Florida at the end of March -- at the request of the White House -- to examine Mr. Forrestal. He found him suffering from severe depression - like wartime operational fatigue. And he tells of the former Defense Secretary being taken to Bethesda -- the hospital chosen by his own physicians. Of his being given insulin sub-shock treatments. And of making progress -- gaining weight, and showing such signs of recovery, that restrictions could be lessened. But, says the Navy Psychiatrist, the patient showed a tendency to increased depression or despondency towards the end of each week. (The psychiatrist's opinion is that Mr. Forrestal jumped to his death during a sudden fit of despondency -- such fits, says he, being common in this particular type of mental depression.

FORRESTAL-SOPHOCLES

The news brings dark attention to a tragic play written twenty-five hundred years ago. James Forrestal left, not a suicide note, but an indication far more eloquent and sombre. The news has been telling how, on a table, beside his bed in the Naval Hospital, was found a book, writings of Sophocles and Euripides.

As it happens, Euripides has been in the theatrical limelight of late, with a performance of the tragedy MEDEA, in which the actress Judith Anderson gives a terrifying re-creation of the pity and horror of the ancient masterpiece. So now into the grim tidings of the suicide of the former Secretary of Defense appears another of those dramatic works of ancient Greece.

This one, the Ajax of Sophocles. James Forrestal had been reading -- in fact, had been copying in handwriting -- a chorus from AJAX. The significance of this is only too darkly evident. Popular legend retains the fantastic vision of -- AJAX DEFYING THE LIGHTNING. The mighty strong-man

of the Greeks went out of his mind, and his frenzy took the form of wanting to do battle with the lightning in a thunderstorm. Other legend pictures him as mistaking a flock of sheep for his enemies, and assailing the sheep - after which he killed himself.

This is the theme of the tragedy by Sophocles, and it applied only too well to the former high government official under treatment at the Bethesda Hospital -- Forrestal having been afflicted with mental derangement, hallucinations, the feeling of persecution.

The passage from AJAX that he was reading and copying is a great example of the use Greek tragic writers made of the chorus, comment by people on the stage. That chorus of AJAX bewails the frenzy that has come upon the giant hero. It speaks of shrieks of woe -- unlike the gentle song of the nightingale. Forrestal copied line after line to the word -- "nightingale." There his copy breaks off -- he stopped writing.

In the lines that follow, the chorus goes on with these words about AJAX, the mighty warrior of Greece:-

Græcia!

"Oh! when the pride of Græcia's noblest race
wanders, as now, in darkness and disgrace,
When Reason's day
Sets rayless -- joyless -- quenched in cold decay,
Better to die, and sleep
The never waking sleep, than linger on,
And dare to live, when the soul's life is gone."

Such was the solution offered twenty-five hundred years ago. James Forrestal, instead of copying that -- did it. Going to a sixteenth-story window and jumping, and leaving the chorus from Sophocles' AJAX, to tell the story.

CHINA

A strange story from Canton, China, telling how the Communists have suddenly evacuated the great industrial city of Hankow. The Reds leaving behind no civil administration, no police -- no one in authority. Whereupon, the starving populace staged a ~~massive~~ orgy of looting -- breaking into homes, and helping themselves to food and property.

But the Nationalist Government in Canton says it has no information on that.

Meanwhile, the Communist radio reports that Red troops are now fifty miles south of Hankow. Which suggest that the Communist generals consider Hankow has no further military value; so they abandoned it -- throwing all their troops - every available man and gun-- into south China. Their main objective now seems to be the great south China seaport of Canton -- where the Nationalist Government has set up headquarters.

RITA

Prince Aly Khan is involved in a mild dispute with a Communist mayor, and there is a possibility that he and Rita Hayworth may not be able to be married in Aly Khan's million dollar chateau on the French Riviera. Instead, they'll have to go to the Town Hall of the village of Vallauris. A village which the French call the sweetest smelling spot this side of heaven. Because that's where they distil perfume-essence from flowers.

The Mayor of Vallauris is a Communist, and he maintains that under French law, every marriage in his territory must take place at his office. So, if the Prince of India wants to marry his film star bride, he'll have to wait on the Communist Mayor, instead of the Mayor coming to the chateau to tie the nuptial knot.

And another development, which has everyone wondering. The Mohammedan rites, the marriage under the laws of Islam, postponed. No reason given; but, the postponement certainly adds to the suspense surrounding this much publicized marriage. Why?

Because at a Moslem marriage ceremony, the bridegroom must state publicly the dowry that he is bestowing on his bride. An old Moslem custom, when brides were bought with so many camels and sheep -- remember, Nelson?