

## Apple of Discord

**G**ENERAL EISENHOWER is an expert strategist and a distinguished diplomat. Other soldiers, in his own country and among America's allies, may be as competent militarily. But nobody else in sight among the Western Powers is such a happy blend of soldier and statesman. That was why his appointment as the Supreme Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was welcomed in all the Atlantic Treaty countries. But even General Eisenhower might reasonably be dismayed by the tasks before him. He has two choices. There is an influential campaign in America to place him in the White House. If he chooses to be a candidate for the Presidency, he will have in prospect the difficult problem of being a Republican at home and a Democrat abroad. His task will be no less arduous if he remains the Supreme Commander of the Western Powers in their hour of crisis.

General Eisenhower is conscious of his delicate position as Supreme Commander. "We have to attempt the impossible," he confessed to the military leaders of the Atlantic Treaty Powers in Rome, "and the European defence force is part of the impossible." Alarmed at the immediate dangers which threaten the Atlantic community he warned the participating States to speed up their defence preparations. He, a soldier, is used to plain talk. "Western European defence," he reminded the Powers concerned, "would never be anything but a stalemate established on the Rhine unless something were done to consolidate the European Army."

He, a realist, had anticipated that friction might develop later. In Rome the conflicting interests of the Western Powers became apparent. They left Rome, to meet again at Lisbon in February, without reaching an agreement on the European Army. There is no disagreement on fundamentals. They concede the over-riding strategic reasons why the Western Powers' defence line must be on the Elbe. They are also impressed with the argument that Germany cannot be defended without a German army. All this is common ground among the Western Powers. But here agreement ends, and divergences appear. Their interests are so conflicting that even General Eisenhower's persuasion has

not succeeded in reconciling them.

Dr Adenauer is willing to associate Western Germany with the Western Powers, but only on his terms. He is a hard bargainer. He will contribute Western Germany's quota to the proposed European Army, but only after the Western Powers have met his demands. France knows that Western Europe cannot be defended without a German army. But she is afraid of the revival of German militarism. That is why she proposes a plan under which "national" armies will be integrated into a European Army under the orders of a European General Staff and under the control of a European Authority. This is the Pleven Plan. At Ottawa the Atlantic Treaty Powers endorsed the principles of the Plan without realising its far-reaching implications. Its profound associations became evident as the details of the Plan were worked out. Now that the Plan is known in all its details many Powers are reluctant to accept it.

It may be that the Pleven Plan removes France's fears and suspicions, but it does not satisfy Dr Adenauer's political rivals. Or Schuman interprets the Plan as a mischievous device to perpetuate Germany's political and military subjection. He is not a militant fascist. His political complexion differs from that of the German General Staff. But it will endorse Dr Schumacher's shrewd remarks that in the proposed European Army "orders to attack will be given in German, but orders to retreat in another language". Even Western Germans do not relish the idea of being used as cannon fodder. There is General de Gaulle, at the other extreme, who has his own reasons for rejecting the Pleven Plan. He is an upholder of France's military prestige. He is opposed to the Plan because it means "the end of the French Army, or else it is a hoax."

The Attlee Government made it clear from the beginning that Britain would not join a political or economic federation of Europe. Its stand was logical. It was aware that both the Schuman Plan and the Pleven Plan required a "pooling of sovereignty" which no independent, sovereign Power could accept. As the Pleven Plan unfolded itself, it became evident that there could be no "national"

army after the creation of a European Army. It also transpired that an European Army could not function without a supra-national Authority empowered with the political and financial authority of a Federal Government.

Though the Labour Government opposed the idea, Mr Churchill flirted with it as Opposition Leader. He was one of the sponsors of the Plan for a European Army. Washington and Paris hoped that Mr Churchill would honour his promises when he came to power. America and France are now disappointed at the rejection of the Pleven Plan by the Churchill Government. Without Britain's participation, and with de Gaulle's opposition, it may not be possible even for the Pleven Government to cajole the French Assembly to endorse the Pleven Plan. Discussions in Rome have emphasised the obstacles to the formation of a European Army.

What are the alternatives? One is to allow Germany to have a "national" army. Britain may not have any objection to any such proposal. America may be willing to accept this alternative. But France will never agree to German re-armament outside the proposed European Army. A plan for a "national" army for Western Germany has many disturbing implications. It is horrifying in its risks. Why not keep Western Germany disarmed? This is the only way to avoid an intensification of the tension in Europe. Its possible risks can be over-emphasised. It is arguable that a disarmed Germany will provoke Russia to commit acts of aggression. Moscow does not act without calculation. Russia knows that there are American forces in the European continent. She is aware that America has declared that her frontiers are on the Elbe.

More likely it is that re-armament of Western Germany may compel Russia to take military action in desperation. Russia has repeatedly warned the Western Powers that she would regard re-armament of Western Germany as a hostile act. Bonn is not united in participating in a European Army. In France opinion differs. Britain does not want a European Army. Why must America, then, insist on a European Army, with the consequent re-armament of Western Germany. A disarmed Western Germany can not only facilitate a peace treaty with a united Germany, but can help in eliminating a major source of friction between rival Power blocs.