

Soviet-West German Agreement

By WILLIAM FOSTER

THE AGREEMENT signed in Moscow on Sept. 13 between the representatives of the governments of the Soviet Union and West Germany represents another important victory for peace, for the policy of the peaceful coexistence of all nations. It is a most significant follow-up of the Big Four Conference of Geneva, and it is a good harbinger for the conference of the Foreign Ministers, scheduled to take place next month, at which the German question will be one of the most vital issues on the agenda.



The actual matters agreed upon—the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and West Germany and an understanding regarding the return of war prisoners—are in themselves very vital. But far more important was the political orientation developed by the conference. This was towards a policy of peaceful negotiations, instead of on the basis of an overhanging threat of war from the Western powers, such as has hitherto prevailed in international conferences.

The Moscow conference, like its predecessor in Geneva, has thrown dismay into the camp of the supporters of the policies of cold war, notably here in the United States. They now have sharp criticism for the hitherto much-praised Adenauer.

THE BONN GOVERNMENT of West Germany, behind which stands the same big monopolists who backed Hitler, has been one of the most ardent

supporters of the war program of Wall St. imperialism. Clearly, it has looked towards the solution of the re-unification of Germany upon the basis of a new war, one which it hoped would enable it to settle that matter just as it would see fit, and also provide it with an opportunity for a revenge reckoning with the USSR.

The pro-war policy of the Adenauer government has been expressed in many ways—by its stubborn orientation towards NATO and massive rearmament at all costs; by its rejection of the sane proposals of the governments of the Soviet Union and East Germany for a united, democratic, and un-warlike Germany; by its attempts, in the June 17, 1953 insurrection in East Germany, to plunge all Germany into terrible civil war; by its again restoring to political life many notorious Nazi militarists, and, underlying all this, by its puppet-like cooperation with the war-like Truman and Eisenhower governments.

But the Geneva conference, as we have seen previously, dealt a powerful blow against the Wall Street general war perspective. There the pressure of the peace-loving peoples of the world compelled the warmongers, at least for the time being, to shelve their war threats and to begin to "talk turkey" across the conference table. Consequently, when Adenauer went to Moscow it was as a man whose previous policy, which was that of increasingly militant German imperialism, had been bankrupted.

Wall Street's threats of a world atomic war—Adenauer's previous big weapon in diplomacy—could no longer help him; so he had to look in other directions for some new answers to his problems. With obvious fear the Wall Street warmong-

ers watched Adenauer go to Moscow; with grave alarm they watched him come back to Germany. In the meantime, they did their utmost to prevent him from coming to real agreement with the Soviet leaders.

THE MOSCOW CONFERENCE, of course, has not settled the whole German question—far from it. Many grave difficulties still lie ahead. But the important thing is that a start has been made in the right direction. The threat of atomic world war, the means by which the capitalist warmongers have stultified all earlier attempts at negotiations over this and other issues during the past several years, was notably absent at the Moscow conference. That was why some progress, however limited, was made; it is also the reason why the peace forces of the world may look forward hopefully to the future.

One of the very greatest lessons of the Big Four conference in Geneva, of the Chinese-American conference, also in Geneva, and now of the Moscow conference, is that once the threat of war is lifted, even the knottiest diplomatic issues between the capitalist West and the Socialist East can be peacefully resolved. It was the cultivated capitalist war hysteria that had made even the most minor of these questions insoluble.

This is a vital lesson for the peace-loving forces of the world to bear in mind in approaching the crucial conference of the Foreign Ministers in October. Wall Street's proponents of cold war and of actual war will do all they can to make this conference barren of real results; but they can be defeated and real peace results achieved if the world's workers and the people generally will insist upon it.