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State Dept review(s) completed.

SUMMARY**GENERAL**

1. Threatened split in Western position on CFM agenda item (page 3).

25X1

WESTERN EUROPE

4. French Communists seek general strike to block rearmament (page 4).

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25X1A

- 2 -

GENERAL

1. Threatened split in Western position on CFM agenda item:

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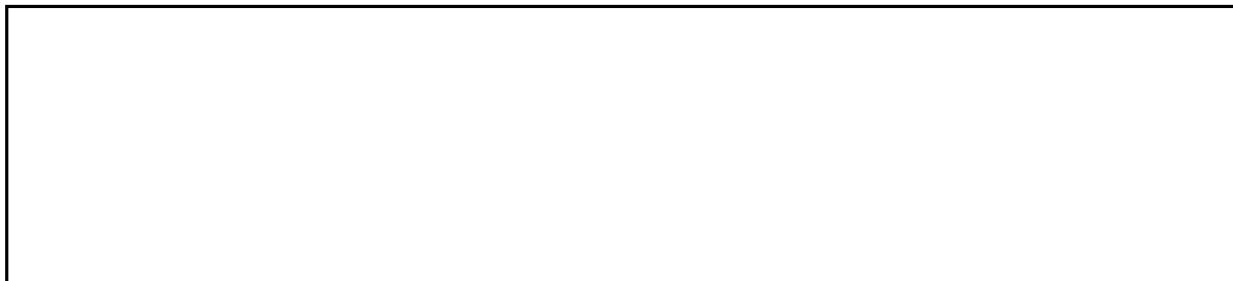
The British and French representatives at the Paris conference have admitted to US Ambassador Jessup that if the Soviets propose discussion of "the demilitarization of Germany" as a separate and first point under the primary agenda item "an examination of the causes of present tension in Europe," they would probably have to acquiesce. Jessup has pointed out that the Western powers would then be accepting the Soviet thesis that the demilitarization of Germany is the biggest obstacle to peace and that, by such acceptance, they would be casting doubt on the Brussels decisions. According to Jessup, the issue may be forced either by the British and French or by Gromyko, who might present it along with a concession designed to split the Western powers.

Comment: A 21 March Pravda article quotes a well-informed French columnist as stating that the French and English want the question of the demilitarization of Germany included in the agenda but that the US is opposed. The article characterizes the Soviet proposals on German demilitarization and Four Power arms reduction as the limit of Soviet concessions.

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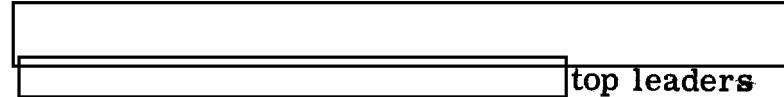


WESTERN EUROPE

4. French Communists seek general strike to block rearmament:

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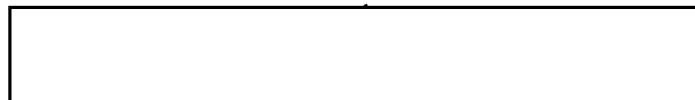


[REDACTED] top leaders
of the French Communist Party and the
Communist-led General Labor Confederation

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met on 21 March and laid plans for converting the mounting strike wave

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into a nation-wide general strike, having as its theme an end to arms production and the resignation of the Queuille Government. Leaders of the French Christian Workers' Confederation state that the Communists have nearly succeeded, contrary to the expectations of Communist and non-Communist labor leaders alike, in setting off a general political strike movement "dangerous" to the French Government and "comparable" to the 1936 strikes.

Comment: The current strike movement is generally considered to be based on legitimate economic grievances. Although it has gained sufficient headway to give the Communists their best opening in France since 1948, failure of the French Communist Party's over-all strategy can be expected because of firm government counter-measures and the break-down in cooperation between Communist and non-Communist labor unions.