

British Out To Destroy European Community

Geoffrey Rippon, leader of the Conservative Party faction of the British delegation to the European Economic Community (EEC) and negotiator of Britain's entry into the Common Market in 1971, has begun a bald-faced offensive against Britain's two major European allies, France and West Germany, by threatening to force the dissolution of the EEC unless Britain gets its way in all of the major controversies now under discussion in Brussels.

EEC

Rippon's warning followed two previous assertions of British nationalism in the past week: British Foreign Secretary David Owen defended the "Anglo-Saxon tradition" of "empiricism" against European critics; and notorious racist Enoch Powell charged that France and West Germany are prolonging World War II grudges against Britain through the EEC.

Britain's attacks on its European partners are clearly the continental extension of the "coup" underway against the U.S. government, aimed at breaking potential European support for the dollar and reasserting the dominance of the pound sterling and the City of London.

"Perfide Albion"

At the heart of the British continental European controversy is Britain's insistence on its national interests at the expense of increased cooperation among EEC countries. The British government's intransigence in recent policy discussions, including insistence on national fishing limits and increased EEC subsidies to Britain's debt-strapped farmers, has unleashed a wave of protest in Europe, with French, West German, and Italian press once again raising the slogan of "perfide Albion" against their British partners.

British retaliation was immediate. Last weekend, Powell told an audience of London businessmen that Britons have "simply failed to comprehend the depth and durability of resentment held against us by the Germans and French. By the Germans for the obvious reason that

we defeated them (in World War II—ed.); by the French for the less obvious but still more potent reason that we did not share in their defeat." Turning on its head the dictum of German military scientist Clausewitz that "war is the continuation of politics by other means," Powell charged that French and German attitudes toward Britain and the EEC represent "the continuation of warfare by political means."

Two days after Powell's attack — for which he was denounced by West German newspapers as a "lunatic" and "extreme nationalist" — the London *Times* announced that British Tories were prepared to argue for the breakup of the EEC and its transformation into a "wider and looser" trading federation modeled on the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Britain's use of EFTA to break up the Adenauer-De Gaulle axis in the late 1950s is well known, and there is little doubt that the British are now looking to enlarging the EEC as a good means for undermining West German-French hegemony.

"Make Or Break Week"

Top British representatives, such as an influential member of the Conservative delegation to the European Parliament, warned reporters that this would be a "make or break week for the Community." Geoffrey Rippon, with backing from anti-EEC members of the Conservative Party, enlarged upon this warning, saying that if Britain does not get its way on sensitive EEC policies, he will launch a campaign for the dissolution of the European Community at a colloquium this week in Madrid on European issues. Rippon also attacked West Germany directly, echoing U.S. Treasury Secretary Blumenthal's criticisms of West German economic policy. Rippon warned that Europe and the U.S. face a "dark and dangerous future" because the monetary system is in disarray, and the balance of power is shifting in favor of the Soviet Union. In particular, he said, West Germany has been unwilling to help EEC member states with weaker economies recover from the recession. Schmidt has been "responsible for frustrating the coordinated effort of the last economic summit" and for delaying the next meeting until July. He concluded that "the fisheries question is not just a test of the credibility of the Community, it is a test of its coherence."

—Pam Goldman