

"In Europe," he went on, "we have more of a corporatist approach than in the U.S., where labor-management relations tend to be more adversarial. After the war, in Europe, corporatist relations were very much revived, and they linger on to the present day, since this was the way Europe was built up after the war: labor and industry together, the common responsibility of employer and employee, based on mutual respect."

He praised the approach of IG Metall in the Ruhr, as a basic model for how corporatist, or "concerted action" methods could work.

In December 1986, the ILO's steel committee met, to lay out policy guidelines for a "tripartite" approach to coping with the next phase of steel's collapse. The IMFe represented metals trade unions from around the world; the Cologne-based Association of West European Steel Employers represented industry; and economics or labor/social affairs ministries of various nations represented governments. In the Federal Republic's case, the jesuitical Labor and Social Affairs Minister, Norbert Blum, handled the dossier.

One informed IMFe source had this evaluation of how things have been proceeding: "It's getting worse and worse in Europe. We are heading toward big layoffs in Germany and France. . . . What we are trying to do, is to help in a concrete way, to reach a tripartite agreement for German steel, to make structural adjustments without dismissals. . . . The key idea is to get alternative employment, to bring into steel-producing regions other economic activity. . . . We are going through a certain phase of restructuring where capacity is being cut down. . . . Nobody challenges the view that there is now overcapacity for steel, it's simply a reality. . . . The unions have no choice, but to be involved in restructuring negotiations. . . . Restructuring is a reality. . . . With any plant closure, we try to avoid the worst."

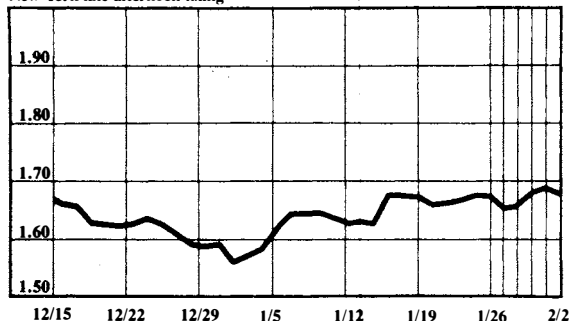
This last spokesmen, and others involved in the ILO corporatist process, are pointing to deindustrialized Great Britain as a model for the continent. They point to the way the British Iron and Steel Trades Confederation has dealt with plant closings over the past years. During mid-January, a British steel unionists' delegation came to the Federal Republic, to push the "model of Colby." Colby is formerly a steel-producing town, which, in the words of one British spokesman, has learned to make the transition from "steel production to service economy via social welfare."

Another lunatic proposal floating in the West Germany, is for Duisburg, the center of German steel-production with the largest industrial port in continental Europe, to be transformed into what the Social Democratic state government of North Rhine-Westphalia calls "food town." Under this scheme, Duisburg would become the center of low-quality food, such as ersatz sausage-based combinations and other substances more or less of the quality and taste of the hamburgers and hot dogs one eats in fast-food shops in the United States.

Currency Rates

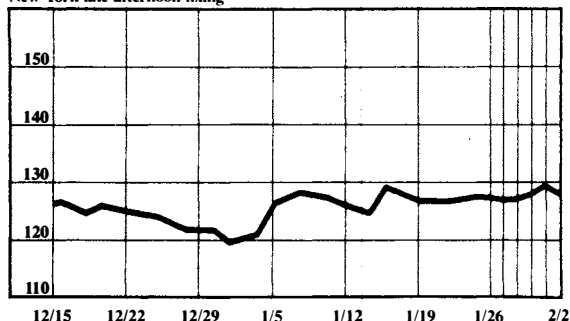
The dollar in deutschemarks

New York late afternoon fixing



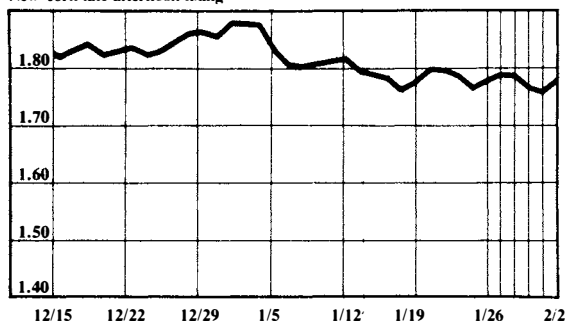
The dollar in yen

New York late afternoon fixing



The British pound in dollars

New York late afternoon fixing



The dollar in Swiss francs

New York late afternoon fixing

