

the rate for the repatriation of Japanese prisoners of war at 50,000 per month, while the Council of Foreign Ministers, meeting in Moscow in the spring of 1947, decided that all German prisoners of war held by the Allied Powers should be repatriated by December 31, 1948.

It soon became apparent that the repatriation of both German and Japanese prisoners of war from the Soviet Union was not proceeding according to schedule. In Germany the quadripartite machinery, which was to have produced a detailed plan of repatriation, collapsed in March 1948. In January 1949 the Western Powers announced that all prisoners of war in their custody had been returned to Germany by December 31, 1948, and drew attention to the parallel obligation of the U.S.S.R. under the Moscow agreement of 1947. They enquired for what purposes these prisoners were being retained in the Soviet Union and observed that the Soviet Government had taken no action regarding notification of the deaths of prisoners of war as laid down by international agreement. They further proposed that the Soviet Government suggest an international body to inspect the working conditions of German volunteer workers in the United Kingdom and the Near East, on the understanding that the same body should be permitted to carry out similar investigations in the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet Government replied that the Allied Control Council, which had been instructed by the Council of Foreign Ministers to prepare a detailed plan of repatriation, had failed to produce such a plan and that the U.S.S.R. was thus under no obligation in this regard. Having given its refusal in these terms, the Soviet Government added, without supplying statistical evidence, that the overwhelming majority of the prisoners of war which had been held in the Soviet Union had already been repatriated and that the Soviet repatriation plan would be completed in the course of 1949.

The U.S.S.R. proved to be equally unco-operative with regard to the repatriation of Japanese prisoners of war. Repeated offers were made to the Soviet authorities with a view to providing them with transportation facilities which would enable the monthly repatriation figures to be increased. These offers were ignored. Instead, on May 20, 1949, Tass News Agency reported that only 95,000 Japanese ex-servicemen remained to be repatriated, although the total number listed at that time by normally reliable Japanese Government sources and by the occupation authorities was about 469,000. The Soviet Government has made no effort to account for this discrepancy of approximately 374,000 prisoners. In the words of a United States note dated December 30, 1949, the discrepancy can "only be explained by the continued detention of large numbers of Japanese in Soviet-controlled areas and/or by an abnormally high death factor among those who were to be repatriated".

In April and May 1950 Tass News Agency was again the channel for a pronouncement of Soviet policy. Statements that the U.S.S.R. had completed repatriation of all German and Japanese prisoners of war from its territory, with the exception of those detained in connection with war crimes or on account of illness, created consternation in Germany and Japan. On May 2 the Japanese Diet, and on