

## THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AT THE END OF 1950

On December 18 and 19 historic joint meetings of the North Atlantic Treaty Defence Committee and Council were held at Brussels. Three important decisions emerged: establishment of an integrated force for Western Europe and the appointment of General Eisenhower as Supreme Commander; an agreement as to the manner in which the German Federal Republic might participate in the integrated force; and the re-organization of the production and supply structure of NATO. These decisions are the latest steps in the effort of North Atlantic countries to build up sufficient collective forces in the North Atlantic area to deter aggression.

The appointment of General Eisenhower is the latest in a series of important decisions in the military field. At the Council meeting in London in May 1950, it was agreed in principle that the forces of NATO countries should be developed and expanded on the basis of a collective balance of forces for the whole area rather than balanced forces for each nation. Only thus did it appear possible for North Atlantic countries to afford the armaments essential for their security without impairing severely the living standards of their people and thus sowing the seeds of discontent behind their military lines. In the September meeting of the Council in New York, the principle was agreed to of an integrated force under a single command for Western Europe. Even more important was the offer of the United States at this meeting to strengthen substantially its forces stationed in Western Europe on the condition, among others, of effective defence efforts by European members and of the participation of Western Germany. Implicit in the offer was acceptance of the thesis of certain European members that the first line of defence for Europe should not be the line of the Rhine, but the eastern frontiers of Western Germany.

### Significant Appointment

The appointment of General Eisenhower precedes the organization of a unitary command structure. It is anticipated that he will establish his headquarters in Europe early in the new year. He will be supported by a staff drawn from the nations contributing to the integrated force. The appointment is highly important psychologically and practically. To European members it is an earnest of United States intention to participate in the defence of Western Europe and not merely in its liberation. From a practical standpoint, if aggression comes in the near future it is of enormous advantage that the Commander-in-Chief who will be responsible for fighting the initial battle should be able to build his own organization, should be in a position to take an effective hand in planning, and should have over-all direction of training forces which must be prepared to operate effectively together if collective defence is to be a reality. On personal grounds, no one could be more acceptable for the post of Commander-in-Chief than General Eisenhower.

The decision on the re-armament of West Germans was reached with great reluctance and much misgiving, especially on the part of France and Belgium, where memories of German militarism are still particularly vivid. But there appeared to be no alternative. Immediately beyond the Iron Curtain are vast forces in being; the re-armament of Eastern Germany and other satellites proceeds apace. Faced with this threat, there has arisen the military necessity of denying to the Soviets the use of West German industry and manpower, and of securing, to this end, the assistance of the Germans themselves. Moreover, if Western Germany had to be included in the area of defence it was only fair that the Germans should share the common burden. The decision is also in line with the policy announced in September by the three Occupying Powers of Western Germany of a "progressive return of Germany to partnership in Western Europe".