

# Morgan Philips Price on the End of Passive Resistance in the Ruhr (September 25, 1923)

## Abstract

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From 1919 to 1923, the British journalist Morgan Philips Price was the Germany correspondent for the *Daily Herald*, a British daily newspaper that supported the Labour Party. Price himself became a member of parliament for the Labor Party in 1929. In this report from the industrial city of Essen in the Ruhr valley from September 1923, he describes his impressions after the end of the workers' passive resistance to the occupation of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops. The latter had occupied the Ruhr area in January 1923 in order to seize the coal and coke production there after Germany had failed to fulfill its reparations payments. Reich Chancellor Gustav Stresemann, who had been in office for only a month at this point, announced the end of passive resistance on September 26, 1923 in order to put a stop to hyperinflation and stabilize the currency. In his article, Price describes who the winners and losers of the occupation of the Ruhr were from the perspective of a British left-wing liberal.

## Source

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Essen, 25 September

After a week of walking about in this great industrial city, covering an area as big as Middlesex, I have the feeling that the working man, composing the overwhelming part of the population, is filled with contempt of the government in Berlin and with hatred of the government in Paris ... This settlement will, it is felt by the Ruhr miner, dispose of the mineral wealth by which he gets his livelihood to a combine of international financiers, and he will be left to his fate ... Small wonder that the feeling is widespread that the Berlin government thinks more of making propaganda out of the 'French robbery' than of providing the workers of the Ruhr with fuel for the winter ... The financing of the passive resistance in the Ruhr bids fair to become one of the scandals of capitalist plundering of public funds. I find that, of the 89 blast furnaces in the Ruhr, only four are now working. The rest are cold, and most have fallen in and will have to be built up again. The same applies to coking ovens, most of which were of the old type. These will be rebuilt for the trusts, at the expense of the German state, on the modern type. Now the German trusts have already received the cash for the rebuilding of the plant in foreign currency – when the mark stood at 20,000 to the £ sterling – from the Reichsbank, and have got it safely tucked away in some corner of the world. Some have paid the Reichsbank back in marks at 1 million to the sterling. Others are in no hurry and will wait until the mark falls a little further.

Source: Morgan Philips Price, *Dispatches from the Weimar Republic, Versailles and German Fascism*. London, Sterling, Virginia: London, 1999, pp. 164–65.

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