

REPORT ON GERMANY: 2

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The Red and the Brown

West Germany's Totalitarian Troubles

IN THE SOVIET ZONE of Germany, the continuation of a totalitarian environment has naturally led to the reappearance on the scene of "reformed" Nazi personnel. In West Germany, on the other hand, the occupying powers have from the beginning aimed at eliminating both the institutional and the ideological remnants of the Nazi regime. The methods used have not perhaps always been ideally suited to their purpose, but the will has unquestionably been there.

Nevertheless, the thirteen years of Nazi rule inevitably left an impress which has not yet altogether disappeared. Hitler's fall did not turn all Nazis into good German democrats overnight — any more than his coming to power turned all good German democrats into Nazis. We must ask ourselves, not whether

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there are *any* totalitarian forces in West Germany today, but how powerful these forces are; how strategically they are placed; whether they are gaining or losing ground; what methods they are using; and what factors in the existing situation help or hinder them — and what their relation to the greatest surviving totalitarian power may be.

Both totalitarianisms, red and brown, have their followers in West Germany. At the end of the war, the Western powers were still under the illusion that the Communists were a part of the democratic world; they therefore gave them the same facilities they granted the democratic parties. Indeed, the Communists were often actually assisted by occupation officials some of whom were themselves Communists and in a position to exert a disproportionate influence on policy. And of course they received substantial assistance of a material sort from the East. Despite these advantages, however,

the Communists in postwar West Germany have never come near their pre-Hitler strength. For if the Soviet Union buoyed them up with propaganda and cash, it also burdened them down with the load of Soviet policy and practice. And the burden far outweighed the support. As long as the Soviet occupation of East Germany is based on total exploitation and total oppression, as long as there are millions of refugees whom the Red Army drove from their homes, and millions of families with relatives doing forced labor in Soviet prisoner-of-war camps — as long as all this continues there is little danger of the Communists becoming a real political threat in West Germany. In the first postwar German elections, held in 1946, the Communists polled a third to a half of their pre-Hitler vote in all three Western zones. In subsequent elections in West Germany, their strength declined steadily. Today, they poll less than five per cent of the vote in the German Federal Republic as a whole, and it is doubtful whether they will poll even that much in any of its states when new general elections take place next year.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there has been a steady rise in the percentage of votes received by neo-Nazi groups. In part, this is due to the fact that such groups were originally outlawed by the occupation authorities. Hence, as they gradu-

ally organized and reappeared on the political scene, their surface strength naturally increased. But even allowing for this initial factor, their gains have continued in the last couple of years. Thus, in three recent by-elections to fill vacant seats in the Federal Parliament, candidates of the neo-Nazi Socialist Reich Party polled over ten per cent of the vote, not a high figure, but substantial enough.

In many ways, the propaganda of the Communists and the propaganda of the neo-Nazis have been very similar. Both have sought in particular to appeal to the refugees, whose unhappy position has made them especially vulnerable to extremist demagoguery. They have echoed each other's denunciations of the Western powers' "enslavement" of Germany; they have competed with democratic groups in making political capital out of the desire of most Germans to see their country reunited. And while not all the neo-Nazis have joined the Communists in propagandizing for neutralism, many of them have done so. Thus the leader of the Socialist Reich Party, Otto Ernst Remer (who squelched the anti-Hitler plot of July 20, 1944) declared: "The best thing for us to do is to take up posts as traffic policemen and stretch out our arms so that the Russians will be able to march through Germany as quickly as possible."

Moreover, there is at least some

evidence that the Russians have lent a hand to the neo-Nazis — probably on the theory that the latter can serve their ends more effectively than the now thoroughly discredited West German Communists. One of the first important neo-Nazi groups in West Germany, the National Democratic Party of Hesse, was formed at the same time that the Russians were establishing the East Zone National Democratic Party as a vehicle for former Nazi activists. The similarity of name, program, and timing may have been only a coincidence. Many people, however, thought it a peculiar one. And more recently, one of the charges brought against the Socialist Reich Party (formed shortly after the parliamentary elections of 1949) was that it had received financial assistance from the Eastern Zone. In August of the current year this charge was again made, not by one of the party's enemies, but by a member of its executive committee, and caused the temporary suspension of the party chairman, Fritz Dorls. But Dorls soon gained the upper hand again, and the protesting member, Count Wolf von Westarp, resigned from the executive committee and party.

THE GOVERNMENT has used the rather broad powers allowed it by the West German constitution to strike at both Communists and neo-Fascist parties. Communist papers have been repeatedly suppressed for

printing particularly outrageous slanders; Remer and other leaders of the Socialist Reich Party have been tried and imprisoned on similar charges. Moreover, when the Constitutional Court, authorized under the constitution to outlaw antidemocratic parties, was finally established, the government brought charges before it against both the Communists and the S.R.P. The Westarp charge and subsequent resignation occurred while the S.R.P.'s case was before the court. This, and the fact that the court had already granted a preliminary injunction against certain S.R.P. activities, probably convinced the party's leaders that its number was up. So in September, anticipating the judgment of the court, they announced the party's "voluntary dissolution." It was rumored that Remer and Dorls were planning to continue it as an underground organization which they would direct from "abroad" — generally interpreted to mean the Soviet Zone of Germany. The S.R.P.'s members in the federal parliament, however, retain their seats as independents.

At this writing the case of the Communist Party is still before the court. It is doubtful whether the government is really anxious to outlaw it, as the German Communists are not now a political threat. Outlawing of the Communist Party, however, would not solve the problem of the Communist conspiratorial threat — or remove the danger of

an increase in Communist influence at some future time. Nor does the dissolution of the Socialist Reich Party diminish in any significant degree the danger of a neo-Nazi resurgence. For both Communists and Nazis are adept at infiltrating and using other organizations.

THE COMMUNISTS are now following two main tactics: One, the old dodge of the "united front" in order to worm their way into the Social Democratic Party. Thus, they offered the Social Democrats their support in the Hessian legislature (the Social Democrats refused it), and they cast unsolicited votes for the presidential candidacy of the late Dr. Kurt Schumacher. They withdrew their own candidates and instructed their followers to vote Social Democratic in several parliamentary by-elections. At the same time they kept up a running fire of attack against the Social Democratic leaders, while appealing to the Social Democratic rank and file to join with them in the "struggle for peace and German unity." So far, however, they haven't got very far, either with the leaders or with the rank and file. It isn't likely that the Communists will have any success with the Social Democrats, certainly as long as Social Democracy continues to be outlawed in the Soviet Zone.

The second, and much more successful, tactic of the Communists

has been to mobilize neutralist sentiment. The groups on which they have concentrated are to be found mainly among the more conservative elements of German society. They have appealed to Ruhr industrialists by stressing the importance of Eastern markets — and they have taken an active part in arranging the illegal export of strategic materials from West Germany to the East. They have appealed to both the strong pacifist sentiment which is a natural result of the last war's destruction, and to the fear of many Germans that allying West Germany with the NATO powers will cut off all possibility of reuniting it with the Eastern Zone. They have played on the concern of many Protestant churchmen for the fate of predominantly Protestant East Germany, and on their fear of Catholic predominance in the truncated West German Republic. And they have made full use of the many Germans — former military men, intellectuals, diplomats, and "National Bolsheviks" — who for economic or "geopolitical" or nationalist reasons believe that Germany's future lies with the Communist East against the democratic West. In this type of activity, the Communist Party seldom shows its own face. Those who appear as the leaders of these movements are generally people who have never themselves been Communists or Communist sympathizers, but who are persuaded either by

flattery or their own desires that they can find a basis of agreement between East and West. Some of these, such as the former German diplomat Rudolf Nadolny, may well be actual Soviet agents. Others, such as Dr. Martin Niemoeller and former West German Interior Minister Gustav Heinemann, are unquestionably honorable men who are unintentionally but effectively playing the Communist game. Whatever the West German government may do to restrict or prohibit the activities of the Communist Party itself, non-Communist neutralists will probably remain the far more significant instrument of Soviet propaganda.

Like the Communists, the neo-Nazis may be expected to infiltrate other parties if they are deprived of one of their own. Indeed, there are already neo-Nazi elements in several of the parties. There are no neo-Nazis among the Social Democrats, and Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democrats have for the most part succeeded in keeping them out. But the amorphous Refugee Party (*Bund der Heimlosen und Entrechteten*, or B.H.E.) shows neo-Nazi tendencies in some areas, such as Schleswig-Holstein, while in others its leadership appears to be genuinely democratic. The German Party, one of the members of Chancellor Adenauer's coalition, was recently accused of neo-Nazism by its coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party. Actually, the German Party has two

wings. One of them consists of conservative advocates of decentralization, and is led by Heinrich Hellwege. The other is ultra-nationalist and at times shows signs of neo-Nazism. Its leader, Dr. Hans Seeböhm, has made speeches whose extreme nationalism led to protests from the Western representatives in Germany. Both Hellwege and Seeböhm are members of the Adenauer cabinet. Some neo-Nazi elements are also to be found in the Free Democratic Party, whose affiliates in the various states are almost autonomous. But there can be no doubt that the majority of this party's members follow the leadership of such genuine democrats as West German President Theodor Heuss and Reinhold Maier, Prime Minister of the recently created Southwest State.

WEST GERMANY has certain important assets in the struggle against a totalitarian revival. The Soviet army of occupation in East Germany, and the Communist puppet regime which has been established there, are a standing warning to German voters against the blandishments of the Communists. Similarly, the memory of the destruction which Hitler wrought is a strong antidote to the propaganda of neo-Nazism. Yet German democracy also suffers from certain major weaknesses. While the millions of refugees and expellees who have swarmed

into the Federal Republic from behind the Iron Curtain remain outside West German society, they form a reservoir of discontent and dangerous restlessness. As long as Germany remains divided, the desire for unity will be exploited by demagogues.

And last but not least, the internal weaknesses of the German democratic forces might pave the way to disaster. German political parties today are still more interested in declaiming grandiose phrases and pursuing small partisan advantages than they are in buckling down to the day-to-day problems of the German people. Partly, this is a consequence of the fact that the present parties were formed in the period of occupation, when they were deprived of any real part in major decisions. The habit of shadow boxing which they developed then has persisted, although its cause no longer exists. Indeed, there is a strong tendency on the part of both government and opposition to behave as if the occupation authorities were still settling things, and to avoid the responsibility for solving Germany's domestic problems in domestic terms. And partly, the German govern-

ment and German political parties alike suffer from bureaucratic dry rot and an ingrained deference to seniority which effectively kill any interest that might be aroused in the German youth. This same bureaucratism and pettiness were among the reasons why so many young people passed into the Communist and Nazi folds in the days of the Weimar Republic.

It would be too pessimistic to conclude today that the democratic development of Western Germany will be frustrated in the long run by the totalitarians of the left and right. For some years to come an all-out bid for power by neo-Nazism or Communism is improbable. And there is little danger that Western Germany, in the near future, will become an aggressor again. What might take place, however, is a slow undermining of the basis of German democracy. This could eventually poison the atmosphere to a point where those men who are trying, in Germany's workshops, villages, and universities, to build democracy from the ground up, would be banging their heads against a rebuilt nationalist stone wall.

*At Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
there is raging a "battle of the brains" . . .*

WILL *Machines* REPLACE THE *Human Brain*?

SERGE FLIEGERS

THE placid brown waters of the Charles River, rolling through Cambridge, Massachusetts, bathe what is undoubtedly the most intellectual shore line in this country — the few odd miles that stretch between the stately grey halls of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the bright, crenelated houses of Harvard. This winter, the waters of the Charles are being rippled not only by the harsh winds of the north but also by the echoes of a sizzling controversy between two intellectual giants of our times — Professor Howard Aiken of the Harvard Computation Laboratory and Professor Norbert Wiener of the Department of Mathematics at MIT.

This controversy, somewhat muffled by good-natured academic po-

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litensness, is nevertheless aptly named the "Battle of the Brains." This is because it involves not only the human, or perhaps slightly super-human cerebral mechanisms of Aiken and Wiener; it is also because, pitched against each other, are two inhuman monsters of reason and logic: The "Mark IV" of Harvard versus the "Whirlwind" of MIT. These two giant electronic computing machines — known commonly as electronic brains — are competing in a race that has so far produced a new science named "Cybernetics" and the promise of another industrial revolution, a revolution that may affect our civilization more profoundly than the steam engine or the atomic bomb.

This correspondent recently completed a tour of the very front line of this unique battle. First stop was the modernistic, red-brick and glass building behind Harvard's Law School, which serves as headquarters