

A Strassburg professor clarifies the recent German elections by depicting the domestic struggle between Socialists and industrialists. He also shows why French and German interests coincide.

DANGER from Germany

By EDMOND VERMEIL

Translated from the *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*
Paris Political Semimonthly

IT HAS RECENTLY been stated that the future of Franco-German relations depends on Germany's word of honor. This is a grave and rigorous statement of truth, but the question of whether Germany will keep her word depends chiefly on domestic politics.

We must therefore define the German danger. I cannot insist too much that this danger is not what people generally imagine it to be. It is, for instance, absurd to say that Germany considered as a whole nation wishes or does not wish revenge, is tending toward war or away from it. Germany does not know what she wants and the contradictory events that marked the Rhineland evacuation prove this point. I should even disagree with M. Jean Piot, who recently remarked that there are two Germany's and that we must have faith in one so

that we may not be deceived by the other.

How is it even possible to define these two Germany's? In reality there are a quantity of Germany's mixed up together in that troublous, confused, ample actuality known as the Reich which serves as their common denominator. There is the Germany of the economic leaders. There is the immense army of the Socialists. There is the Roman Catholic Germany, and ranged against it the Lutheran or Evangelical Germany. And if any single line of opposition can be found in this complex, disconcerting mass it is the profound opposition between a divided middle class which includes feudal lords and industrial employers and a vast proletariat which has expanded immensely since the War. The only important relations across the Rhine are the relations between

these two groups. It is the only form in which we can possibly admit the existence of two Germany's. It is, however, impossible to say that one group wants war and the other peace. The German proletariat, for instance, is perpetually fighting the directors of German economic life, but the proletariat has need of them and cannot live without them and will finally bend to their will.

Must we again repeat that everything in Germany is to be explained by the enormous industrial advance that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century? The process occurred with unprecedented rapidity. The pre-capitalist social forms, the family, the professional associations, the political, regional, municipal, and national communities have been dissolved and have been separated from their ancient religious attachments. The institution of the family has been more changed in Germany than anywhere else in Europe. Its various elements have fallen asunder. Women have gone to work. New ideas on marriage have come into vogue. Domestic industry has been ruined. More than in any other country labor in Germany is a form of merchandise that is easily and coldly exchanged for other forms of merchandise. Old-fashioned professional pride is disappearing. 'Arbeitgeber' and 'Arbeitnehmer,' the one who gives and the one who receives work—these two terms cover the whole social field.

It is not for nothing that Germans have lately coined the phrase 'Nebenregierung' (side-government), which they use to describe the proletarian syndicates as well as the industrial syndicates. All Germany is being tied up more and more by the network of

its *Verbände* and *Gewerkschaften* which squeeze the consumer to death. The conflicting interests of these two groups will dominate more and more Germany's whole domestic policy. The political struggle is a struggle between syndicates. We suspected this last March when the uncompromising attitude of the Socialists put the Brüning Cabinet in power and we suspected it again when the Reichstag was dissolved three months ago.

HOW can we understand the struggle between the German parties if we do not know the social structure of the German nation? Here is a population that has increased from twenty-five to sixty-four millions within a century, a population that is moving from the agricultural east to the industrial west, from the south to the north, with both east and south emptying themselves to the profit of three great industrial regions, Westphalia, Brandenburg, and Saxony. It is a country that is deserting its farms for its big cities to such an extent that its former distribution of population has been completely reversed, and thirty-six per cent of all Germans now live in rural districts and sixty-four per cent live in the cities, where the real Germany is to be found.

Industry and the World War made certain changes, the inflation created still more, and the number of people old enough to work has increased enormously. Hours of labor have been lengthened and women have been admitted to industry. Add to the army of workers the bondholders, invalids, and wounded soldiers supported at state expense; add, too, the unemployed. The Reich might well be com-

pared to a house whose second story, the industrial story, is much bigger than its first story, the agricultural one, a house that must be supported by props that are fatally placed on foreign soil.

All these laborers and all these officials, massed together in the big cities and governed by Socialists, are becoming aware of their growing importance to the rest of the country. Social differences among them are disappearing, or rather the opposition between the big employers and the rest of the nation is becoming more acute. The leaders of the nation's economic life are developing into a new kind of oligarchy (*neue Oberschicht, neues Führertum*). Faced by these two groups, the middle class is losing its influence. A vast proletariat, quite different from the former proletariat, is taking shape and is being absorbed into numberless syndicates. Its ranks are being swelled by masses of employees and by the lower officials in public and private service. The war and post-war periods have only hastened this process, have only served to make the elect group of capitalists more of an oligarchy, have ruined the middle class by inflation, and enriched the new-style proletariat.

The figures expressing this condition are most eloquent. Germany today is composed first of an economic élite including about nine hundred thousand people; secondly, of an intellectual class numbering about two millions; thirdly, of a middle class of farmers and shopkeepers including sixteen and a half millions; and, fourthly, of a proletariat made up of eight and a half million industrial workers, thirty million nonagricultural workers and three and a half

million peasants, forty-two millions in all.

In a social democracy like Germany people are more apt to fall than rise, although certain historians pretend that the lower strata have been raised to a more favorable level. And it is over this society which is being increasingly reduced to the same level that the employers are pitilessly extending their network of concentration and rationalization, letting anyone whom they cannot use fall into unemployment and poverty.

The political parties can only reflect such a social condition. In Germany more than anywhere else, economic and professional groups are exercising powerful pressure on elections, deputies, and the functioning of parliament. Commissions are playing a rôle of greater importance, and the technical character of the debates condemns these commissions to a dreary state of boredom. Just read Herr Lambach's book, *The Reign of the Five Hundred*, and you will see what kind of parliamentary machine the Reichstag is.

WHAT I have just said explains why a fundamental conflict separates the Nationalists from the Socialists. On one side stand the big employers, on the other the new-style proletariat. Between these two groups are the Democrats, whose numbers are dwindling and whose only assets are their homogeneity and their press. As for the Catholic Centre group, it is merely a small-sized repetition of the whole of Germany and is tending to fall into a capitalist and a proletarian wing, the latter being composed of Christian syndicates.

This is the line of cleavage between two camps of quite unequal size. True, the Nationalists have made gains, but the divisions that are breaking up this party reveal once again the various economic elements of which it is composed. Meanwhile, the Socialists are defending the interests and ambitions of the new proletariat. This is why they are spending so much money, especially in the big cities, and have imposed crushing taxation. The Socialists are socializing and nationalizing everything, the working population, the institutions, and all the thousand details of modern life. Two-thirds of the German population live with state aid. Loans are increasing and the more sincere Germans fully realize that this social fraud has more to do with the present financial crisis than reparations.

In other words, the problem of nationalization or state socialism has become the most important topic of discussion in Germany, having supplanted the reparations dispute. Of course, I realize that the campaign for revising the Young Plan has already begun, but it will probably be pursued from the point of view of state socialism. It is no longer a question of whether Germany will pay us or not. I believe that she wants to pay. It is much more a question of whether state socialism will hurl the country into a bottomless financial abyss, making it once more insolvent, and whether it will not be necessary to substitute new methods, dictatorial ones, no doubt, contrived by the economic leaders to fight the Socialists. Behold, then, the German drama. It dominates everyone who is playing a part in German life. In the governmental crisis last March the most

anti-Socialist element in the Centre Party carried the day.

How can one doubt the gravity of the present crisis? Bismarck's empire never succeeded in uniting organically the two Germany's that used to dispute for power: the old Prussian nobility and the middle class of business men. The Prussian fortress still exists but it is now occupied by the Socialists, who were so jealously kept out of it before the War, as well as by the Centre Party, whose spirit of collective organization closely resembles the Socialist spirit. The question, therefore, is whether the Weimar Republic can unite organically this new socialized Prussia with the economic leaders. If the Centrists and the Democrats abandon their rôle as liaison agents between the economic leaders in the party of Treviranus and the Socialists, the whole edifice built up in 1919 will lose its balance.

This vision of modern Germany, which I believe to be a true one, will perhaps permit us to judge the foreign policy of the Reich more wisely. If it is true that public political discussion has shifted from reparations to state socialism one can readily see the close connection between domestic and foreign policy. One must keep a cool head and remember that behind all the noisy disturbances that accompanied the Rhineland evacuation, a drama of material forces was being enacted, a financial and economic tragedy that dominates the whole country. The same thing is true of the official declarations concerning foreign policy.

LET us examine the two most recent texts that the German Cabinet

has taken to express its foreign policy: the speech made by Foreign Minister Curtius on June twenty-fifth before the Reichstag and the reply to Briand's memorandum concerning the European federation. What could be more firm, more consciously prudent than the former utterance. 'Germany,' said Herr Stresemann's successor, 'wants equal rights and full liberty of action. Because she wants these two results she promises to keep the peace, for, in her eyes, peace and these two objects are the same thing.' Herr Curtius then examined all the different fronts of Germany's foreign policy. In the west, since the evacuation, only the Sarre problem remains. Central Europe is in a state of great ferment, which Herr Curtius scarcely described, nor did he tell us what attitude the Reich will take in that part of the world. Germany's eastern difficulties are well known and her recent negotiations with the Soviet seem to have smoothed them out and saved the Rapallo Treaty. In relation to Poland, Herr Curtius praised the commercial treaties and expressed the hope that the frontier officials of both nations would act discreetly. Then came the indispensable couplet praising the League of Nations, a comment on the disarmament and minority problems, and an announcement of a reply to M. Briand. In short, nothing new.

What did the Briand reply have to say? The German government asked: first, that no move should be made against any non-European country or continent and that the future federation should adopt a sufficiently elastic programme to admit Russia and Turkey; secondly, that in the political field the great principles of

equal rights, liberty, and security for all should be applied and that in the name of these principles the existing treaties and the *status quo* of 1919 should be modified; thirdly, that in the economic field 'forces' should be allowed free play and that the special situation of certain countries weighed down with social and financial charges should be taken into account; fourthly, that no harm should be done the League of Nations by provoking the creation of Continental groups.

Treaty revision, an opportunity for German economic leaders to act more freely, and a chance for them to make connections with other countries and continents, these are the three essential points of the German reply. Here, too, there is nothing new. We knew in advance that Germany would never want a European federation that would not involve treaty revision, that would limit the field of action of its captains of industry, or that would exclude England and Russia, as Count Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europe does. Then, too, the idea that dominated the reply was a thoroughly German idea. Life creates anew and saps human statutes at their base. A European federation is all right but it must be a mobile, dynamic, supple federation in which Germany can easily cut herself free from a heavy past, project herself forward into the future, reconquer her lost political position, and assure her connections with the British Empire and Russia.

Nobody has dwelt on the strange analogy between the German and the Italian replies. Perhaps their resemblance is fortuitous, but if Rome and Berlin have come to an agreement should we feel anxious? Italy, like Germany, demands absolute equality

between victorious and vanquished powers and also demands the admission of Turkey and Russia into the League. In short, Italy and Germany both urge revision, though for different reasons, and the idea of a European federation has thus immediately raised the most serious questions. Is it better to regulate them at once or to wait until they ripen with time? In my opinion a project for a federated Europe can amount to nothing more nor less than a revision of Europe and this is very dangerous and slippery ground.

The new element here is the appearance, if not the reality, of a German-Italian *rapprochement*. Is the old Triple Alliance going to be revived? One can hardly think so. Certain modern historians, however, do say that Germany's foreign position is more favorable than it was in 1914 in spite of the losses suffered under the peace treaties. On the eve of the World War the diplomatic position of the Triple Alliance was desperate and Germany, ill-supported by her allies, had to face a war on two fronts. This is no longer true to-day. Confronted by a group of states, vanquished or victorious, who are determined to obtain by force a revision of the treaties, we French should be singularly alone. Yet everything leads us to believe that the Reich has no aggressive intentions for the moment. The most enlightened spirits across the Rhine know that decades are needed for the German revival. Of course, the reactionary German papers do not ignore the Franco-Italian conflict, or the opportunities that may soon arise to undertake a more active diplomacy, one that would go far beyond the limits fixed by Stresemann.

The recent diplomatic movements on the Wilhelmstrasse seem to indicate a tendency in this direction, but all that we have said about the social structure of the Reich leads us to believe that the leaders of Germany are not dreaming of undertaking a new adventure. And we may also add that they have not forgotten Italy's defection in the War and that perhaps they lay no great store by Mussolini's future.

NO, I do not believe that the economic leaders of Germany are at the moment gamblers like Ludendorff. They are more preoccupied with establishing their power in a country still torn by opposing tendencies. As for German foreign policy, it can only be an 'expectant' one. Germany is chiefly striving not to engage herself with any single country. If a conflict breaks out she will either range herself on the side of the power that seems likely to win and whose victory would best serve the interests of the Reich, or else she will ask to be paid dearly for her neutrality. I believe that Germany would be more inclined to adopt the latter course since it would be fruitful and would involve no risks. Hence there is no reason for her to strive openly for an alliance with Italy, though, when it comes to following the Franco-Italian conflict, that is another affair. No one can reproach the Germans for wanting to keep posted. The same considerations hold in relation to Russia. Germany is too afraid of Bolshevism to engage in any Russian venture, but she can and does use Russia to achieve her own ends.

Some Germans think that this

game of balance which Bismarck and Stresemann played cannot be kept up forever. They even declare that Franco-German solidarity is the only safe position. They cannot forgive their country for not having followed a more European policy in the past few years and for having counted too much on England for the destruction of the Versailles Treaty instead of having marched side by side with France. They are no doubt right, because this 'liberty of action' that forces Germany to turn first to Russia, then to England, then to Italy, and then to ourselves without entering into engagements anywhere, this 'liberty,' I assert, recalls the floating game of diplomacy that Germany played before the War. There is, however, this vital difference. Before the War this game made the whole world anxious, whereas to-day the whole world tends to profit from it. But where will it lead to, and isn't Europe being kept in a state of chaos and indecision? Without any order inside Germany, or along its frontiers, what are the hopes for European order? How can a permanent European federation be built without Germany, the very heart of the European continent?

Will the true, profound thought of Germany's economic leaders be to unite German and French destiny? The economic agreements that have progressed so rapidly since 1926 may well lead to more close connections. The Germans know that they need our capital and they also assert that the European colonies in Asia are becoming so gravely menaced that

the colonial future of Europe depends on a joint exploitation of Africa.

In any event, should not our policy be to 'fix' Germany, to try to steer her ambitions and efforts in our direction? Our victory, our stability, our present wealth should permit us to play a worthy rôle, and meanwhile German nationalists, not only the Conservatives, but the National Socialists, will thrive on economic discontent. In the Reich, where centralization is increasing, where large estates are being pitilessly broken up, where captains of industry are acquiring a sure control over vast bodies of men who have no choice but to obey orders, great things will surely happen soon. Germany has no interest in letting her domestic policy, her social policy, and her foreign policy float at the mercy of the formidable currents now traversing Europe. France has nothing to gain from a passive policy which would allow a situation to arise in which Germany might some day take advantage of her. Franco-German solidarity must be so strong that nothing can prevail against it. That remains impossible, however, as long as Germany fails to achieve unity and governmental security at home and is unable to discover abroad any means of directing her efforts in useful channels. Are we not self-confident and skillful enough to interest this country in our destiny, to restrain it and give it the cohesion it lacks to-day, that together with it we may forge an armor that will give the European federation its meaning and its chance of life?

Modern England wears two aspects—
one her familiar mask of gravity, the
other a face of deep contentment that
foreigners rarely see. These two moods
are here articulated in human terms.

English Lights *and* Shadows

By TWO LONDON
JOURNALISTS

I. HOME TRUTHS FROM ENGLAND

By HAROLD NICOLSON

From the *Evening Standard*, London Beaverbrook Daily

A LITTLE WHILE AGO I wrote what I feel, on second reading, was a rather unkind article on how English people behave abroad. There are many things which I should wish to add to that article, but I dislike following the same furrow twice over. I propose in this present article to take a cross section and to give some advice to the foreigner who visits England. Much of this advice will take the form, the slightly furtive form, of home truths.

Most foreigners who reach our shores are already provided with preconceived notions. Such notions are dangerous and disturbing. The Frenchman, for instance, imagines that on arrival he will grope his way through an impenetrable fog, will stumble over several plum puddings, and will then

be faced by what is known in France as '*la morgue Anglaise*.' I have frequently wondered what they meant by this odd expression, and I took the trouble the other day to look up the word in Littré. 'MORGUE,' I read, '(orig. inc.) *s. f.* Mine, contenance sérieuse et fière || Orgueil et suffisance.'

I have no idea at all what is meant by 'orig. inc.,' but the rest of the definition is apparent to me. It means that the Frenchman feels that the average Englishman is proud and self-satisfied.

There are, moreover, other preconceived notions which our French visitors in their dogskin gloves take as signposts to the English character. There is that unpleasant word, which they are so fond of using, and which