

The Ragged Edge

WHEN the great pacts were signed in Bonn and Paris, there was no merriment in the streets, no singing and dancing as there still is in France on the Fourteenth of July. Yet the new partnership between West Germany and the great democracies may prove as portentous as the fall of the Bastille.

If we look at the photographs of Acheson, Eden, Schuman, Adenauer, and De Gasperi, stiff and stern, we can see in their faces how precarious is the line-up of these five men facing history. They may be the founding fathers of a new order, they may march straight into oblivion. Acheson is at the end of his term of office; Eden represents what in terms of popular vote is a minority Government; the other three are struggling to hold the confidence of about half of their countrymen. For all five, and particularly the three continental Europeans, there is a hard battle ahead, to be fought first in the parliaments and then in the next elections. Their signatures may turn out to have been written in pencil, not in indelible ink.

The frame of mind of the two Anglo-Saxons is, of course, different from that of their colleagues, for in the United States and Britain only government leadership, and not democratic institutions, is at stake in the coming parliamentary and electoral tests. The three Europeans know that should their policy of continental union be rejected by their people, should nationalism once more prevail, democratic freedom won't have much of a chance to survive. Either they make a united Europe, or their governments—and democracy—will topple.

There is extraordinary daring in what these three men have done; yet these three devout Catholics are as far removed as they can be from the traditional type of revolutionary radical. All the same, they have challenged old ingrained traditions, like that of the

enmity between France and Germany; they have taken a stand against powerful entrenched business and labor interests; they have flown in the face of history by attempting to create a new federal state—United Europe—without the surgery of war and revolution. The American Republic was born in revolution and war; the Constitution was designed to make enduring and workable the national union that popular insurrection and force of arms had achieved. There are few nations whose birth has not been marked by blood. If the nation is to be a democracy, popular suffrage comes next.

The new democracy of United Europe, on the contrary, must be ratified, directly and through the parliaments, before it gets a chance to operate. Its founding fathers are not, like those of the American Republic, former revolutionists turned legislators, but statesmen who ask their people to by-pass revolution and still make history. Actually, these men are the only real revolutionists of our time. But in our time the verbiage and ceremonial of revolution have been confiscated by the Communists, who call by that name the forcible return of mankind to the discipline of the herd—just as they call by the name of peace their unending war on civilization.

The major trouble is, however, that too heavy a burden has fallen on the people themselves. For it is now up to them and their representatives in parliament to decide whether the scaffolding so laboriously built by their statesmen is to be buttressed by actual political and military strength. The three European leaders and their followers think this can be done.

Actually, every continental European election these last few years has been a plebiscite on whether or not to keep democracy, conducted under the eyes of an implacable external and

internal enemy who could, at least for some time, overrun every land in Europe. West Berlin is the living symbol of the whole of western Europe. The majority of the European peoples still prefer democracy. In the next election they will be asked the hardest question: whether or not, in the face of Russia's threats, they want Europe united.

THE Foreign Ministers now have their minds set on the parliaments, and the parliamentarians have their minds set on the electorate. Leaders, parliamentarians, and people look at the United States and Soviet Russia, for these are the two supreme powers on whom the destiny of the world depends. Ultimately, the choice before every European who goes to the polls, even in a municipal election in a remote village of southern Italy, is between these two alien, unfathomable powers. No wonder that a large number of voters become confused and follow despicable leaders who offer them any sort of pie in the sky, including the defunct Fascist glories. And no wonder also that in these registrations of popular will, a very large number of voters declare themselves against any further registration of popular will. The European democracies live very close to the ragged edge of majority rule, yet they manage to live.

This is the condition of things in Europe as the battles for ratification start. It's like a whirlpool of worries, the statesmen afraid of the parliaments, the parliaments of the people, the people of the Russians—or of us. We are certainly not responsible for the Russians, but we are responsible for ourselves. By the men we choose to lead us next November, we can make it clear to the European democracies that we will not let them down. At the present time, this is the best we can do for them—and for ourselves.



Antoine Pinay

Premier Pinay And the Men of Vichy

JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN SCHREIBER

francs in February to 3,990 in May.

These achievements may not prove lasting. It is not impossible that the Gaullists could again become a unified political force; it is quite possible that inflation could soon start undermining the franc again. But, whatever the future, something has been changed in France: The entire line-up of political forces has been altered irrevocably.

A Gap and Three Bridges

France's economic position is well known: It must rebuild what the war and the German occupation destroyed; it must renew and modernize industry so that France can compete in the international markets; under the terms of the Atlantic program, it must furnish a powerful army—and meanwhile it must fight an increasingly difficult war in Indo-China. The gap between income and expenditure, in a budget of 3,500 billion francs, is about 460 billion francs—about \$1.3 billion. From March, 1951, to March, 1952, prices had risen thirty-five per cent.

There are three methods by which the gap between income and spending can be bridged. The first, of course, is to cut down on spending. Up till now no one openly advocated cutting the credits for reconstruction or for industrial re-equipment. Such a policy would bring unemployment and prolong the housing crisis, and would be as dangerous to the nation's morale as it would be to the future of the country's industrial health. Also, since no Government dares to withdraw from Indo-China or interfere with rearmament, economy as a solution to the financial problem has been considered impractical.

A second method of bridging the gap is equally simple: You increase income by increasing taxes. M. Pleven

and after him M. Faure tried to do this—and parliament threw them out. Parliament refused to vote new taxes on the ground that the country would not pay them unless some crisis showed that they were unavoidable. As Jean Monnet reminded Americans in April, the Frenchman is about the most heavily burdened taxpayer in the free world.

There remains a third method. You persuade part of the population to spend less and lend its savings to the state. For political reasons, no Government in France's recent past has even dreamed of this method as a practical possibility. The only citizens capable of saving from income without cutting into their budget for the bare necessities of life belong to the upper and middle classes. But those citizens will not make sacrifices or take risks unless they trust the Government that asks for their money. Because French Governments ever since the Liberation have been Governments of the Left—with the Socialists supporting them when not actually participating in them—the upper and middle classes have never trusted them. Only a Government of the Right, drawing its strength from conservative forces, could have recourse to the classic "liberal" method of state borrowing. With the Gaullists in parliament voting as a solid bloc in opposition, there was no majority of the Right on which any such Government could be based. No one thought a Government of the Right could be formed. Antoine Pinay made the attempt. To everyone's surprise he succeeded in splitting the Gaullist party wide open: Twenty-seven Gaullist Deputies supported him; eighty-eight remained in the Opposition. Now, for the first time since Vichy, France has a Government of the Right. That

PARIS
ANTOINE PINAY has been Premier of France for little more than three months, and already the man Pinay is being replaced by Pinay the symbol—the personification of common sense, honesty, and simplicity. These virtues are thought to be governing France. It is as if the Mr. Smith of the film had gone to Paris instead of Washington. Not only M. Pinay's political supporters but a large part of the French public see in him a sort of reincarnation of Raymond Poincaré, who, a quarter century ago, roused the nation to a new effort, restored public confidence in government, and saved the franc for the time being.

The same happy view of M. Pinay prevails widely abroad. Swiss and Belgians applaud him in the newsreels; in the United States he is presented as a plain businessman managing French affairs with the old-fashioned directness with which, as a plain businessman, he managed his factory in central France. The theory is that France needed only such leadership to regain both economic prosperity and political stability. What is the truth behind this legend?

The "Pinay experiment" has two indisputable achievements to its credit. For the first time, de Gaulle's party has split on voting. A third of it is now supporting M. Pinay. And the Premier has brought down the free-market price of the twenty-franc gold piece—the black-market's standard of measurement for the franc—from 5,040