

WEST GERMANY: THE REACTIONARY DEMOCRACY

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GERMANY evokes both admiration and anxiety; admiration, because of her rapid change from ruins to renewed great power status; anxiety, because her division into two states, each part of one major military alliance, presents a permanent threat of global conflict. This situation, of more than ten years' standing (1949 saw the creation of both German states), is not very conducive to any dispassionate analysis of the facts, indeed, to any objective study of one or the other Germany. New and Manichaeic general explanations have replaced the old, pseudo-historical theories based on an allegedly intuitive knowledge of "the German soul," so that each bloc now has its good and its evil Germany. To one camp, the Bonn Republic is an exemplary democracy, while to the other it is but a conspiracy of revenge-seekers ready to pay any price to reconquer territories lost because of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. East Germany, to her apologists, represents German democracy par excellence, while to her detractors, she is simply a Soviet protectorate.

Consequently, all attempts to understand the development of the larger German state, the Bonn Federal Republic, must first discount those convenient and premature syntheses served up by the Press and some popular treatises on the subject. Only by retracing step by step the evolution of the main social forces since 1945, can one discern the dynamic of West German society in all its complexity.

The date of the surrender, 8 May 1945, signalled the spectacular disintegration of the old Prussian machinery of state. The same date witnessed the dissolution of an equilibrium founded on the social predominance of the Junkers and the upper middle class, and on the unrivalled political strength of an unchecked state bureaucracy (which originally supported the monarchy and then turned to National Socialism when the economic crisis of 1929 demonstrated the necessity of bringing working-class organizations to heel). Fatally wounded by the annexation of East Prussia and Silesia by the U.S.S.R. and Poland, and then by the redistribution of large estates in the Soviet zone, the Junkers, who formed the backbone of the professional army and of a large part of the State's repressive machinery, disappeared as a social group. At the same time, the Nazi bureaucracy, discredited by inefficiency, corruption, and cruelty, rapidly dissolved, and proved quite unable to inspire any *Werwolf*-style clandestine movements. The industrial bourgeoisie alone emerged with only minor wounds from this general collapse. It survived for several reasons; first, because of the

many ties which it had forged with intermediate social groups; then, because of the accumulated weight and inertia of a highly developed capitalist society; finally, in a word, because of the strength of capitalist relations of production. Even though twenty per cent of German productive machinery had been destroyed by Allied bombing and in actual fighting, the industrialists found themselves in command, in 1945, of an industrial empire without equal in the rest of Europe. Whilst the production of consumer goods had been severely limited, the production of capital goods had continued to grow to the end of 1944, so that those who had held economic power in 1939 found themselves, in spite of defeat, even more powerful in 1945.¹ In fact, the problem of the German bourgeoisie was much less to reconstruct its industrial plant, as to shield it from the activities of the working-class movement, and to put it back into operation in conditions which would assure the continuation of profits.

This double task appeared difficult, almost impossible, in the months immediately following the surrender. Economic activity was disrupted by the division of the country into four zones, the dismantling of factories, and the depreciation of the currency. Most of the plants which did function had fallen under the control of workers' councils which had been spontaneously formed to begin production again. Such embryonic political life as emerged, little by little, under Allied tutelage in the Western Zones was largely dominated by more or less vague socialist concepts, but socialist concepts all the same. Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie held many trump cards in their hands and knew how to play them with consummate skill. The bourgeoisie's position was first reinforced by the support of the Western Allies, the Americans and the British, whose primary objective was to prevent the "Sovietization" of Germany.² It is no exaggeration to assert that nearly all the progressive measures proposed or adopted by local or regional representative bodies ran up against an Allied veto. This occurred in relation to the powers of the workers' councils and it likewise prevented the nationalization of the coal and steel industries as decided by the *Landtag* of Rhineland-Westphalia, which was rejected by the British in 1948. The bourgeoisie could also count on the support of the Catholic Church, which had real influence in the Western Zones, especially in the Ruhr. Political Catholicism provided the tool needed to oppose Communists and Social-Democrats, and to unite all social groups professing hostility to socialism. To be sure, the Christian Democrats (C.D.U.), born by fusing the old "Zentrum" with several Protestant groups, had to act prudently and offer concessions, more often than not purely verbal, to the Labour movement. Nonetheless, they immediately saw their objective as a struggle against the "extremism" of communists and socialists, whilst themselves propagating a moderate "socialism" which respected individual rights and "justifiable" forms of private property. The programme which the C.D.U. adopted at Ahlen provides rich evidence

of this flexible tactic, even if it appears, in retrospect, to have quasi-revolutionary overtones in comparison with present Christian-Democratic positions.

The third trump card held by the German bourgeoisie was the weakness of the German Labour movement, its illusions and divisions, its tactical blunders and its confusion in an unprecedented historical situation. The revolutionary wing of the working class, the Communist Party, had been particularly badly hit by Nazi repression.³ In 1945 the balance-sheet was as follows; of 300,000 members of the Communist Party in 1933, approximately half had been arrested, killed, or imprisoned; many of its leaders, Ernst Thälmann, Franz Stenzer, John Schehr, Erich Steinfuhr, Ernst Putz, Walter Schütz, etc., had disappeared in prisons or death camps. Of the survivors, many had had to emigrate and had thus lost contact with German life. To this must be added the devastating purges ordered by Stalin in 1938-39 and directed against numerous German party veterans then living in the Soviet Union, such as Hugo Eberlein, a survivor of Rosa Luxemburg's and Karl Liebknecht's *Spartakusbund*. In 1945, the reconstituted Communist Party in the Western Zones had nowhere near the weight it had had in the years before 1933.

However, despite the serious handicap of an atmosphere of anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, the Party had considerable opportunities. Beginning with its reconstitution in June 1945, it witnessed a return to the Party ranks of various groups and tendencies which had broken with it at one or another moment in its history. In a few months it had re-established its whole 1933 numerical strength in the Western Zones alone, namely 300,000 members, while for the Soviet Zone its membership was 600,000. All in all, if the electoral influence of the Party had diminished (as was seen in regional elections), its organization itself seemed strengthened, particularly in the Ruhr, where numerous workers' councils remained in communist hands from 1945 to 1948. The Party even appeared to have purged itself of the more shocking aspects of its pre-1933 sectarianism (the principal enemy had been declared at that time to be social democracy.) Its propaganda emphasized the national particularities of the German road to socialism. Indeed, according to some observers, the German Party was distinguishable from others by the freedom of expression of some of its leaders with regard to the Soviet Union. Max Reimann, who later became General Secretary of the West German C.P., could even assert to a group of British journalists on 28 February 1946, that "German Communists do not recognize the Oder-Neisse border settlement; they think that this settlement is wrong." Like the Social Democrats, the Communists seemed to have donned new clothes and appeared quite prepared to travel in new directions.

In fact, the renovation of political methods and ideas was more apparent than real. Bureaucratic direction of the Party persisted, while

the rank and file continued to exercise little control over policy lines imposed on the organization. The Central Committee, set up in East Berlin, was, for all practical purposes, out of reach to Western party activists, and, in addition, acted and reacted primarily in response to problems posed by developments in the Soviet Zone. In its view, Western Zone Communists served essentially as a balancing force which ought, simply, to exert sufficient political pressure so that policies advocated and enacted in the Eastern Zone might be, in their turn, adopted in the Western Zones. Beginning in the closing months of 1946, a certain uneasiness permeated the ranks of the West German Party. The policies elaborated in the ten-point manifesto of 11 June 1945, had been accepted at the time with little dissension because it proposed a serious struggle for denazification and the confiscation of the property of war criminals and, above all, because it pronounced itself in favour of a German road to socialism. All this now began to be seen in another light by many party activists. An absence of clearly defined socialist objectives, at a moment when the Social-Democrats were defining the building of socialism as the task of the present, the defence of private trade and enterprise, a quasi-unconditional submission to the directives of the occupying powers, all this elicited much hostile criticism. Party activists saw clearly that the democratic demands, which they had understood as preparatory steps on the way to socialist claims, amounted more, in fact, to reflections of the policies of the Soviet Union in Germany than to translations into practical language of an original conception of progress to socialism. At the beginning of 1947, many militant members left the Party; on 20 January 1947, for example, eight members of the enlarged central committee of North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as a majority of the Cologne communist newspaper's editorial board, resigned from the Party and called for a return to the revolutionary traditions of German Communism.

This crisis was all the more serious because it coincided with a crisis in the relations between Social-Democrats and Communists following on the more or less forcible unification of the S.P.D. and the K.P.D. in the Soviet Zone in April 1946. Until the end of 1945, relations between activists of both parties had been good nearly everywhere. Often, local organizations of both parties favoured the idea of fusion and, indeed, in certain instances, fusion was actively prepared, despite the extremely guarded attitudes of both party directorates. From 1946 onwards, the picture changed as news kept arriving of events in the Soviet Zone. Social-Democratic sections, with rare exceptions, increasingly refused to heed calls for common action and to listen to those who advocated unification on the model of the Soviet Zone. Fighting against this trend, local communist organizations wore themselves down calling for a unified socialist party. If the Party had not possessed a strong organizational framework, and if it had not closely concerned itself with purely material problems (housing, food, heat, etc.), these

first difficulties and resignations might have proven much more damaging. As it was, 1947 ended without too much damage done, but more important, it marked the beginning of an isolation which was to become more and more complete.

1948, a turning point in German post-war history in many ways, especially politically, brought very serious developments for the K.P.D. which, caught up in a Soviet diplomatic realignment, became a minor party without significant influence within a few months. In December 1947, in answer to the Allied Conference in London, the East German Unified Socialist Party had held a "People's Congress for Unity and a Just Peace" in Berlin which was attended by 242 K.P.D. delegates. At this Conference, Otto Grotewohl, speaking for the Socialist Unity Party (S.E.D.), had laid down new policy lines in the following terms in response to Allied efforts at reorganizing West Germany: "In case the Allies do not come to a decision about guaranteeing the unity of the German people, we propose that a referendum be held in order that the people may choose whether Germany is to be divided or unified in a single state. After such a referendum on German unity, and after a central government is formed to sign a peace treaty, we wish to see a national assembly elected which could ratify this treaty." This became, for a long time, the policy of the K.P.D., which sent two of its most important leaders, Max Reimann and Fritz Sperling, to serve on the permanent committee elected by the Congress. At first glance, this line appeared to represent the basic interests of the German people and thus likely to increase communist popularity. In fact, it was anathema to many men of goodwill, because it was directly inspired by the East German authorities. Indeed, many saw it as a simple manoeuvre designed by the Soviet leadership to place their former allies in a difficult position and to prop up the sagging prestige of the Eastern Zone Communists. It was suspected that behind this strategy lay a policy which envisaged the "Sovietization" from above of all Germany, using the methods inaugurated in the People's Democracies. Even dedicated communist activists found it difficult to be enthusiastic about such a prospect. In spite of this, under the impetus of the Party apparatus, emphasis passed from democratic and anti-Nazi demands to abstract and patriotic slogans enjoining reunification through a referendum and the signature of a peace treaty. The S.P.D., with which the communists had sought to collaborate for several years, now became a prime target, since it refused to accept the referendum strategy, which was, in fact, full of ambiguities. The K.P.D. began, instead, to look for collaborators amongst those middle-class groups and tendencies which were ready to accept a reunified Germany, more or less neutralized, and more or less under Soviet protection. To cultivate such sympathies, the class struggle was played down, as was, to a certain extent, communist ideology itself. It was in this vein that on 27 April 1948, a Conference of West German Communists voted, by

251 votes to 18, to change the name of the Party, which was to be called thenceforth the Popular Socialist Party. The Western Allies would have none of this name-changing, but the proposal itself was symptomatic of a change in policy. The social strata which this new strategy was designed to attract were not numerous, but neither were they totally negligible; and they were, in general, situated outside customary spheres of communist influence. This fact led the Party leadership to multiply its appeals to groups which were traditionally alien, if not hostile, to the Labour movement.⁵ In April 1949, Hugo Paul, an important figure in the Party directorate, declared to the regional conference of North Rhine–Westphalia that the Communist Party “would ally itself with all strata, with the middle class as well as the peasantry, the small manufacturers, and even larger ones, so long as they were concerned in the creation of a reunified Germany.”

The most immediate result of this policy was disarray among activists and massive departures from their ranks. Militant elements could no longer recognize their party in its new slogans. They were sorely conscious of growing contradictions between their desire to erect a Socialist Germany and the nationalist rhetoric of communist propaganda. In addition, they saw quite clearly that the new line would elicit little response from the masses and could only accentuate the Party's isolation. Aware of the strength of anti-Soviet feeling in Germany, they knew that the K.P.D. ought to concentrate its efforts on renewing links with the working class instead of exhausting itself in the attempt to win over to Soviet diplomatic positions middle-class groups who had watched with dread the advances of Socialism (however distorted the Socialism) in Eastern Europe. The continuation of this policy through thick and thin so long as Stalin lived cut off a majority of activists from their Party. In 1952, the K.P.D. was but a shadow of its 1945 self; when it was made illegal in 1956, the event evoked little reaction from the working class. It must thus be acknowledged that the most revolutionary elements of the German proletariat were sterilized soon after the war, leaving popular feeling effectively without leadership and granting immense opportunities to the bourgeoisie.

In appearance at least, the Social-Democratic Party seemed better able to cope with the situation. Rebuilt, despite a thousand difficulties, under the dynamic leadership of Kurt Schumacher, a survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, the Party displayed great vitality from 1945 onwards. It quite rapidly became the largest political organization in the Western Zones, and its membership grew apace:⁶

In 1946	707,448 members
In 1947	875,479 members
In 1948	896,275 members
	(June)

Neither the C.D.U. (Christian Democrats) nor the communists could, at the time, claim such numerical strength. Nor was any other party so fully identified with the nation's sufferings, its will to survival, and its desire for self-renewal. In 1945, confronted with the discredit into which the traditional social and political order had fallen, Schumacher, and with him the party leadership, had believed that Social Democracy could easily impose itself as the country's guiding force (at least in the Western Zones). Socialism, Schumacher had often repeated, was the task of the present, the coming objective.' He thought that the Social-Democrats were the only group in a position to fight successfully against the permanent subjection of Germany to external tutelage (and also those ideas which provided the theoretical justification of that tutelage, namely the collective guilt of the German people); and that it was the only party capable of rebuilding the economy on sound, democratic, and socialist foundations. He did not hide his scorn for the communists, whose programme (already mentioned) defended free enterprise, and he was wary of so-called Christian political regroupings, suspecting that they served only as camouflage for the old and reactionary elements in German society. As a result, he held that Social Democracy need not seek alliances with other groups, excepting, naturally, the trade unions. In the realm of domestic policy, he advocated the nationalisation of important industries and an agrarian reform involving a redistribution of the land. Although adamantly opposed to a technocratic state and attached to parliamentary democracy, he felt that far-reaching economic planning was needed to allow Germany to lift herself from poverty and to assure harmonious economic development.⁸

In fact, this programme could not easily be accomplished, for the means in Social-Democratic hands were hardly adequate to the magnitude of the task. Social Democracy, which voluntarily abstained from using any means other than parliamentary or municipal action, propaganda or agitation, could not be sure that it would be allowed to employ them, or even that these means would be fully restored by the Allies. This dilemma was accentuated by the fact that the Party knew that the enthusiasm of its activities and the support of the masses were directly related to its success in achieving the implementation of its programme. Kurt Schumacher was himself conscious of this danger, and he did not ignore the handicap which Allied policy entailed. At the Nuremberg Conference of the S.P.D., he declared,⁹ "In reality, in Germany we find ourselves in the middle of a civil war, waged with economic and bureaucratic weapons which, unfortunately, are concentrated mostly in the hands of our political and class enemies—and this is known, tolerated and encouraged by all the military governments in Germany." As a result, he consistently assumed a critical position *vis-à-vis* the Allies and their policies, and did not hesitate to threaten non-co-operation to force the reconsideration of certain measures. He refused to allow himself to go further, however, and to utilize strikes, which were very numerous in

1947 and 1948, for political purposes. His strategy consisted entirely in maintaining sufficiently strong popular pressure while awaiting the return to normalcy in the Western Zones which he considered after all to be inevitable in the near future.

Normalcy once arrived, he anticipated a Social-Democratic victory at the polls, similar to that of the British Labour Party in 1945, and hoped that capitalist forces would not have had sufficient time to revive and re-establish their predominance. Schumacher thus yielded to an illusion then widespread within the Party and particularly cherished by its economic experts (Erik Nolting, among others), an illusion which held that German capitalism had practically ceased to function and would demonstrate its inability to promote economic expansion.¹⁰ In fact, despite the absence of a currency worthy of the name, capitalist accumulation continued, so that on the eve of the 1948 monetary reform, numerous firms possessed sufficiently large stocks for a rapid expansion of production.¹¹ The 1948 monetary reform itself provided the stimulus which the capitalist market economy needed, thereby robbing the Social Democrats of their political initiative. The German masses, who had shown some interest in the policies advocated by Schumacher, reconciled themselves, little by little, with capitalist methods of reconstruction, if only because these did offer an immediate alleviation of economic want. Of course, the more conscious sections of the working class remained faithful to socialist alternatives, but not without losing much of their drive and confidence. All this had repercussions on the Party, which lost 50,000 members in a few months while experiencing growing scepticism and discouragement in its ranks. Marxism, as more or less revised by Lassalle and Bernstein, which had served as official party ideology since the early days of the Weimar Republic, came increasingly under attack from the right-wing of the party. It was also evident that many members of the Party who had come to socialism, not under the Weimar Republic but after 1945, were quite susceptible to the arguments of anti-Marxist "reformers." More generally, anti-communism, fed by the Cold War and by the revulsion which Walter Ulbricht's régime elicited, acted not only against the Communist Party but also against the moderate socialism of Social Democrats. In these conditions, a Social-Democratic defeat at the Federal Republics first legislative elections in 1949 was inevitable. Despite an admirable election campaign, Kurt Schumacher saw his Christian Democratic adversaries emerge victorious.

Deprived of its best elements who had disappeared under Nazism, the orthodox wing of the Social-Democratic Party was unable to present a serious defence of its reformist socialist ideas, and, after the death of Schumacher and another electoral defeat in 1953, yielded further ground to the right-wing of the Party. Surprised by the duration and strength of the "economic miracle," the traditionalists felt less and less certain of their own convictions. Confronting a world which they no

longer understood, they sought salvation by adapting themselves to the dominant forces in society.¹² The Bad Godesberg programme (1959), which repudiated any socialist concepts, was the logical conclusion of this evolution.

It was, then, a weak working-class movement, hardly recovered from Nazi persecution, and still very much subject to the atomization and disorganization imposed by years of repression, which the German bourgeoisie confronted after 1948. Disposing of a large and impressive array of productive capital, bourgeois industrialists could hold workers' consumption down to a very low level, since living standards at the beginning (1948) barely provided for subsistence needs and any amelioration in conditions, however minor, represented an enormous advance from the economic decrepitude of the years 1945-48. In 1951, trade union leaders could assert, to a great extent justifiably, that wages of German workers were still lower than they had been in 1936. Moreover, a continuous and regular inflow of East German refugees, lasting until 1961, provided a constantly replenished reserve of highly qualified unemployed workers who helped to keep wages low. While thus benefiting from economic conditions which were the envy of all other European ruling classes,¹³ the German bourgeoisie could, in addition, exploit prevailing anti-Communism to its own advantage. Each mistake and each failure of the heavily bureaucratized Ulbricht regime was used to bolster up the bourgeoisie's position and to justify its most reactionary policies. One might even say that anti-Communism gave the bourgeoisie a new, substitute, ideology¹⁴ which was used to cement and consolidate its relations with other social classes, since the old reactionary, nationalistic ideologies were no longer suited for this purpose. The masses, which would have rejected out of hand any openly class-inspired anti-Socialism, proved quite susceptible to an anti-Communism which presented itself as a defensive reaction to the bureaucratic despotism experienced by millions of Germans. This coupling of anti-communism and democracy (which, as understood by a relatively unsophisticated public opinion, meant the absence of state interference in private affairs), formed in fact, the political basis of Adenauer's successes.

Thus, if one keeps its context in mind, the "German miracle" is a miracle no longer, but follows logically from relations of strength between social classes. On an economic plane, the moderation of the working class permitted German industrialists to produce at low cost and, as a result, to carve out for itself a new position in the world market while awaiting the slow expansion of the domestic market. At the same time, the state of relative social peace between classes assured political stability and the dominance of the Christian Democratic Party. Since the supremacy of conservative forces was never endangered, parliamentary democracy, contrary to certain pessimistic forecasts, seemed to take root. The reconciliation between the ruling class and

democracy,¹⁵ accomplished behind the protective shield of paternalism, is explained by the favourable nature (to the bourgeoisie) of the compromise made with the working class: uncontested political dominion for bourgeois groups in exchange for minimal democratic and trade union freedoms.

The strength of this bourgeois "restoration" accounts, in turn, for the rapid rise of West Germany on the international scene. Chancellor Adenauer, whose arrival to power was the result of his personification of the alliance between political Catholicism and the Rhineland industrial bourgeoisie, carried great weight with the Allies, and particularly the Americans, because he represented a stable, conservative government. In its struggle against Russia and Communism the West needed maximum reinforcement for the manning of its West European fortress, especially in West Germany. Adenauer, who quickly understood this, lent himself, in consequence, to all plans proposed or encouraged by the Americans (Coal and Steel Pool, rearmament, etc.), pushing aside all objections founded on a fear of the permanent division of Germany. To all those conservative elements which might fear the maintenance of Allied tutelage, he demonstrated by facts that acceptance of the Cold War led to a greater external freedom of action. To those who might have accepted the neutralization of Germany in payment for reunification, he exposed the dangers of such a policy to the established conservative equilibrium in West German society (lowering of anti-communist tension, difficulties in fusing the economic and social structures of the East and West). All his art, in brief, was embodied in his transformation of Cold War policy into the cornerstone of the "German miracle."

At its beginnings, this policy was presented as purely defensive, designed only for the construction of a rampart against Soviet expansion. Nevertheless, its development showed, soon enough, the serious risks which it implied. The existence of a second German state, however weak its foundations might be, could not be ignored. Economic, social and political exchanges between the two Germanies continued through a thousand channels (Berlin, for example). Reunification, pushed aside for the present, remained a problem, a throbbing wound requiring attention. Tenaciously fighting against the fatal virus represented by the socialized economy of the D.D.R. (German Democratic Republic), conservative groups, led by Adenauer, were obliged to propose a reunification plan which envisaged an extension of the Federal Republic to all of Germany. According to Adenauer, Communism in Germany must some day come to a dead end as a result of constant Western pressure (and, in particular, because of pressure from the Federal Republic). Under popular impulse and subject to international control, elections would be held which would be won by the democratic forces of the Federal Republic.¹⁶ It was evident that any such position, which refused to recognize the political and military *status quo* in Europe,

would necessarily elicit adverse Soviet reactions and push Soviet policy makers to lay down a harder line. The Adenauerian "defensive" alignment, based, in principle, on the rights of Germans to self-determination, led, in reality, to an arms race and to a quest to alter the relations of power which already existed in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷ In essence, such a policy foreshadowed later tendencies making for the arming of the *Bundeswehr* with atomic weapons, either by Franco-German agreement (as yet quite hypothetical), or through the American strategy of a multilateral striking force.

Even supposing that revenge-seeking groups, those which advocated the reconquest of territories attached to the U.S.S.R., Poland, and Czechoslovakia, found little support in German public opinion—which is, in fact, the case, as shown by the results of most recent public opinion studies—Christian Democratic foreign policy could not help but favour the most reactionary segments of German society. Definition of the national objective as a weakening of "totalitarian" communist régimes had inevitable internal repercussions. Nonconformity, refusal to think according to the Manichaeian categories of "free world" and "totalitarianism," concentration on the real problems of the other Germany and on the necessary conditions for a reunification without pre-ordained victors or vanquished, all of these became manifestations of base and anti-civil conduct on the eyes of those who held power. To anti-Communism, understood at home as a rejection of the economic and social policies of the Eastern countries, was added a pseudo-national categorical imperative which dictated extreme caution against all initiatives coming from the Soviet camp. In all circumstances Chancellor Adenauer's watchword remained the same: "The situation has never been so serious." By that he meant that any opposition to government policy coming from Parliament or public opinion was untimely, considering the permanent dangers faced by the Federal Republic. Also implied was the necessity of abstaining from any positive gesture in response to initiatives proposing *détente*. It followed that any such atmosphere was favourable to former Nazis, whose consistent anti-Sovietism guaranteed their reliability in the eyes of a large part of those in authority. On the other hand, the climate was distinctly unpropitious for independent journalists and anyone who courageously attempted to throw light on the background of the Government's military and foreign policies. The "Spiegel" affair¹⁸ and various wire-tapping cases have recently demonstrated that such a state of affairs leads inevitably to a limitation of public liberties and the spread of a sort of "McCarthyism." Public reactions, though erratic and limited, stayed the Government's hand, but the danger of an authoritarian degeneration of Bonn democracy was not thereby eliminated.¹⁹

Today, after Adenauer's departure, it is true that these reactionary policies have been suspended for a time. New American policies have

come to undermine many aspects of the Adenauerian schema. In Europe, as elsewhere, Americans and Russians are seeking, step by step and with great difficulty, a certain acknowledgment of the status quo. Tension has diminished over Berlin, and the American administration has, on several occasions, shown itself not unwilling to contemplate the prospect of indirectly recognizing East Germany in order to stabilize Great Power relations in that part of Europe. In West Germany itself Adenauer witnessed an uprising against his influence from a succession of Christian Democrat politicians questioning both the more flamboyant aspects of his paternalistic authoritarianism and his obstinacy against any concessions in foreign policy. The Foreign Minister, Gerhard Schroder, and to a lesser degree, the new Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, quite aptly personify this prudent reformism which accepts for a time the idea of relatively peaceful co-existence and seeks, above all, the consolidation of German positions within the Common Market and the Atlantic Alliance. It would, however, be unjustifiably optimistic to see an indication of any fundamental change of direction in this confrontation between an "American wing" (Schroder), and a "Gaullist wing" (Adenauer, Brentano, Strauss). Both wings of the German bourgeoisie (a division similar to that in the C.D.U. exists in the Liberal Party) desire to preserve the social, economic, and political equilibrium of the Federal Republic. Their differences are of degree and not of kind. The modernists, *à la* Schroder or *à la* Gerstenmaier (President of the Bundestag), are not partisans of any major change; they simply seek to adapt the existing order to a slightly altered climate. They know that it will be necessary to make concessions to the profound pacifism of European peoples.²⁰ They also recognize that the slowing down of economic expansion and the general wear and tear on the C.D.U. in power necessitate a policy of collaboration with the Social Democrats and, consequently, call for an attenuation of the explicit conservatism of their own party. Furthermore, they realize that dissensions between Gaullist France and the U.S.A. offers the possibility of simultaneously using French pressure against the Americans and Anglo-Saxon pressure against the French for the greater strengthening of their position. By playing the role of mediators they can protect themselves against aspects of American policy which are judged to be too advanced while at the same time reaping, at little personal expense, all the benefits which accrue to those who pose as moderates. However, their positions remain, basically, the same, as was proved by Chancellor Erhard's November 1963 trip to Paris: The Federal Republic is the only state which can legitimately represent German sovereignty; one day or other, East Germany must disappear. The new directions also have very narrow domestic limits. The Erhard cabinet, like the old, intends to introduce new laws governing the state of emergency which would give the executive very great controlling powers over public life.

We can now return to the question which we raised at the beginning

of this analysis. Is West Germany one utterly reactionary bloc? Evidently, the answer is no. West Germany, or, more precisely, the Federal Republic, is a conservative state, where reactionary elements are unquestionably pre-eminent. It is not, however, the bellicose, quasi-Hitlerian state too easily depicted by certain commentators. Its assertiveness is limited by a whole series of factors, both international (dependence on its allies), and domestic (passive pacifism of a majority of West German public opinion). Its alarming nature follows less from its past actions and immediate activities than from potential and possible reactions²¹ which are more likely to originate in the weakness of the society's countervailing forces (Labour movement, intellectual Left), than in the intrinsic strength of its reactionary elements. The essential problem in changing the German situation is, then, to revitalize the working-class movement, not to convince the bourgeoisie to choose a different road, for the bourgeoisie can hardly go much further than the moderate Kennedyism of Gerhard Schroder. In making this assertion we have not only returned to a consideration of the German Left and its weaknesses, we have uncovered a much larger question, that of destalinization on an international scale. For, in effect, the political reawakening of the German working class is closely related to the success or failure in the correction of the bureaucratic distortions of East German and Soviet Socialism. This means that working-class movements in other European countries, which often seem to feel that they are powerless observers of the progress of opportunism and the spirit of capitulation within the Social Democratic Party and German trade unions, can do a great deal by encouraging the liquidation of the remnants of Stalinism. It is not inconceivable that the German Labour movement might, as destalinization progresses, rouse itself from its state of lethargy and that the organized trade union Left, the last solid bastions of socialism, might pass from the defensive to the offensive. In such a context, the strategic and tactical problems of socialist action after years of sterility could be posed anew. This, were it to occur, would have a salutary effect on the European Labour movement as a whole. In the epoch of the Common Market and of global negotiations, let us in any case remember that mutual ignorance between socialists is the worst of failings. Germany is part of our fate; let us not therefore refuse to understand her. More than ever, the German question is international in scope.

(Translated from the French by G. W. Ross)

NOTES

1. On this point, see A. Piettre, *L'Economie allemande contemporaine (Allemagne Occidentale) 1945-1952* (Paris, 1952); also H. Heininger, *Der Nachkriegszyklus der westdeutschen Wirtschaft 1945-1950* (Berlin, 1959).
2. On Allied policy, see R. Thilenius, *Die Teilung Deutschlands, Eine zeitgeschichtliche Analyse* (Hamburg, 1957).

3. On the German Communist Party, see *Dokumente and Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin, 1959), Reihe III, Band I, May 1945-April 1946; also *Chronologische Materialien zur Geschichte der S.E.D.* (Berlin, 1956); O. K. Flechtheim, *Die Deutschen Parteien seit 1945. Quellen und Auszüge* (Berlin-Köln, 1955); and G. Pfeiffer and H. G. Strickert, *Das Verbot der K.P.D.* (Karlsruhe, 1956).
4. See *Chronologische Materialien zur Geschichte der S.E.D.*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
5. On this, see the August-September 1950 issue of the periodical *Documents*, p. 876.
6. See *Jahrbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1948-9* (Hanover) p. 61.
7. See A. Scholz, P. Oschilewski, ed., *Turmwächter der Deinokratie, Reden und Schriften von Kurt Schumacher* (Berlin, 1953), Band II; also the pamphlet *Sozialismus eine Gegenwartsaufgabe* (Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 1946).
8. For Schumacher's ideas, see also F. Wesemann, *Kurt Schumacher, ein Leben für Deutschland* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1952).
9. See *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdeinokratischen Partei Deutschlands, vom 21 Juni bis 2 Juli 1947 in Nürnberg*, p. 36.
10. See V. Agartz, *Sozialistische Wirtschaftspolitik* (Schwenningen, 1947).
11. See V. Agartz, "Tendances du capitalisme en Allemagne Occidentale," in *Economie et Politique*, Paris, June 1958, no. 47, pp. 37-8.
12. See L. Kofler, *Marxistischer oder ethischer Sozialismus* (Bovenden bei Göttingen, 1955).
13. On the German economy, see H. C. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (Yale, 1955); also J. Teisserenc, *Le Commerce extérieur et la balance des paiements de la République Fédérale Allemande 1950-1957* (Paris, 1958).
14. See W. Martini's very revealing study, *Das Ende aller Sicherheit, Eine Kritik des Westens* (Stuttgart, 1954).
15. On the problem of democracy, see A. Grosser, *Western Germany from Defeat to Rearmament* (1955); and the same author's *La Démocratie de Bonn* (Paris, 1957); also H. Sultan and W. Abendroth, *Biurokratischer Verwaltungsstaat und soziale Demokratie* (Frankfurt-Main, 1955).
16. In the Adenauer scheme, a Germany reunified by election would have remained free to choose to remain a member of N.A.T.O.
17. On this point, see W. K. Gerst, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland unter Adenauer* (Berlin, 1957).
18. *Der Spiegel* is the independent weekly which came under attack from the Government after it had exposed grave shortcomings in the Army.
19. See E. Kuby, ed., *Franz-Josef Strauss, Ein Typus unserer Zeit* (Munich, 1963).
20. See J. Schnoebel, *Les deux K., Berlin, et la Paix* (Paris, 1963).
21. See W. Abendroth, "La struttura sociale della Repubblica federale tedesca e le sue tendenze politiche" in *Problemi del Socialismo*, Milan, February 1963, pp.163-92.