

Germany Pays Her Pound of Flesh

Political Crises Inhibit Industrial Expansion

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(A Talk from 3YA.)

IN 1918, Austen Chamberlain stated the war was a race between victory and revolution on both sides. He was right, and in the defeated States revolutions took place, but the war still goes on, not now with high explosives, battleships and bombs, but in the economic area—by war debts, reparations and tariffs—and the present race is in many countries between economic stability and revolution or anarchy. This is particularly true in Germany, which is only at present held together by pressure from without. Apart from this international pressure Germany would break up into warring parties, revolution would follow, and the country might finally be controlled by a Fascist (Hitlerite), or, on the other hand, Communist Party.

The Germans know, however, that France and her Allies are ever on the watch; and on the failure of Germany to meet her agreements would at once invade or adopt other unpleasant tactics to endeavour to compel payment. This fear of outside nations, together with the common sense of the large majority of the Germans, alone at present keeps the Government in its place, and prevents the various camps from breaking out into open rebellion.

Such, briefly, is the present position, but in order to understand it we must go back to the period at the end of the war and outline events from that date.

In 1918 the impossible happened—a revolution in Germany. Up till the beginning of the war no country seemed to have a more stable Government than Germany. The masses of the people were too docile and well disciplined to give colour to any suggestion of revolt. The Government appeared to be more solidly entrenched than any other European Government. It is true that there were many parties in the Parliament or Reichstag, but none of these had a controlling power or seemed likely to have it.

It is to be remembered that in Continental Parliaments no single party as a rule holds the reins of government. The governing body is usually composite, made up of groups of differing opinions—veering sometimes to the Right or Left, to the Conservative or to the Radical—but as a rule avoiding extreme positions. Now the largest single party in 1914 was the Social Democratic Party, which in itself was also largely divided in its aims. On its extreme left were the Communists, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—showing a standard of a brilliant red—but on the right the flags were only faintly pink and the views of the members were mildly liberal—when the war came Karl Liebknecht was the only one who dared to vote against war credits. As revolutionists and pacifists he and his party openly denounced the war.

When the Russian revolution came in 1917, it gave an immense impetus to Communist propaganda in Germany. This year, too, was Kohlhuben (turnip)

year in Germany—when the majority of the people lived chiefly on turnips; and anti-war sentiment was growing fast.

Out of the left wing of the Social Democratic Party sprang what during the revolution was termed the Spartacist Party. The Spartacus League, inspired by Rosa Luxemburg and K. Liebknecht, made great headway in undermining the workers' support of the war, but during the revolution the two leaders were arrested and assassinated.

From the Spartacist League, however, there has developed the modern Communist Party, of which more anon.

Opposed to Spartacists was the ultra-patriotic Vaterlands partel, under the leadership of Admiral von Tirpitz. This was the forerunner of the reactionary nationalist groups in Germany at the present time, and of the Hitlerites. On October 4, 1918, "as a forlorn hope," the Kaiser appointed as

Chancellor the Liberal Prince Max of Baden, who, for the first time in German history, included Socialists in his Ministry. On October 28 the fleet at Kiel mutinied; by November 4 the whole navy was in revolt. By this time the military situation on land as well as at sea had become desperate. Soldiers and workers' councils were formed at sea and on shore.

On November 8 Bavaria proclaimed itself a republic, and the Bavarian royal family fled the same day. On November 7 an ultimatum was issued by the Socialist leader, Scheidemann, that unless the Kaiser abdicated the Socialists would resign from the Government. On November 10 the Kaiser fled to Holland; and a Republican Government was formed by the Social Democratic Party and Independent Socialists of Germany. However, the Spartacists continued to fan the flames of discontent and party strife, and raised a rebellion which was put down with bloodshed in the so-

called Spartacus week, January 5-12, 1919. Yet their work still lives in the Communist group.

A Constitution Drawn Up.

AT Weimar in the same year a constitution was drawn up—said to be the most democratic in the world—and put in force. The Reichstag (or lower chamber) is elected by universal suffrage, on the principles of proportional representation. A second chamber representing the different States has subordinate powers. Provision is also made for the initiative and referendum. The State church was done away with, as well as the extremely antiquated and reactionary Governments throughout the Empire. This democratic Government is now on its trial.

As a result of the publication of the Versailles Treaty in 1920, an ultra-patriotic Conservative revolution broke out led by Dr. Kapp, usually known as the Kapp Putsch. A general strike made it abortive, and Kapp ignominiously fled to Sweden. Germany was learning the tactics of passive resistance.

Internal Quiet.

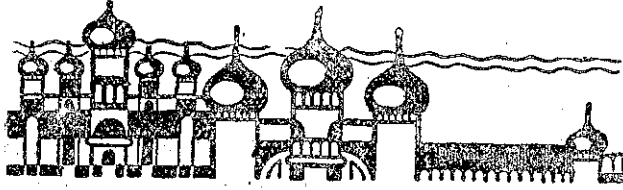
SINCE this date to the present there have been no dangerous internal disturbances in Germany, but the nation is still at fever heat below the surface; though there are also strong forces making for peace and stability. The Government has throughout tended towards the Right or Conservatism.

War Debts and Reparations.

BUT Germany is suffering many injustices and until these are rectified or at least adjusted there will be turmoil in the land; perhaps the greatest and most evil of all is the statement in Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles that Germany was solely responsible for the war, and that therefore she may justly be called upon to pay war debts and reparations.

Every student of war origins now knows this statement is false, and the imposition of payments of astronomical proportions on Germany quite unjustifiable. Until this economic burden is removed from Germany there will be dispeace in the land. The Treaty of Versailles must be revised. A second great injustice from which Germany is suffering is the removal from her rule of the territory now known as the Polish corridor and the placing of it in control of Poland under the plea that the inhabitants are mostly Poles. Territories that had been German for 700 years have been placed under the tyrannical Polish rule by the treaty. As a matter of fact, the corridor is chiefly inhabited neither by Poles nor Germans, but by an old Slav race known as Cassubians. In any case the numbers of Germans in the territory probably outnumber the Poles, though accurate statistics are hard to come by. By this corridor East Prussia is separated from the rest of Germany and the Poles, and obstacles put in the way of free transport.

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Russian Music

is the title of the "Musical Portrait"
to be broadcast from 2YA on
November 2 by

Ernest Jenner Pianist

Playing
"Theme and Variations" (Op. 72) Glazounov

Hilda Chudley Contralto

Singing
"The Soldier's Wife," "Lilacs," and
"To the Children" Rachmaninoff