

Germany Today

THE German Republic was not born in a burst of ideal enthusiasm; it did not spring from a longing for brotherhood and equality, like the first French Republic or the United States in the past, or the Russian Republic at present. In fact, before it was constituted not even the Socialists favored it unreservedly. As a prominent German Socialist said to me during the war, while on a visit to Copenhagen, "It would be wrong to overthrow the Hohenzollerns simply because the Allies might demand it. After all," he added, "we must not forget that the dynasty gave us men like the Great Elector and Frederick the Great."

The German Republic came from a crashing of hopes. It was constituted because the people had lost faith in the Kaiser and in the kings who had led them to disaster. It was constituted particularly because France, England and America had proclaimed, time and time again, that their only object in the war was to "make the world safe for democracy." The Germans imagined that if Germany became a Republic the enemy would feel his goal had been reached, and that consequently not only peace but international goodwill and livable conditions for all would be the result of such a transformation. Former enemies would become reconciled in the worship of the same political ideals. The Allies had repeatedly stated that they had no quarrel with the German people but were merely fighting to destroy imperial autocracy. And the politically naïve German people was not perspicacious enough to realize that political hypocrisy, more or less lost sight of during the peaceful years which marked the end of the nineteenth century, had met with a brilliant renaissance in the twentieth.

The Treaty of Versailles, however, opened the eyes of the German Republicans. They realized that the clauses of the Treaty could not have been worse if Germany had upheld the old autocratic régime, while the Empire would at least have had the advantage of consolidating German unity. It formed a rallying point which counteracted Germany's instinctive decentralization tendency. The Kaiser's fall, however, marked the unbridgeable cleft between Prussia and Bavaria. French policy did everything possible to widen the breach. As the national government at Berlin was Socialistic, France made a point of backing Monarchistic and Communistic aspirations. Geographically France concentrated her efforts to split Germany on Upper

Silesia in the east and on the Rhineland in the west. The object of depriving Germany of Upper Silesia in spite of the plebiscite was to curtail Germany's coal supply and to strengthen Poland. In the Rhine provinces French policy seems to be to take for granted that France will never evacuate the occupied territory. Incidentally the French, who made war to crush militarism, have now in times of peace an army numbering 250,000 more men than the former Kaiser's.

When Germany occupied French territory in 1871 an exchange of not only polite but cordial notes took place between the Commander of the German forces, General Manteuffel, and the President of the French Republic, M. Thiers, the noted historian. Both men did everything within their power to prevent friction and make the occupation as little oppressive as possible, and every effort was made to shorten its duration. The letters of both men invariably concluded with respectful compliments to the ladies of both families. France hastened to pay the five billions and the Germans at once withdrew their army. Today, however, all courtesy and urbanity are lacking in the relations between the French Army of Occupation and the German authorities. Moreover the conditions for this occupation are so insane that the huge sums which Germany pays France are swallowed up by the costs of this useless army. Nothing is left of the German payments to rebuild the devastated areas. They could have been almost entirely reconstructed for one half of what Germany has had to advance for the maintenance of this unproductive burden. At the same time French business men until very recently have bitterly opposed all attempts at German cooperation in the rebuilding of the devastated areas, lest the employment of German workmen cause unemployment among the French. Anyone who sees the way the French government allows its officers to put German families out of their homes in occupied territory and gives free rein to its colored troops would think the object of the French was to stir up as much hatred as possible.

During the war the Germans frequently made the ridiculous and tactless remark that "Germany did not hate France"—a remark which fully justified the Frenchman's ironical retort, "What would she have done had she hated us?" Yet in spite of its absurdity the remark was true, as far as the German people was concerned. Among the broad layers of the German middle classes there reigned

old deep-seated admiration for French culture. Workers and peasants did not know what national hatred was. But today, after the humiliations heaped intentionally on the German people, hatred is spreading in such a way that the masses—who are absolutely disarmed—would rush and attack the French soldiers with their bare fists if they allowed themselves to be guided by their feelings instead of by their brains.

A real statesman tries to attain his object without humiliating the defeated enemy. This is the very A B C of statesmanship. Bismarck, who in reality was very different from the man of blood and iron he is now said to have been, gave a typical example of wisdom and moderation in 1866, after Austria had been defeated by Prussia. He refused to allow the King of Prussia to march triumphantly into Vienna, he avoided all victorious demonstrations which would breed rancor among the vanquished, he was careful not to deprive Austria of any provinces or towns. He saw beyond the present into the future. He wanted reconciliation between the two peoples, for he meant to keep Austria as friend and ally for the future.

Compare this attitude with that of the Allies in regard to Germany. On the strength of a fiction in which no thinking person believes, namely that Germany *alone* was responsible for the war, humiliations without end have been piled on the defeated. By the Treaty of Versailles, undoubtedly the most stupid document of modern history, the victorious powers under the cover of justice call upon the worst instincts of their own and of the defeated peoples, creating not only material destruction but moral decadence. Their grasping cupidity, posing as the hand of righteousness, first deprived Germany of raw stuffs, provinces, colonies, fleet, airplanes, artillery and army, and then demanded reparation amounts of such magnitude that they can only be reckoned in astronomic figures. Meanwhile the Allies did not hesitate to take over enemy property in Allied countries. They succeeded in making the mark, like Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin*, shrink until there now reigns such a state of chaos in Germany that France—almost on the verge of bankruptcy—and England—with some two million unemployed—feel the effects.

They have furthermore strengthened German reaction and encouraged German nationalists whose one desire is to overthrow the Republic. In other words, they have strengthened the very elements they claimed they went to war to destroy. Finally, they have managed to discredit the Social-Democrats in the eyes of the German people. The Social-Democrats, being in power in Germany and obliged to give in to every Allied demand, have

lost all prestige. In short the Allies have succeeded in undermining the only party with whom they knew they could live in peace. This is and was a policy of rank insanity.

To realize fully what a regression in civilization this policy implies one need only look back a hundred years or so. At that time Europe had watched the French Revolution with horror and misgiving exactly the same as that with which the Western powers have watched Soviet Russia. Coalitions had been formed against the rebel power. During the whole Napoleonic era Europe lived in a state of perpetual upheaval and terror. And yet, in 1815, after Napoleon's fall, Europe made no attempt to weaken France by cutting her boundaries or trying to ruin the country economically. Europe was willing to let bygones be bygones and looked upon the French people and their new government with sincere goodwill. Instead of being hedged off behind a fence as were the German delegates at Versailles, Talleyrand, the French spokesman, was admitted everywhere at the Vienna Congress on an equal footing—more than that, he was admired and fêted as the most brilliant personality of the conference.

Whoever has visited Germany of late and has looked ever so little below the surface must have detected signs of dissolution and disintegration. One political crime follows another. Industry will soon stagnate owing to lack of coal, commerce is being crippled because of the mark's fantastic tumbles. Thinking people in Germany are on the verge of despondency, while the masses are becoming completely demoralized. The common man who, in Germany, used to be a model of honesty, thrift and industry, is growing careless and shiftless, shirking as much as he can, taking whatever he can lay his hands on. The sight of profiteers and the prosperity of those who seem to thrive on his misery make him burn with hatred for the bourgeois and he seeks stimulus in the fanaticism of communist theories. The German workman does not want to grind and toil when all he makes is to benefit the enemy only. The German people, as a mass, does not want to become the gigantic slave or thrall of its former enemies. German officials who before the war were poor but proud are now desperately poor and inevitably less proud, consequently no longer incorruptible, as before. The German Republic stands in great danger of being swept by hunger revolutions, plundering and confiscation of private property; it is threatened with economic and political chaos, followed by brutal reaction.

And in the midst of the general dissolution the young generation in Germany lives in a world of

hazy unreality. German youth is lost in abstractions as to the future; it lives in a world that bears no relation to real life; it dreams about the coming of a new religion; it worships prophets of mysticism whose melodious words fail to hide the abject poverty of their ideas. Its tendency in art is futuristic. It cares little for the problems of the day. It feels no desire to free its country from the enemy's yoke and still less does it long to play a part in regenerating national character by trying to impose a standard of plain old fashioned honesty in place of the morbid vacillation, indifference, shiftlessness, dishonesty, violence and murder which now reign in Germany.

Germany is a Republic whose republican ideal is still to be born. A nation cannot change its way of thinking in a year or two. For more than a thousand years Germany has been monarchistic. It cannot be expected to become republican simply because a few men scribble a constitution on a piece of paper. Look at Russia. During the Czarist régime Russians complained most bitterly about the despotic political police system. Today, under the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat the same system flourishes. Russians still continue to be spied upon, cast into prison, subjected to torture and arbitrary execution. The only difference is that the institution previously called *ochrana* is now

called *tcheka*. It is worse than before, if possible. At any rate it is led by the same men.

Europe's old ideals have disappeared. Liberty is dead. In 1913 I went from Copenhagen to Tunis without a passport. Today I cannot take the half hour trip from Helsingör to Helsingborg without one. Every individual, today, is dependent on the goodwill of the police. Nor is there liberty to work and reap the results of one's strength and will to work. In Germany taxes are so high that, if business people were to be absolutely honest in making out their taxation papers they would have to close their shops.

Only one power in the world, the United States, has found its equilibrium after the crisis. The United States has not necessarily preserved liberty—of that there never was any inordinate amount in the sweet land of the free—but she has at any rate protected and increased her material profits and now, after a temporary eclipse, has found her sound political judgment again. The only remedy for Europe's evils would be for America to assume political and economic leadership of the unfortunate continent. But as that is scarcely possible, Europe will have to work out her own salvation, and in the process Germany's evolution will play a vital rôle.

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Tests of Hereditary Intelligence

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THE first argument in favor of the view that the capacity for intelligence is hereditary is an argument by analogy. There is a good deal of evidence that idiocy and certain forms of degeneracy are transmitted from parents to offspring. There are, for example, a number of notorious families—the Kallikaks, the Jukes, the Hill Folk, the Nams, the Zeros and the Ishmaelites, who have a long and persistent record of degeneracy. Whether these bad family histories are the result of a bad social start or of defective germplasm is not entirely clear, but the weight of evidence is in favor of the view that there is a taint in the blood. Yet even in these sensational cases, in fact just because they are so sensational and exceptional, it is important to remember that the proof is not conclusive.

There is, for example, some doubt as to the Kallikaks. It will be recalled that during the Revolutionary War a young soldier, known under the pseudonym of Martin Kallikak, had an ille-

gitimate feeble-minded son by a feeble-minded girl. The descendants of this union have been criminals and degenerates. But after the war was over Martin married respectably. The descendants of this union have been successful people. This is a powerful evidence, but it would, as Professor Cattell * points out, be more powerful, and more interesting scientifically, if the wife of the respectable marriage had been feeble-minded, and the girl in the tavern had been a healthy, normal person. Then only would it have been possible to say with complete confidence that this was a pure case of biological rather than of social heredity.

Assuming, however, that the inheritance of degeneracy is established, we may turn to the other end of the scale. Here we find studies of the persistence of talent in superior families. Sir Francis Galton, for example, found "that the son of a distinguished judge had about one chance in four of becoming himself distinguished, while the son of a man picked out at random from the general population had only about one chance in four

* Popular Science Monthly, May, 1915.