

WHAT THE BRITISH THINK OF THE GERMAN SITUATION

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE BY ELBERT FRANCIS BALDWIN

SOME German faces hereabouts reflect the war; others do not. The other day, in a restaurant, the one waiter there, an old man, served us with dignity. His face was a tragedy. In it you seemed to read the story of the war, forced by a few miscreants, and bringing—never mind what glory—the loss of sons and grandsons to innocent old waiters and other workmen, bringing untold misery to innocent women and children here in Germany, even if in far more poignant measure to those across the border in France and Belgium.

Last Sunday the Cologne Cathedral was packed with people, and, what was more significant, there seemed to be more men than women. After the sermon all present sang a choral. Every one apparently knew all the words of every verse. The effect was wondrously sonorous and impressive. I looked at the faces about me. No sign of war there.

On the streets you occasionally see a one-legged man, but there is no such sad spectacle of the wounded as in Paris. What does strike you is the absence of the German military, once omnipresent. Instead there are the khaki-clad British.

It certainly is good to see the khaki again. Next to having it worn by our own boys, one is glad to see it on the backs of the Britishers. They are a sturdy lot, these men of Britain. They look as if they meant business. They do. The British Occupied Area on the Rhine is quiet. Where the Briton controls in Germany *he controls*.

A number of British officials of high rank have favored me with their opinions, gained by four years' service in the Rhineland, with regard to the Ruhr situation. I summarize them as follows:

"Three courses are open to us: (1) Side with France; (2) retire altogether; (3) remain neutral.

"The first course—to side with France—does not appeal to us from either a political or an economic standpoint. We believe that France's present course will be disastrous for her, for Germany, for all Europe, and for America too.

"The second course—to retire altogether—would be to destroy the Entente. We do not want to do that.

"We follow the third course. Why? Because it will be our duty, we feel, to be the ultimate balance-wheel in settling this dispute. It should be settled along two lines. First, France and Belgium should have all war reparations rightfully to be claimed from present-day Germany. Second, Germany should be saved from complete ruin, and hence from the impossibility of paying any debts at all.

"Is she being put in that position now? You might just as well knock a man down and then keep standing on him, stronger than he is, while expecting him to get up and hoe the garden for you.

"This does not at all mean that we do not want the French and Belgians, after their exasperating years of waiting, to get their dues. We do. But there is an equally strong feeling among us that they are making a mistake.

"Their right to the present pressure on the Ruhr is questioned by some international lawyers. But let us suppose they have this right, as you claim. They have already spent an enormous amount of effort and money, and all they have got in return, after six weeks of endeavor, are far fewer reparations coal trains than they would have otherwise. They will have to spend a great deal more money and can look forward to no better proportionate result. Meanwhile they are exhausting Germany's power to pay. Of course such a game is not worth the candle.

"Mind you, in saying this, neutral as we are, we are careful to act in such a way as not to add to French difficulties. For instance, last week France asked permission to move coal trains across a corner of our Occupied Territory. At first we objected. This was not lack of friendliness for France. It was because we had already arranged with Germany that, on condition of our territory remaining exclusively British-occupied, there would be a cessation there of the general strike of German railway men. But the French persisted. We did not wish to hamper them, and our refusal did hamper them. So we intimated that, if we could not remain neutral and stay, we would have to remain neutral and go. Now neither France nor Germany wants us to go. The Germans were so much alarmed that their Government, in order to prevent our retreat, spontaneously undertook a guaranty against any strikes or troubles on that six-mile sector in the event of our permission being given to France to use it. Of course you may say that the sector would be useless if sabotage took place at the extremities just outside our zone, as might be likely from the wholesale sabotage system on the Ruhr railways at present. Then the French asked us for general running powers over our railways, and here we did say no. We had stretched a point in yielding on the six-mile sector, but to yield everything would be emphatically to take sides with the French in their effort to break German resistance.

"Referring to our getting out of the Rhineland entirely, it must be added

that this would really please a lot of hot-heads in France, because it would make the conditions of transport simpler, because the French could get at the Germans quicker, and because the French feel themselves strong enough to hold the whole region. But it would not, we believe, please the rest of France, and we want to be friends with France. You hear the comment caused by the retreat of your own forces. Of course we took you at your word and did not attribute your withdrawal to any desire to be unfriendly to any one; but you knew perfectly well that you were being unfriendly both to France and to Germany; as to France, your retreat coincided most suspiciously with her advance. What is doubtless true is that the Mississippi Valley people, who seem to be running your Government just now, are really ignorant of the power for good your forces on the Rhine have been and would be, a really greater power than ours. Were you back again in Coblenz, as you ought to be, your influence on the whole situation would be more steadying than any other could be, and might be compelling.

"Of course on the moral side the danger to France and Germany is far greater than on the material side. This is specially true of Germany. Feelings of revenge and hate were bad enough before; they are ten times worse now. If the Germans were not disarmed and could get at the French, there would be a St. Bartholomew Massacre. The fact that there has been no massacre—only sporadic exhibitions—is sufficient proof that Germany is really disarmed.

"Foreigners are apt to think of Germany as one country, and not as a combination of countries, as was the case before 1870. But in many respects Germany remains a combination of countries, and it was supposed that the Entente would take advantage of this fact in 1919 and try to make a treaty with Bavaria, for instance, before making one with Prussia. This was not done. Since the war the history of Germany itself has emphasized certain distinctions, as, for example, that between South and North, or the movement in the Rhineland towards an independent state, even though that movement has not amounted to much. These divisions helped any foreign ambitions with regard to domination, political or economic, in Germany. With one blow the French policy in the Ruhr has closed these divisions. They have all been swept into one great, resentful nationalist sentiment. Reactionaries, Conservatives, Pan-Germans, Liberals, the Catholic Center, Radicals, even Socialists, all are united. Barriers have been broken down. It is a curious thing that

a misstep in foreign aggression should have welded the German nation together at this time.

"As to the German future, the present Government has been steering a self-respecting middle course between the reactionaries at the one extreme and the Communists at the other. That a Republican Government in Germany should stand the strain as long as it has augurs well for its continuance. But Republican France is not helping Republican Germany to continue. While the people here as a whole are grateful for a deliverance from old-time monarchic and bureaucratic despotism, they long for something more tangible as an evidence of law and order than is the present Government, good as it is. While they will not return to the historic monarchy, the present French pressure is helping the monarchist cause just the same. Many, probably most, Germans think of it as signifying the greater strength of resistance. Hence the Germans are likely to abandon government under a president for a royal constitutional state, as we understand it in England, where the sovereign reigns but does not govern. What they really long for is a symbol of sovereignty and strength. They do not find it in President Ebert. Strange as it may seem to you, they would be more likely to find it in a mere boy, the son of the Crown Prince. Again, your German loves display; he likes orders and decorations and patents of official station and the aristocracy and the nobility, and these all lead to a king rather than to a president. Most of all, the German is naturally docile and dependent on something or somebody higher than himself. This is the state, and of course it can be symbolized by a president as well as by a king. But a changing president, as in Switzerland or France or America, does not represent the continuity of executive power. Certainly he does not represent the continuity of what you might call the human document, and this is emphasized by such a royal family as ours. For these reasons, therefore, most Germans will ultimately be found, we think, favoring a democratic government with a king, not a president, at its head.

"There is still a strong disposition in Germany to think that the real victory in the late war does not, after all, lie with the French, but with uninvaded Germany. This feeling has been accentuated by German success in evading treaty provisions since the armistice. Present French pressure on the Ruhr may succeed or fail, but at least it should teach Germany one thing, and that is that she was really beaten in the war.

"You find here a curious German mentality. It resists your assumption that the Germans have not won the war. The truth will have to be beaten into that mind before you can awaken the German soul to any possible penitence for having caused the war. In our four years of service in the Rhineland we

have met no native man enough to say he was sorry that Germany had caused the war, not even open-minded enough to admit that Germany really had caused the war. These people still believe the unconfirmed report that, on August 1, 1914, the Russians crossed the German border and committed deeds of war in three places. The Germans actually maintain that they won the war because they preserved their Fatherland from invasion! When you ask them if the sight of us and the Belgians and the French along the Rhine means their victory, they reply that it merely signifies a temporary check to Germans on foreign soil, and that they would not have ceased fighting but for the Communists' strike at home. Oh, they are mighty poor sports; they are mighty poor losers!

"But do not blame them too much. In a number of respects they are still about two hundred years behind the times. If they had a wholesome outdoor life, it would do their minds and souls good. Fortunately, they are now going in notably for outdoor sports. This is especially noticeable in our occupied area, and we like to think that our example has been worth something in this regard to the German people.

"No matter what the national differences, the British want to see fair play in Germany, just as anywhere else. In the first place, it is not fair to invade the Ruhr as the French have done under the pretext of making good a ten per cent lack in coal deliveries and 135,000 telegraph poles in wood deliveries on the reparations account. Certainly it is not fair for the French to levy a 100,000,000-mark tribute on the town of Gelsenkirchen, as they did the other day. This was refused. The French occupied the place, found 110,000,000 marks in the bank, and took the same. By the way, it was also at Gelsenkirchen, was it not, where the French would not allow a film operator to make a picture of their forces charging the German mob? If the French are sure of their methods, why this caution? On the other hand, there is much to be said for the French. They have shown notable patience, especially in their reluctance to visit the death penalty on *saboteurs* convicted by their courts martial.

"On the economic side, the arbitrary imposition of ten per cent duties on the Ruhr exports and imports strikes not only at the Germans in general but jolly well at the British in particular. Result, stoppage of business. For instance, at the Krupp works in Essen day before yesterday you had the spectacle of completed locomotive machinery under sublet contract from a firm in Switzerland, which, in turn, had a sublet contract from an English firm. These Krupp locomotives were ready for shipment to South Africa, but could not be delivered because the French had imposed their ten per cent duty and the British would not pay it. Again, at Düsseldorf, where you were, two days

before you went to Essen a British firm had made a deposit of £1,500. It was desired to transfer this deposit to Cologne. Did the French, in command at Düsseldorf, allow the transfer to the British, in command at Cologne? No, indeed—except by paying 150 quid. So we are not to be treated as the French and Belgians treat themselves; we are to be treated as they treat the Germans! When we put this up to the French, they say, 'You are not participating in the Ruhr operations. You cannot expect to have your share of whatever profits there may prove to be, either now or later.'

"They will go you one better. When you ask them what they will do if actual war breaks out, you will very likely hear something like this: 'We will go to Berlin, where we all ought to have gone in 1918. We will force a new treaty on Germany, supplementary to the Treaty of Versailles and independently of you.' In our opinion, if the French ever get to Berlin, they will find no German Government there with which they can do business. In the second place, their new treaty could not supplement the Versailles Treaty because no final reparations settlement can be made except with the full consent of all the Powers represented on the Reparation Commission.

"In our opinion, the 'forwards' in France are overplaying their hand. Their organs are now proposing the establishment of a permanent or quasi-permanent Interallied organism to control the Rhenish and Ruhr railways as a guaranty of French military security. In our opinion, such an organism would be nothing but annexation in disguise.

"After all, the whole Ruhr question is primarily economic. Lloyd George saw this long ago, but very likely he went too far in favoring Germany. He proposed a topping plan, we thought, but it was perhaps a too Germanized English policy. Now we do not want to go to the other extreme. We want to strike the golden mean. After 1870, when Germany had won Alsace and Lorraine, she was impregnable economically, because she controlled the coal of the Ruhr together with the iron ore of Lorraine. As also a great steel and iron producer, Germany rivaled England in the world market. Then came the World War, the German reversal, and the Versailles Treaty. It is mostly a political treaty. As such it did a number of economic wrongs. For instance, it ran the new Hungarian border between a mine and the neighboring large factory directly dependent on that mine. Still more strikingly it separated the Ruhr coal fields from the Lorraine ore fields. Of course as spoils of war France had to have Lorraine back, but the economic error was there just the same. What can be done now? It looks to some of us as if France wants to possess the Ruhr too in the effort to be the economic as well as the military monarch that Germany once was. Well,

take it from us, Germany will never consent to alienate the Ruhr.

"Would she consent to a compromise, we ask—the internationalization of the Ruhr region until all reparations are paid? The administration of the region would be in the hands of an international board of receivers, having the authority of receivers in England or America for any bankrupt concern. They would appoint a managing director and the necessary staff. They would mine coal and sell it in the open market with equal rights of competition. The dividends earned would be distributed proportionately as reparations, the Allies at the outset having fixed a reasonable sum as the amount of such reparations. We say that this plan would certainly be better for all concerned than is the present French occupation. Of course the German mine owners, resist-

ing the present occupation, would probably also object to this solution. However, the German Government could compensate the mine owners as it did the ship owners after the war.

"Germany would gain two things by this plan: first, freedom from occupation; second, an incentive to work harmoniously and faithfully with the Allies for debt liquidation. France would also gain two things: namely, security, her primal need; and reparations, her secondary need. Her security would now be guaranteed by an international control. Finally, England would gain, for there would be no danger of French monopoly of Ruhr coal and Lorraine ore. You may think that this is the real reason for proposing it, but the motive was just as much for the good of Germany and the good of France as for the good of England.

"Suppose this plan is turned down. No matter what solution is proposed, ultimately Germany will have to enter into some kind of negotiation with France. If 'eventually, why not now?' as one of your sign-boards says over in the States. The German Parliament and the German Government will have to take some action—the force of facts will compel them. In our opinion, this action should be a guaranty in the form of mortgages on agricultural estates and on mines and industries, offered by German agricultural and industrial magnates, as a basis for reparation. Were this done, you would have a proper starting-point for negotiations.

"Our advice to the Germans is to take the initiative in this rather than wait for the French to do so. *They will!*"

Marlenburg, Rhenish Prussia,
February 24, 1923.

FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON, COW-PUNCHER ARTIST

BY DOROTHY HARRINGTON

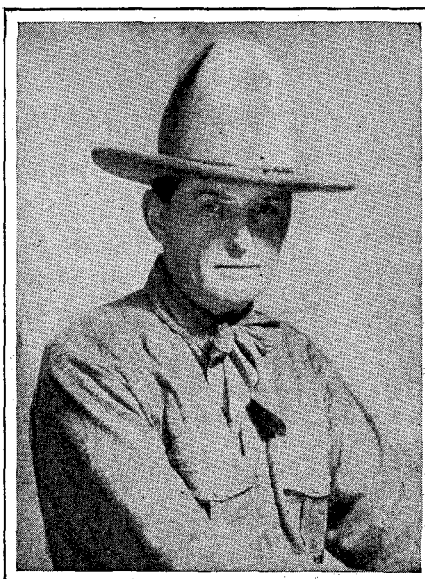
C RAGS and canyons, mountains and deserts, silence of the night, storms wild and thunderous, horses, cow-punchers, and the last of that vanishing race of Indians—these have been the themes of the Western painter, Frank Tenney Johnson, who has just been awarded the thousand-dollar Shaw Purchase Prize for 1923 at the Salmagundi Club in New York City.

The prize picture, "A Wanderer," a study in oils, is a night scene, showing a rugged Mexican wanderer just stealing away from a lamplit adobe inn, a laden burro beside him. This picture breathes the romance of that Southwestern desert country.

Johnson's colors and settings show a keen observation and a close study of his subjects, yet they maintain a breadth and a simplicity of technique. They are full of imagination, yet never fanciful. They might almost be called historical documents.

Many believe that no one has ever depicted the real Mexican, not only in outward appearance, but also psychologically, as well as he. Mr. Johnson's works are convincing because he paints the life that he has lived and known. All of his material is drawn from his rich store of first-hand experience in that Western country where he was born and where he lived most of his life.

His father was a breeder of cattle in then untamed Iowa, and Johnson was born upon the open range of that country. During his boyhood he followed the breaking plow in spring, herded cattle in summer, hunted and trapped along the Nisha Botna in the fall, bucked the winter blizzards, and watched with keen observant eyes the straining muscles of



FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON

the horses as the old stage-coach, the last of its kind, lumbered over the Overland Trail on its way to Council Bluffs.

Later Johnson adventured farther West and into Mexico. During all of those years the artistic impulse was strong within him. He sketched and painted incessantly, and tales are told of how the young cow-puncher, suddenly missing from the chase, would be found far in the rear with canvas and brush capturing the last great splendor of the setting sun.

Ambition finally lured him East to the New York School of Art, where with big enthusiasm and a scant purse he worked and studied faithfully, living in a room without heat and eating as he

could. F. W. Heinie and the famous Western painter and Texas ranger Richard Lorenz were among his first instructors.

From the very beginning his pictures had wide appeal, and Johnson became one of the most popular of the younger painters. But, in spite of advancing reputation, Johnson has never lost touch with his motherland. Each year he makes a pilgrimage West in his own car, which he personally equipped for camping and sketching. He lives and works in the open, and there his best work is done.

"A Wanderer," mentioned above, is one of a series of paintings which the artist recently made in Juarez, Mexico, a town just across from El Paso, the region of Villa's one-time sprightly raids. Others of this series are "Beneath the Southern Moon," "A Mexican Smuggler," and "In the Moon's Soft Glow"—all of which are on exhibition now in various New York galleries. Johnson's night scenes are particularly noteworthy for their depiction of moonlight.

Johnson knows the West of yesterday and the West of to-day. For him the plains are rich with ghosts of prairie schooners, Indians, pack animals, and all the dim figures of the passing West. Always in his work there is a poetic depth of memory, a thrill of that old and virile West he loved. He paints the West of to-day with some rich, intangible hint of yesterday in the brilliant strokes of his brush. To the sensitive eye the moonlight for which he is famed is peopled with misty figures of the past, plodding over miles of rolling prairie, mountain trail, and rocky canyon. Magically on his canvas past and present mingle.

Two reproductions of paintings from Mr. Johnson's brush appear on the following pages.