

France at the Polls

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ON May 11 the French elections occur. Two main political groups oppose each other, and each has its "lunatic fringe," to quote Theodore Roosevelt.

The Monarchists

THE "lunatic fringe" of the first group (the Bloc National) is the monarchist element, not yet dead despite the Republic's more than half-century of distinguished record.

There are two kinds of monarchist fringe, the Royalist and the Imperialist, namely, the Orleanist and the Bonapartist. The "party of the first part," the Orleanist, calls itself the Action Française. As if it were living centuries ago, it believes in action by a hereditary party leader rather than by a Parliament. Its titular leader is, of course, the lightweight Duke of Orleans, "the heir of the forty kings who made France," in the words of the slightly misleading party manifesto. Events in Italy inspire the authors of the manifesto to add that Mussolini's success shows what a leader can do and what a Parliament cannot. The active man of affairs for the Royalists in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of the French Parliament, is Léon Daudet, a lively, loquacious, ubiquitous, and irrepressible person.

The Imperialist or Bonapartist party naturally finds its supreme leader in Prince Victor Napoleon and its parliamentary man in Prince Joachim Murat. Like the Action Française, so this party chooses a title, the Appel au Peuple, masking its real purpose—indeed, the "Appeal to the People" seems less frank. Its principal plank would confer supreme authority on the chief executive of the state, whoever he might be. That means ultimately, in the Imperialist vision, a Prince-President, as in the case of Louis Napoleon, and then the same kind of lightning transformation as took place when he suddenly evolved into Napoleon III, Emperor of the French.

The Bloc National

LEAVING the monarchist "lunatic fringe," we come to the first of the two main political groups in France, the Bloc National. It is composed of five parties, all republican, but conservative or liberal as the case may be.

Let us start with the Action Nationale Républicaine. Here is a group of gentlemen who insist on economy, first, last, and all the time. They demand the sup-

pression of both money and labor waste. They justly claim that the same amount of governmental work might be done by fewer functionaries; that more money would accrue to the state by simpler and juster taxation and that more money would come to the citizen if state monopolies were revised so as to return enterprises not normally under state control to private undertakings.

The Fédération des Républicains Rénovateurs has similar economic aims, and in addition would brush up parliamentary manners a bit.

The Fédération Républicaine also wants tax reform. It is anti-monopolist, but it would abolish personal taxation and replace the land tax.

Then comes the Fédération des Républicains Démocrates. It stands strongly for state control of all industries involved in the National defense, and in foreign affairs for the Poincaré "energetic policies," to quote its manifesto—indeed, so stand most of the other parties.

Finally follows the similar Parti Républicain Démocratique et Social, with the accent on the "Social." It would extend woman suffrage, give a bonus to large families, prohibit strikes in public service industries. It is highly Poincarésque in its insistence on German disarmament and debt payment, as on its opposition to Bolshevism and its equal approval of any constitutional Russian state recognizing Russian debts.

The Bloc des Gauches

THE second great group in the French Parliament is also made up of five parties and constitutes the Bloc of the Left (*Bloc des Gauches*). In most if not all Parliaments the Conservatives sit on the presiding officer's right, the Radicals on his left.

Here in France the party of the Left with most conservative instinct is the Parti Radical National. It has been of immense help to Premier Poincaré, for it has generally supported his policies, internal and external.

Closely following this lead is the Parti Radical Socialiste. Its particular reason of being seems to be to assert that one can be a Socialist without the least Bolshevik squint, for its manifesto repels any alliance "either with Rome or with Moscow."

Another sort of Socialist is the Parti Républicain Socialiste, with ex-Premier Painlevé at its head. This party demands a progressive repartition of taxes,

proclaiming itself at the same time no enemy to private property. In foreign affairs it stands for strong defense measures, a full satisfaction of the demands of France, and a modification of the League of Nations giving it greater executive power.

Still another brand of Socialism is the Parti des Socialistes Chrétiens. These Christian Socialists favor a state subsidy to large families, universal woman suffrage, real proportional representation, the establishment of the referendum, and the neutralization of the Rhine's left bank. The party is largely directed by Marc Sangnier.

Finally we have the Parti Socialiste Unifié, as representing more the kind of thing we have been wont to call Socialism. It stoutly resists the transfer of any public service corporation from state control and demands far fuller protection for labor union rights, especially to the famous and all-embracing C. G. T. (Confédération Générale du Travail, or General Confederation of Labor), of which it is the backbone. It also would see the Rhine's left bank neutralized. Its chief spokesman is Paul Boncour.

The Communists

NOW, leaving the ten parties which really form the active force in French government-making, we come again to a "lunatic fringe." This fringe depends from the Radical Socialist Bloc des Gauches. It is a Communist fringe. Like the monarchist, this is made up of two elements.

The first calls itself the Union Socialiste Communiste. It is not the simon-pure article. It tries to be a bridge from Socialism to Communism in the way it supposes Karl Marx would advise.

The real Moscow garden variety of Communism is furnished by the Parti Communiste, without any "Socialiste" to deceive you. These precious politicians declare that only by seizing large private fortunes can you pay the public debt of France, that the state must own not only all transportation and mining enterprises but also all banking, insurance, and industrial companies, that an armed proletariat must replace the existing army, and that France must ally herself with Soviet Russia.

France will not do this. But every one will be surprised if, on May 11, the electoral pendulum does not swing slightly towards the Left.

Valescure, April 16, 1924.

Mr. Murphy—the Politicians' Politician

By RICHARD BARRY

AN artist in love with his art. A politician who loved politics for the sake of politics. A gamester enjoying the athleticism of his game. Not for the spoils only, though never without the spoils; not for victory only, though jealously cultivating victory. I think if we accept this view of Charles Francis Murphy all his life can be explained by its light.

First, what was his material profit? His estate was surprisingly small, probably less than Richard Croker's, which was much less than expected. As money goes, he was a very ordinary millionaire in a city containing over a hundred persons each with an income of a million a year and several thousand millionaires. Money, clearly, was not his first god.

Yet it must be noted that he was a thrifty, marked member of that race which has produced Henry Ford and Andrew Mellon. Before he was twenty-five years old he had saved \$500 from day wages, at a time when two dollars a day was extra good pay. Therefore it is not fair to assume that *all* of even his comparatively small fortune came solely from political sources. He knew how to save, he knew how to guard an investment.

Consistently, from the beginning he refused all tribute from gambling and from the social evil, formerly the most conspicuous elements of graft. The "cleanliness" of New York in the present generation is due as much to Mr. Murphy as to the change in public attitude toward gambling and prostitution.

There was a saying long credited to Mr. Murphy, "Tammany takes only honest graft." Whether or not he ever uttered the words, he abided and forced his associates to abide by their significance. It is not necessary to examine the obvious contradiction in the term to realize that by "honest graft" the "Boss" meant something like a broker's commission due him and his associates for "placing" the contracts.

This "broker's commission," this "honest graft," amounted seldom to more than ten per cent of the amount of the contract, and it had to be split in many ways. If Mr. Murphy came in for any, it was only a small share of it, and I have talked with one of his friends who asserts with conviction that Mr. Murphy himself always scrupulously avoided personal profit from municipal contracts. Many times, and especially in the later years, there was no "commission" at all. One of his later edicts was, "Tammany must keep out of the schools." The

IN the weeks just preceding the Tammany leader's death, Mr. Barry had three talks with him. As a result of these talks, Mr. Barry here presents Mr. Murphy as the politicians' politician; as one might describe Keats as the poets' poet and Turgenev as the novelists' novelist. To Mr. Barry such differing men as W. J. Connors, Will Hays, Hiram Johnson, R. M. La Follette, General Leonard Wood, and the late President Harding acknowledged their interest in Mr. Murphy's methods and respect for his mastery of the technique of politics. Mr. Barry's article seems to us a sympathetic but not favoring, a human but judicial, interpretation.

The Outlook's view of Murphy as a tribal chieftain was given last week.

Boss's reply to criticism of the taking of any "commission" was that "some one would get it; why not us?"

The life-work of the Boss was almost entirely devoted to other considerations than securing and parceling out graft. For years he stood as a bulwark within Tammany, staunchly preventing the looting of city and State, yet such was the vulnerable nature of his place and history, and the history of the organization, that he could neither claim nor accept the proper credit.

In one of my talks with Mr. Murphy I said: "Why don't you dissipate some false ideas about Tammany by saying publicly that your chief function is the establishment of a sort of clearing-house for political ideas; that you have equipped yourself as a kind of barometer to register the public pulse on candidates and issues, and that you can remain on the job only as long as you guess right?"

He replied: "That's it. Write it yourself. You got it straight."

I asked him how he got his equipment. He referred me to others, being either modest or else cognizant of the fact that when a man has many tongues to wag for him he does not need to wag his own.

As a relaying point between the people and officialdom, he came near being

selfless. For instance, in commenting on the observation that Tammany might prove a burden to Governor Smith in securing votes for his Presidential nomination outside of New York State, Mr. Murphy said to me: "If it will help Smith I'll agree to step into an airship the night he's elected and get out for good."

His relation to woman suffrage is also a case in point. Several leaders of the Women's Party say he turned the National tide in favor of the Suffrage Amendment. Though his personal predilection was against woman's suffrage, his sole object was to interpret the popular will, but through officials of his selection.

He came to rule, not by accident, but by design, the alert design of his own puissant mind. When he was thirty, the leader of his Assembly district, Eddie Hagan, died. Pending an election it was up to the city leader, then Richard Croker, to appoint a successor. It was night, but Murphy heard that a rival would approach the Boss early in the morning. He set about to get an emissary to Croker that night, and he did. The emissary had to go to a Turkish bath. At first the Boss was annoyed—doubly annoyed that he should be disturbed in his repose and that the decencies of recent demise should be so rudely overborne. But, on second thought, he conferred the district leadership on "the young fellow who beat the starting gun."

After four years, when the old Boss had retired, and when his appointed successor, Lewis Nixon, had failed, and a triumvirate was appointed composed of MacMahon, Haffen, and Murphy, and the triumvirate came to sit in meeting and have its picture taken, the youngest, least conspicuous, least-known member, Mr. Murphy, without canvassing his colleagues, without hesitation, sat in the central chair.

How did he manage it? So far as MacMahon and Haffen were concerned one of them has often said that it was like an eruption of nature; when anything was to be done, Murphy was on the job; no one ever asked for him in vain; he seemed to have no time for himself, but all his time for Tammany. Haffen lived in the Bronx; MacMahon on the West Side; Murphy within four blocks of the Hall. The others came once in a while; Murphy practically lived there, and if not actually there he always could be reached in a few minutes.

In the slang of his followers, he was "no buck passer" and "no stringer." He