



# The Price of German Unity

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THE STATUS of Germany has been the key to the stability of Europe for at least three centuries. In the twentieth century, the peace of Europe has been violated twice by a powerful and unified Germany. But prior to 1871, when Germany was composed of a group of competing states, it was the arena of conflict for other European powers that sought to perpetuate its divisions, thwart its national aspirations, and prevent one another from gaining a preponderant influence.

Considering this history, it was inevitable that Germany, when it was finally unified in 1871, should identify security with sufficient strength to defend itself against all of its neighbors simultaneously. But this effort, however understandable, proved fatal to the stability of Europe. Germany's strength, coupled with its central position, produced a vicious circle. A country powerful enough to defend itself against all its neighbors simultaneously would

also be strong enough to defeat each of them singly. Moreover, the effort to develop such strength required a mobilization of resources and an exaltation of national feelings certain to disquiet all other European countries. Bismarck, who unified Germany, spoke of "the nightmare of hostile coalitions." It was Germany's tragedy that the effort to prevent these coalitions made them inevitable. Germany has been either too weak or too powerful for the peace of Europe.

One of the major challenges of western policy since the end of the war has been to integrate Germany into the community of nations in a manner consistent both with its legitimate national aspirations and with international stability. A number of farsighted American and European statesmen sought to bring about a new political structure based on the proposition that if Germany was to play a constructive international role it must have a stake in

something larger than itself. This is why German postwar leaders have been among the strongest advocates of European political union and Atlantic co-operation.

They have felt the need for larger structures all the more keenly because they realize that Germany as a national state has suffered too many breaks in historical continuity and too many shocks. Every German above the age of fifty has lived through three revolutions. He has known four different régimes, each claiming to be morally antithetical to its predecessor. He has seen Germany lose two world wars and has experienced two catastrophic inflations. Every German above thirty-five has witnessed the trauma of the Nazi period, of World War II, and of the postwar collapse. Rootlessness and loss of territorial integrity contribute to the insecurity of German leadership groups, the stridency and legalism of whose disputes often hide a lack of inward assurance. In short,

Germany is too exposed geographically and too vulnerable psychologically to sustain a very active autonomous policy.

The effort to integrate Germany into a larger community would have been delicate in the best of circumstances. In recent years it has become stalled because of the Franco-American conflict over the future of the Atlantic Alliance. Each of the protagonists has sought to add Germany to its side: France by claiming to be a better spokesman for German and European concerns than America; the United States by advocating schemes for nuclear control—especially the so-called Multilateral Force (MLF).

THESE conflicting pressures have placed the Federal Republic in an extremely uncomfortable position. Germany, though courted on all sides, runs the risk of finding itself isolated. Every gesture by the Federal Republic toward either France or the United States evokes so much pressure from the other that a compensatory move must then be made. In order to assuage American outrage over the Franco-German treaty of collaboration, Chancellor Adenauer agreed in principle to the MLF. When the negotiations over the MLF threatened a Franco-German rift, Chancellor Ludwig Erhard felt obliged to re cement Franco-German ties. Because of its understandable insecurities, Germany requires, above all, a calm and steady senior partner. The frequent changes in American policy on strategic doctrine, nuclear control, and the emphasis to be given to various partners threaten to undermine the stability of German political life, whatever the merit of individual United States positions. French policy has been consistent but it has confronted the Federal Republic with choices it is unprepared to make. As a result, the pro-western elements in Germany are in danger of splitting into pro-American and pro-French factions. Over a period of time, the beneficiaries must be the nationalists or the quasi-neutralists. Thrown on its own resources by the rivalry between France and the United States, the Federal Republic has been forced to become increasingly conscious of

its own unfulfilled national aspirations.

These competing pressures threaten to upset the delicate balance on which Germany's integration into the Atlantic Alliance was built. Germany has emerged as the balance wheel of the alliance. The most exposed western ally, seventeen million of whose people are Communist hostages, has become the focal point of all disputes. Its internal structure may not be equal to this strain. There are signs already that the conflict may tear apart the governing party, the Christian Democratic



Union, which largely forged the pro-western orientation of the Federal Republic. This will liberate tendencies that are now restrained by the desire to maintain the appearance of preserving a well-established consensus. France, in turn, seeing that the Franco-German treaty, by which it has sought to limit the Federal Republic's freedom of action, has had the practical consequence of enhancing Germany's national role, may be tempted to seek reinsurance by improving its relations in Eastern Europe.

Thus the current situation contains a series of time bombs. The combination of de Gaulle's abrupt-

ness and America's shortsighted reaction to it threatens to bring about what each of the rivals should fear most: a Germany increasingly absorbed in its own unfulfilled national aims and aware of the bargaining position conferred on it by its central position and growing power.

### German Unity and Atlantic Policy

The most serious potential source of conflict between the Federal Republic and its allies—and the lever with which the Communist countries may hope to pry Germany loose from its Atlantic ties—is the division of Germany. No German political leader can accept as permanent the subjugation of seventeen million of his compatriots by Soviet arms—all German political parties are agreed on this point. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the desire for unification is on the rise. If the alliance seems indifferent to the division of Germany, German leaders will be under increasing pressure to seek it bilaterally—a course which raises the danger of nationalism or neutralism or both.

The problem is complicated by three factors:

¶ NATO is an alliance of status quo countries; yet one of its principal members seeks a basic change in the status quo.

¶ None of Germany's allies share its national aspirations with equal intensity.

¶ Germany's past has left a legacy of distrust that creates special obstacles to its international role.

These difficulties become particularly severe whenever there appears to be some relaxation in East-West tensions. To most of the members of NATO, détente comes as a welcome respite. To the Federal Republic, it implies the danger of a tacit acceptance of the status quo. Most of the allies do not find the division of Germany intolerable, whereas the Federal Republic considers acceptance of the present dividing line in Central Europe a sacrifice of basic national aspirations.

For the first fifteen years of NATO's existence, this difference was obscured by the formula that the division of Germany was one of the causes of the cold war and that a relaxation of tensions presupposed

progress toward unification. In the meantime, it has become apparent that there are powerful, perhaps dominant, tendencies in the West to consider a détente even if German unification should not thereby be advanced—or else to assert that the only road to German unification is through promoting a relaxation of tensions.

American policy on Germany reflects these trends. It seems to contain the following elements: to defend the freedom of West Berlin, including free access to that city; to attempt to tie Germany closely to the United States through institutions such as the Multilateral Force and by other arrangements such as arms purchases; to assert periodically its interest in German unification without, however, pressing the issue sufficiently hard to endanger the possibilities of a détente with the Soviet Union or to throw down an open challenge to the East German satellite; and to encourage the Federal Republic to pursue a more active policy in Eastern Europe and even toward the East German satellite.

**E**NCOURAGING a more active German policy toward the East is especially favored by many leaders in Washington and London. They are convinced that increased contacts between the two Germanys will promote the erosion of the East German régime. According to this school of thought, in any increased contact between the two Germanys the superior cohesiveness and strength of the Federal Republic will give it by far the stronger bargaining position. At a minimum, such negotiations may make life more bearable for the East German population.

Such reasoning has caused western proposals for reunification gradually to move toward enhancing the status of the East German régime. In 1955, the western plan still called for unification through free elections. In 1959, a new plan called for a technical commission composed of twenty-five West and ten East Germans to engage in preliminary negotiations for a year. Decisions were to be taken by a majority of three-fourths, giving East Germany an effective veto. In the propo-

sals of 1962, the composition of these commissions had become equal and the time limit of one year had been removed. Also in 1962, the allies proposed an International Access Authority to Berlin, in which the East German régime was given equal status with the Federal Republic.

The preferences of its allies have in recent years found support even in the Federal Republic. The West



German government has reluctantly accepted the principles of technical commissions in which East and West Germany would enjoy parity. Others argue that contacts between the two Germanys will carry the “bacillus of freedom” into the East and thus “infect” the East German satellite with western values.

### The Hostages

But any such policy must sharply distinguish three sets of relationships: western attitudes toward East Germany, toward the East European countries, and toward the Soviet Union. If the West pursues a united policy, there is considerable merit in a more flexible stance toward the countries of Eastern Europe. The purpose must be, however, to isolate the East German satellite; therefore, enhancing the status of East Germany is a dangerous course. In any direct negotiations between the two German states, the bargaining position of the Federal Republic would be precarious. In all such contacts, humanitarian concerns would outweigh political considerations. Germany's allies should not contribute to the already considerable confusion among three partly incompatible objectives: improvement of conditions in East Germany, consoli-

dation of the East German régime, and progress toward German unification.

Ameliorating conditions in East Germany, however desirable for humanitarian reasons, is likely to help the East German régime consolidate itself and thus make unification more remote except on East German terms. As the respectability of the East German régime grew, the moral cost to the Soviets of maintaining the division of Germany would be diminished. The impact of a more benevolent régime in the Soviet Zone on the Federal Republic could be extremely corrosive. The freedom of Berlin would grow more and more precarious as East Germany approaches the character of a sovereign state.

This process is likely to be gradual. While the East German régime is striving to establish its international status, its demands may be moderate. But once it is recognized—or even if its international status is substantially enhanced—it will have major incentives to seek to undermine the Federal Republic. National feelings in East Germany, unlike those in Eastern Europe, are hostile to the existing government. In Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, patriotism can lead to the conclusion that the national interest is best served by liberalizing the existing governments because no focus for alternative loyalties exists. In East Germany, by contrast, national aspirations clash with the existence of a Communist régime. A prosperous, democratic West Germany acts as a powerful magnet. Thus the East German régime has every incentive to seek to weaken the Federal Republic. It can use its own population as a hostage and the exposed position of Berlin as a lever.

**T**HE SUPERIORITY OF West Germany's bargaining position—which is postulated by some American policymakers—may, therefore, be an illusion. On the contrary, German political leaders may find themselves facing a growing dilemma. In return for easing the fate of their population or tolerating access to Berlin, the East Germans can demand concrete political gains. Confronted by popular pressures and moved by humanitarian impulses,

no German government will find it easy to be dispassionate in deciding at what point an accumulation of seemingly marginal concessions has produced an irreversible trend. In turn, every West German concession to the German Democratic Republic will strengthen those in the allied countries who favor recognition of that satellite régime in any event. The result is more likely to be the indefinite continuation of two hostile, competing German states than progress toward unification.

To be sure, if German political leaders are determined to pursue this course, there is nothing we can do to prevent it. But we should make certain that the West cannot be blamed for the probable consequences. And we should do nothing to promote policies that may lead to a growing demoralization of the Federal Republic. The Opening to the Left in Italy has undermined the Center and opened the way to respectability for the Communists. Much more dangerous results could follow in Germany from a policy of enhancing the status of the East German régime.

### The Prospects for German Unity

The dilemma posed by the German quest for unity can be summed up as follows: unification must be a primary goal of any German government, but pursued as a national policy, unification is impossible and disruptive of European and Atlantic cohesion. At the same time, no serious effort to further German unity in any other framework has been undertaken for a decade. If these policies are not brought into harmony, a crisis in the relations of the Federal Republic toward its allies is probable.

A concrete allied program for German unity is essential also to overcome the predicament in which the alliance now finds itself: Many in the West argue that German unification cannot be the prerequisite of a relaxation of tensions; the contrary is said to be the only realistic course. German leaders, on the other hand, have a more complex attitude. They make a distinction between "peripheral" settlements, which they welcome, and "central" agreements, which they oppose unless they bring some progress on the German ques-

tion. They are uneasy lest the German situation become frozen as the consequence of a general détente.

Finally, a concrete program for German unity is necessary to prevent the gradual, almost imperceptible acceptance of the Soviet framework for German unity: that it be negotiated directly by the two German states—a scheme which while incapable of promoting unification is well designed to foster both nationalism and neutralism.

For these reasons Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder's proposal at the NATO ministers' conference of



May and December, 1964, that the United States, Great Britain, and France make new diplomatic overtures on behalf of German unification, deserved a more positive response than it received. To be sure, the western allies were probably correct in their view that any proposal acceptable to the Federal Republic would not prove negotiable with the Soviet Union. But negotiability is only one criterion for diplomacy and not always the decisive one. Otherwise, the agenda of any conference would be determined by the Soviets. On the issue of Germany in particular, one purpose of allied negotiations should be to

demonstrate that if no progress toward unification is made, the onus rests on the U.S.S.R.

While the allies should show greater understanding for the anguish of a divided country, the Federal Republic has to face the fact that German unity can become an active policy only if it is embodied in a concrete program. Heretofore Bonn has demanded support for German unification, but it has recoiled from encouraging a specific plan to achieve it. It has feared that any proposal might involve provisions about Germany's frontiers and about limitations on German arms that would amount to unilateral concessions.

But any serious proposal on German unification must have at least two components: it must settle Germany's eastern frontier with Poland and Czechoslovakia along existing dividing lines, and it must establish a system of arms control for Central Europe.

NO PLAN on German unity can avoid a consideration of the difficult and sensitive problem of Germany's frontiers. This tragic issue has its origin in 1945, when the Potsdam Agreement placed the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, which had been German for centuries, under Polish administration pending a final settlement in a peace treaty. Poland then expelled the approximately ten million Germans living there and replaced them with Polish settlers, mostly from Polish territories taken over by the Soviet Union. The Federal Republic has refused to accept the Oder-Neisse line as final. This is partly to retain a bargaining lever for an eventual peace conference, partly because of the pressure of the refugees from the disputed territories, most of whom now live in the Federal Republic.

The problem posed by the Oder-Neisse line is one of the human tragedies of our time. The reluctance of the Federal Republic to renounce territories that had been German for centuries is understandable. Moreover, there is something cynical about the insistent East European demand that the Federal Republic accept the eastern frontier of the East German satellite régime, which

in turn is recognized by all East European countries.

Nevertheless, the perpetuation of German claims to the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line complicates progress on the issue of unification. It provides the Soviets with a convenient excuse for maintaining their hold on East Germany, and it cements Soviet relations with Eastern Europe. Reluctance to cede a claim to territories that no longer contain any German settlers contributes to perpetuating foreign rule over seventeen million Germans between the Elbe and the Oder-Neisse line.

To be sure, it is an important tactical question at what point the Federal Republic should renounce its claims. But it is essential to recognize that acceptance by Germany of its eastern frontiers will have to be part of any responsible program for unification.

### A New Approach

Heretofore western plans on unification have been thwarted by three overriding Soviet motives for keeping Germany divided: the desire to preserve a Communist government; the wish to preserve East Germany's economic capacity for the Soviet bloc; and the attempt to ensure Soviet security by preventing a unified Germany from pressing on Eastern Europe.

A new western approach to the issue of German unification should attempt to separate these various issues. Without going into all the details, one possible course could be to separate the issue of self-determination from that of unification for an interim period, say fifteen years. Pressure for immediate unification consolidates all opponents of Germany in Eastern Europe and *sub rosa* in Western Europe as well. Self-determination, on the other hand, is a moral imperative commanding wide consensus. If rejected by the Communists, it would place them at least morally on the defensive.

Such a proposal could take the following form: the western countries, including the Federal Republic, could announce that, while the unification of Germany remains the ultimate goal, the immediate aim is to enable the population of East Germany to choose the form of gov-

ernment it prefers. The western allies could, therefore, declare their willingness to acquiesce in the temporary existence of an East German state, provided its government emerges from a process of free elections, and provided it is explicitly established as an intermediate stage toward unification. For a period



of fifteen years the territory now called the German Democratic Republic would have a status similar to that of present-day Austria. A loose confederation could be established between the two German states, but East Germany would be independent, neutral, and demilitarized. For a period of ten years, the existing economic obligations of the present German Democratic Republic to the East European countries, including the Soviet Union, could be maintained. After that period, these links would depend on normal negotiations with the government then in office in East Germany.

A COMMISSION composed of European neutrals—Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and perhaps Finland—would monitor the free elections and the demilitarization provisions of the treaty. Soviet troops would be withdrawn from East Germany prior to the elections. After a period of fifteen years, there would be a plebiscite supervised by the same commission to determine whether East Germany wanted to continue in loose confederation with the Federal Republic or whether it preferred

unification on a federal basis. In either case, East Germany would remain demilitarized. Both German states would recognize the existing frontiers of Germany, including the Oder-Neisse line. After the neutral commission certified that the government of East Germany was freely elected, Berlin could become the capital of that state as well as the seat of the organs of the German confederation. No further reason to maintain Berlin as a separate political entity would exist. Within the Federal Republic, foreign troops would retire a distance roughly equal to that between the Elbe and the Oder-Neisse. The Federal Republic would renounce access to the ownership of nuclear weapons.

Even if there were agreement in principle, many details would remain to be worked out: for example, the precise definition of demilitarization or what international undertakings would be consistent with the neutral status of the new state. But once the direction of an "Austrian" solution for East Germany were taken, the advantages would be plain: a terminal date to the division of Germany would be established. The process of incorporating more and more features of Soviet proposals in western plans would be reversed. A foreign-backed régime detested by the population would be removed. The East European states would gain the security of a belt of controlled armaments along their borders for the indefinite future. The East European economies could adjust to the loss of their East German partner over a ten-year period. The Berlin problem would be solved. Germany's frontiers would be settled both juridically and psychologically because the generation that was expelled from Eastern Europe would have largely disappeared by the time Germany was unified. Arms-control schemes for Europe could be linked to a specific program for unification. In the fifteen years before the plebiscite that would settle the unity of Germany, European political integration could be fostered in order to reduce the fear of any one national state.

Such a program would end a situation that is bound to become more and more dangerous. Even if such a program were to be rejected initial-

ly by the Soviets, it would change the framework of negotiations. Rather than begin with enhancing the status of the East German régime, as is the case with current schemes, the new program would focus attention on its oppressiveness as the principal obstacle to unification. This would arrest the present drift toward a gradual enhancement of the East German régime. By taking a stand on the issue of self-determination, the West would have a platform most likely to command international support. By separating self-determination from unification, an interim period for adjustments and a framework for meeting legitimate security concerns of Germany's neighbors would be provided.

### Possible Alternatives

Still, it is highly improbable that any negotiating formula will advance German unity. Even the most reasonable program is likely to be re-

fuses to maintain diplomatic relations with any country that recognizes the East German régime. The isolation of that satellite can, under present circumstances, be furthered best by seeking to reduce the fear of Germany in Eastern Europe. One possible adaptation of the Hallstein Doctrine would be for the Federal Republic to establish diplomatic relations with all of Germany's neighbors, thus opening direct contact with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

**B**UT THE long-term prospects of Germany do not depend on such tactical considerations. What is needed is a willingness by the West to embark on two related courses: (1) to recognize the psychological and political dilemmas of a divided country and (2) to make Germany part of a larger community. The first policy requires, above all, steadiness and reliability on the part of Germany's allies—especially its strongest partner, the United States. They must take care not to overstrain the fabric of German political life by a restless and constantly shifting search for ever-new expedients or by trying to use the Federal Republic as a weight against each other or by urging the Federal Republic into assuming extra-European risks, thus exposing the most vulnerable country to the grave danger of blackmail (witness the German imbroglio in the Middle East). The most useful policy for the United States toward the Federal Republic is to forge ties at all levels that assure Germany of the moral and political backing of a senior partner.

But bilateral policies cannot solve the problem of Germany. To pretend that there is a "European" solution is to remove the weight in the scales—the United States—on which the security of Europe ultimately rests. To stimulate German distrust of France is to foster the traditional forms of nationalism. Nevertheless, this is what has been happening. The practical result of the Franco-American rivalry is that each ally is tempted to bring the Federal Republic to its side by holding out vague hopes and grandiose schemes. German leaders are torn by the conflicting demands of their allies and their

own national aspirations. The West, which has so often been rent by internal struggles, stands in danger of repeating its historic folly. Paris may have thought that by committing the Federal Republic to a treaty of special friendship it was discouraging temptations of nationalism and providing for the construction of Europe. Washington's attitude toward the Franco-German treaty was motivated by a desire to combat third-force tendencies. These competing efforts stand in danger of producing what they seek to prevent; the attempt to use Germany as a balance wheel will complete the fragmentation of the Atlantic Alliance.

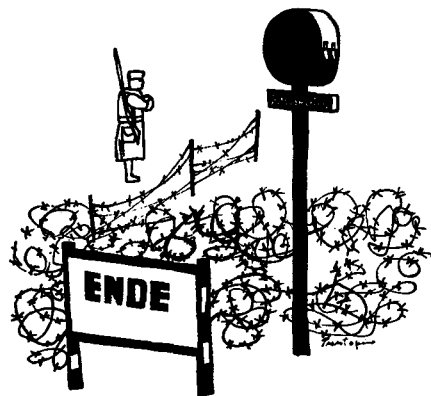
The long-term hope for German unity resides in an evolution in the West that will act as a magnet for the countries of Eastern Europe. As Western Europe achieves political unity, the fear of any one state will diminish. A united Europe, moreover, will be a powerful magnet for the countries of Eastern Europe. As ties between the two parts of Europe grow, the East German satellite could increasingly appear as a vestige of a passing era.

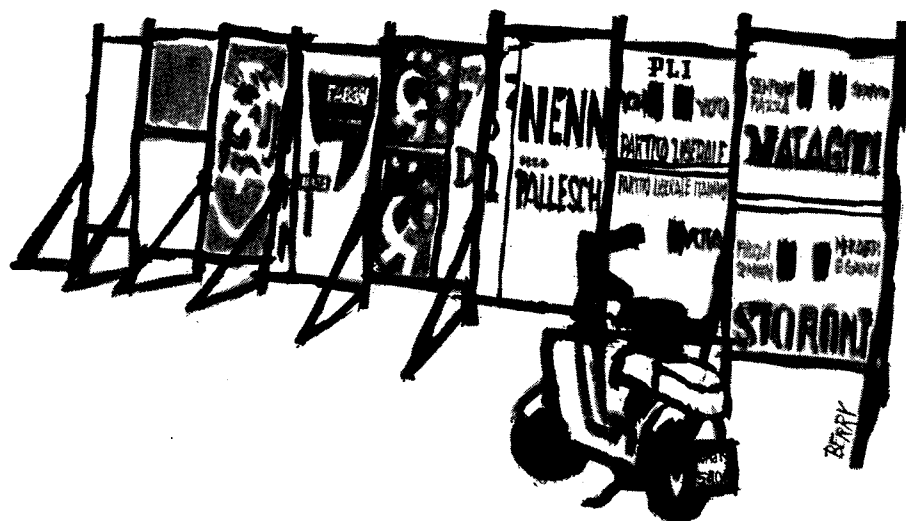
**T**HIS united Europe, in turn, should be part of a close and confident Atlantic relationship. A far-sighted western policy will therefore seek to convert the so-called German problem into an effort to build structures, European and Atlantic, in which the Federal Republic can participate as a respected and equal member. The challenge is to overcome the struggles for prestige and influence which form the headlines of today and to channel energies into the construction of a larger community.



jected by the East. Thus the West requires two interim policies: (a) with respect to Eastern Europe and (b) with respect to its own internal arrangements.

With respect to Eastern Europe, the policy should be to give incentives for autonomous foreign policies and to differentiate, whenever it is possible, between East European governments and the East German satellite. The purpose should be to isolate the East German satellite and to convince the countries of Eastern Europe that maintaining the division of Germany is not necessary for their security. The Federal Republic could contribute by modifying some of the rigidities of the Hallstein Doctrine, by which it re-





# Italy's Catholic-Communist Dialogue

CLAIRE STERLING

**H**AVING RUN THROUGH two cabinets during their first unhappy year together, Premier Aldo Moro and his partners of the Center and Left have just started on a third. The new cabinet, formed after a winter of serpentine negotiations, is barely distinguishable from the others and may be unable to hold out as long. Its survival will depend on whether or not it can pull Italy out of an acute economic recession before next summer—none too brilliant a chance, but almost certainly the last one for Moro's coalition.

It seems beyond question that another failure would be one too many. The Christian Democratic-Socialist alliance that was to have changed the course of history here has brought only frustration and disappointment for the Italians. Time after time, both sides have sat down to explore their differences and, finding them unnegotiable, have returned to explore them again. Engrossed in an occult ritual

of "clarification," they have never really gotten around to governing the country. The most memorable act of Moro's first center-left cabinet, which came to power in December, 1963, with a forty-five-page program that had taken a full seven months to negotiate, was to raise the price of matches and legal foolscap. The next one hardly did more than draw up the third draft of a Five-Year Plan that hasn't yet been sent to parliament.

Meanwhile, the economy has skidded into decline. During the last year, consumer demand has fallen off heavily. Investment in new plant, especially in textiles, machine tools, and household appliances, has slowed nearly to a stop. The construction industry has shrunk by nearly forty per cent, with 400,000 building workers laid off and as many more due to be unemployed by summer. An estimated half million workers in associated industries (cement, bricks, lumber) stand to lose their jobs at the same

time. Several hundred thousand other workers have been cut down to a twenty-hour week.

**O**NE MIGHT ARGUE about how much of the blame for this can fairly be laid to the center-left coalition, which did not take over until the downward curve was already setting in. But few economists doubt that the trend could have been checked a year ago by energetic government intervention. The coalition leaders, however, could not find an adequate course of action that did not lead to irreconcilable doctrinal controversies.

The public has been remarkably forbearing. Italians have long been in the habit of regarding all government as inefficient and corrupt. Those who were inclined to favor the center-left experiment were aware that it could not start off smoothly. Yet even the experiment's warmest supporters are beginning to sense that too much time has been wasted in getting started, and that