Germany’s Problems

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TODAY I WANT TO REFER to certain impressions I gained during my visit to Bonn. The Federal Republic has, in my opinion, to face enormous problems which are difficult to solve. On their speedy solution, however, depends the stability of conditions in Germany and, with it, that of the entire Western world.

Nothing appears to me more urgently required than sound German politics. The danger of an unbalanced Germany, with tendencies toward Communism or reversion to Nazi ideologies, cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Such a development would endanger all that we have achieved for the defense of the West in the last four years. However paradoxical this statement may sound, a democratic Germany is an essential element today in the fight against Communism and for freedom, which means an essential factor in the consolidation of the 1945 victory.

If Germany were to turn Communist or if Nazism were again to come to power — and both would only be the effects of the same cause — it would constitute a terrible danger for the rest of Europe. We all need our strength so that Europe can be developed and defend itself. If Communism stood at the Rhine or if between the Oder and the Rhine a power should gain a foothold which is by its nature hostile to any democratic civilization and which adheres to totalitarian ideologies — in other words, if in Germany in one form or another those parties which stand for misery, despair and revenge were in power, then our already difficult situation would become really perilous.

I think it superfluous to further explain such a truism. However, if we are convinced of its truth we must not hesitate to follow a policy which can prevent this disaster.

WE NEED NOT ABANDON the reservations we may have in our minds, and such a policy would not be a sign of sentimentality or weakness. What is required is to act according to a very simple and easily comprehensible situation.

The refugee problem is, in my opinion, the main problem in western Germany. Figures illustrate a terrible situation. In the Federal Republic a population of more than 45,000,000 must absorb 10,000,000 refugees, people who were expelled from Silesia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia or who fled from the Eastern zone because they did not want to live under tyranny and Soviet misery. The majority of them arrived completely destitute in western Germany, robbed of all their property, furniture, clothing and money. They arrived in a devastated country, where the native population was short of 5,000,000 dwellings.

By their sudden influx they have caused confusion in Germany’s economic life and in living conditions already severely affected by the war. They constitute about one-third of the approximately 1,700,000 unemployed who are a heavy burden for Germany. They have found shelter in those states which are nearest to their former homelands: Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Bavaria.

Today 71.55 percent of the German population of 1939 are crammed into an area only 52.3 percent the size of the former Reich. I do not intend to speak of the human problem created by such a migration of people, of the physical and spiritual misery inevitably caused by it.

ALTHOUGH WE MUST NOT neglect these aspects, I want to point today only to the undeniable political danger represented by these masses of ruined, desperate and destitute people. They are obviously easy victims for Communist or Nazi propaganda, more even for Nazism than for Communism.

They have no sound political ideas and these masses cannot have such ideas. They have no chance at all of a sensible choice. They are neither liberals, nor Christian socialists nor socialists. They follow him who will promise them an end to their misery. They are a political prey for the boldest or the most irresponsible politician. At the latest elections in Lower Saxony 11 percent of the votes were given to the new Nazi party, and there is no doubt that the major part of these votes were those of the refugees.

Western Germany cannot achieve a sufficiently quick solution of this problem if it is left to its own resources, because it does not possess the necessary financial means. The Strasbourg Assembly tried to mobilize the Council of Ministers and it responded with its usual inertia.

How much time will it require to study this question, how much time will it need for working out the beginning of a solution, when a quick move is needed because speed is in this case an essential factor for success! Once again such an immense national emergency can only be overcome by European cooperation, and the possible effects of this national emergency reach far beyond the narrow limits of Germany’s frontiers.

I said that the Federal Republic, if left to its own resources, could not solve the refugee problem for financial reasons. Is it realized, that Adenauer’s Catholic government — with the support of all other parties — is to introduce a 50 percent capital levy to solve the problem of war damages? This means

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