

EUROPE speaks**[Nachkriegsausgabe]***Edited by Mary Saran**No. 5**June 20th, 1946**[Seite: - 25 -]***Critical Interim in France**

THE results of the elections to the second constituent Assembly in France on June 2nd were contrary to all expectations and prophecies. Nearly everybody believed that the newly constituted, extreme right-wing P.R.L., in which all disguised fascists and Pétainists, all conservatives and social reactionaries had collected together, would gain considerably in influence. It was thought that the M.R.P. would lose its right-wing supporters to this conservative-clerical party with its violent anti-Marxist propaganda and would itself emerge at least greatly weakened, if not completely decimated. The Radical Socialist Party, which had united with all the anti-clerical democratic bourgeois elements in a left-republican grouping, was expected to regain a considerable proportion of its former influence. It was widely thought that the socialists would be the main victor on account of their leading rôle in the government and in the key ministries, through the credit they could claim for the success of Léon Blum's mission in America, and because many non-socialist elements would see in the Socialist Party the only bulwark against communism. Finally, the Communist Party was expected to receive a setback in its recent advance, if not a considerable loss of votes.

All these calculations and prophecies proved absolutely false. The P.R.L. made no gains of any significance; the M.R.P. did not lose any votes to the P.R.L., but, on the contrary, emerged as the victorious party; the grouping together of the radical elements yielded no results; the Socialist Party suffered a defeat, whilst the Communist Party, although losing four seats, can still boast of the fact that it has once more gained over a hundred thousand votes.

Taken as a whole, the relative strength of the parties in Parliament is very little altered: the same "big three" remain easily the three most powerful parties, and only their relative strength has changed. This change, together with certain other factors which have been brought to light, has created a new situation. The coming weeks will show the full significance of these developments.

In any general political analysis of the elections it is sufficient to examine the results of metropolitan France. Trends and reactions in the colonial territories are very different, and they can therefore be disregarded in this comment. The following figures refer to the 548 seats of continental France plus Corsica and Algeria. On the extreme right, the P.R.I. had 35 seats in the previous Assembly; it has again got 35 on the purely P.R.I. vote. The small splinter right-wing groups had formerly 27 seats, and have now 28. Thus, under the most favourable circumstances, this reactionary faction would only dispose of 63 seats: no great achievement, no threat to the Left. The M.R.P. has increased its strength from 145 to 162 seats. The Radicals and Left Republicans together had 47 seats and now have only 40. The socialist representation has been reduced from 136 to 126, and lastly that of the communists from 148 to 144. The remainder of the seats was won by small splinter groups.

This review of the gains and losses of seats does not, however, reflect the changes in the actual number of votes obtained by each party. It is difficult to draw an exact comparison between the present voting figures and those for the first National Assembly last October, as in October certain electoral alliances existed which had disappeared this time. All the same we can state that the M.R.P. with approximately 5,590,000 votes gained more than a million votes. The communists, in spite of the loss of four seats, increased their votes by about 150,000, according to official statistics; according to their own, by 318,000; their total vote was about 5,136,000. Finally, the Socialist Party, with a total vote of 4,187,000, suffered a loss of about 300,000 votes.

Failure of Right-wing Groups

These figures demonstrate first of all the striking failure of the P.R.L. and the radical-left republican block. Both had great opportunities. In the last session of the Assembly they were in opposition, and, although they sat in different parts of the House, they made common cause on most questions. Both had recently attacked all three majority parties, using very strong language. But neither of them had anything new or attractive to offer in their policy or their leaders. Their anti-Marxism was overdone, their social outlook too old-fashioned, their clericalism too blatant.

The alliance of the left-republicans was compromised from the outset by the presence of the radicals, a party which had utterly failed between the two wars to satisfy the new social demands of the masses, and which was saddled with the responsibility for many scandals of the Third Republic and for Munich. After its defeat in October last, it tried to stage a come-back by moving to the right and systematically adopting a policy of opposition. It gained nothing by these tactics. What prestige it still possesses, and what increase in votes it was able to obtain, as in the case of Herriot in Lyons, is due to the personal influence of a few individuals, of whom at least one (Daladier), who has reappeared on the scene, is a very doubtful asset.

In the ranks of the republican lower middle classes there is no doubt a great deal of disappointment, because the efforts of these left republicans have not achieved any notable results. The fact that the P.R.L. spent in vain the ample resources put at its disposal for the election by big business and the big industrialists should be a great source of satisfaction to the workers.

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The M.R.P. Success

The M.R.P. was probably most surprised of all about its own great success. Its policy recently had been dictated by the fear of the increasingly powerful propaganda of the P.R.L., whose attacks were mainly directed against the M.R.P. It may even be true that the M.R.P. would have accepted the constitution if the P.R.L. had not appeared as a threatening rival. It took, of course, full advantage of the dual position it had held before the elections, that of being both in the government and in opposition, and its coalition partners had allowed it to exploit this advantage. It must be admitted that the M.R.P. played this double game very skilfully. Moreover, its young and well-organised groups worked hard and efficiently; its youth and women's organisations and its press service might have served as a model to others. Through the Christian trade unions the M.R.P. had succeeded in gaining influence among the workers, often helped by the fact that there was a strong reaction to communist intolerance in the trade unions. The fact

remains that, for the time being, there is among those who have placed their hopes in the M.R.P. a considerable section who honestly desire to see economic and social reforms take place in France. It has also rallied those who still possess Gaullist sympathies, and see in the M.R.P. the "party of the faithful". Lastly it attracted large numbers of right-wing people who see in it a more effective bulwark against the Communist flood than the P.R.I., whose aggressive propaganda is liable to arouse class antagonism and the danger of civil war.

It is still difficult to assess definitely the importance of the M.R.P. victory. Does it mean purely a victory of the Right? Or does it signify the general reaction in France against social conservatism and against any fascist ideology, thus indicating that the general swing to the Left in France has not yet come to a standstill? The M.R.P. naturally tries to present its victory in this light, and objects very slowly to being classified amongst the right-wing parties.

The Communist Position

The Communist Party, it is true, has forfeited the right to form the government which it previously claimed as the strongest of the three parties. It would, however, be a mistake to judge its position solely by its parliamentary strength. Many people thought after the referendum that the "communist flood" had been stemmed in France. This is not borne out by the elections. The votes it lost in some large towns, probably to the extreme right, were more than made up for in the countryside. Once more the propaganda of the communists was helped by the large financial resources they had at their disposal, as well as by their indisputable organising talent, the enthusiasm of many of their members, their flexibility which is not handicapped by any scruples. The unscrupulousness of their tactics showed itself in their sudden pre-election conversion to an all-out claim for wage increases. Exactly five days before June 2nd the communist-dominated bureau of the C.G.T. passed a resolution in favour of a complete reversal of the trade unions' wage policy which received at once the full-hearted approval of the Communist Party Executive.

To understand the significance of this coup let us recall the following facts: The C.G.T., as well as the Communist Party, had supported without reservation the policy of price and wage control introduced by the Gouin Government. As recently as four weeks back, this policy was ardently defended by the communist secretary of the C.G.T., Frachon^[1], and approved by 80 per cent. of the Trades Union Conference, which even shouted down the minority speakers who dared to advocate a policy of sliding wage scales, wage adjustments and strike action. Frachon then branded as "traitors" all those who "sabotaged the industrial recovery of France". The same Frachon discovered five days before the elections that production in France had increased by 100 per cent, and that a general wage increase for all workers and civil servants should be demanded. This proclamation, although still subject to approval by the administrative committee of the C.G.T., came like a bombshell, especially as it was immediately loudly acclaimed in *Humanité*. The *Peuple*, the trade union paper, also gave it considerable publicity, though it did not exploit it to the same extent for electoral propaganda as the communist press. The demand for a change in wage policy, it is true, was objectively justified, since the existing policy of a simultaneous control over wages and prices had deteriorated into a one-sided wage stop, whilst prices had risen considerably. But the proclamation was, under the circumstances, a pure electoral trick, and showed once more that the communists do not hesitate to make use of the trade unions for their own party ends. It seems certain that this trick succeeded in winning over many workers for the

communists, since nothing could be more popular than the advocacy of a general rise in wages. It was an effective counter-blow to the anti-communist campaign and to the use made by the socialists of Léon Blum's successful mission in America.

Anti-communist Campaign

The communists were also helped by the stupidity of the "anti-communist" campaign. Indeed, they found it good tactics to exaggerate its importance in every possible way. A strong general reaction against communist policy had set in during the campaign for the referendum, and it had no doubt played a considerable part in securing a majority against the constitution. After liberation, it must be remembered, owing to the active part played by the communists in the resistance, and above all because there was a widespread aversion to anything that smelled of anti-bolshevist propaganda, the communists had won for themselves a position vastly different from that they had occupied before the war. High Church dignitaries and prominent bourgeois personalities sat on executive committees of thinly disguised communist organisations, such as the Front National, the Union of French Women, the National Writers' Association, or the Organisation for the Renaissance of France. Bishops spoke on the same platform as communists and communists appeared in churches at official festivals. The Communist Party had become respectable, or, as François Mauriac^[2] put it: One must hear now the ladies in the drawing-rooms speak of their communist friends!

This popularity was short-lived, not because the communists pursued a revolutionary policy and thereby repelled these often rather undesirable allies. Their line was anything but revolutionary, at least in their public policy. They lost these newly acquired supporters because they laid hands on what had been the preserve of the Right: Patriotism, nationalism, even chauvinism. They tried to monopolise the slogans of national unity and the hatred of the "hereditary German enemy". They were foremost in demanding a strong army in the interest of national prestige and the maximum effort of the workers to increase production. Like the ultra-patriots of the "Action Française", they claimed everything French was their exclusive property, whilst at the same time supporting every move in Moscow's foreign policy, whether it was directed against the interests of France or not.

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These forms of chauvinism were bound to provoke a strong reaction, especially since the communists never refrained from attacking all other parties for their pre-war policies, despite the fact that their own record in this respect was so obviously far from commendable, even though, after liberation, everybody conveniently kept quiet about it. This reaction set in immediately it became clear that the Communist Party was making a bid for power, for the right to form the government, and that this government would be in the hands of Maurice Thorez, a man who, though rehabilitated by de Gaulle, had still to live down his desertion from the army in 1939, at the time of Russia's pact with Hitler. Yesterday the spoilt darling of right-wing bourgeois circles, to-day the Communist Party has once more become public enemy No. 1.

The fact that the Socialist Party has joined in this anti-communist campaign is rather unfortunate at a time when a general offensive against Communism is rallying all anti-marxist, clerical and reactionary parties. It has certainly alienated many workers who, without being a hundred per cent. communist, are rightly suspicious of an anti-communist wave on which social reaction hopes to come back to power.

The Socialist Dilemma

The Socialist Party could not be expected to refrain from replying to the unjust attacks made upon them by their communist partners, who charged them with being responsible for the referendum defeat. Nor could they be blamed for defining their own programme in terms that distinguish it from that of the communists. The series of articles by Daniel Mayer in the *Populaire*, outlining the difference between the socialist and communist viewpoint, was not unduly polemical or hostile in tone. Nevertheless, it was an embarrassing fact that these articles were strikingly analogous in argument to a series that appeared at the same time in *Epoque* [3], the most venomous anti-communist paper. The violent personal attack on Thorez for his desertion to Russia in 1939, which was made by the socialist Minister of the Interior, Le Troquer, more out of anger and resentment than on the grounds of reasonable argument, did not do the socialist cause any good either.

As a result of this whole development, a certain atmosphere of tolerance, which had made co-operation between socialists and communists possible before the referendum, has been seriously disturbed, which means that the socialists have become more dependent upon right-wing parties. Moreover, the communists have been encouraged to proceed once more with their notorious appeals for workers' unity against the socialist "party bosses".

The defeat of the socialists in the elections - as much a surprise to them as victory was to the M.R.P. - requires a more thorough examination, and its causes are manifold. Left-wing socialists regard the exaggerated anti-communist line of their party as the main mistake, because it has repelled the socialist workers who want working-class unity. Right-wing socialists, on the other hand, especially those who joined the Socialist Party after liberation and came from middle-class circles, emphasise that no clear and consistent line of socialist policy has emerged which could inspire confidence. In particular they deplore the change of tactics from close collaboration with the M.R.P. in the first months of the Assembly to closer liaison with the communists, which was again followed by bitter campaigns against them.

There is certainly substance in both these criticisms. One could add as another recent instance of strategical manoeuvring without a clear-cut of their own, the over-readiness of socialists to compromise after the referendum was lost. This was hardly appropriate at the moment when the strengthened Right Parties went over to attack, and gave the impression that the socialists were not very serious in their support for the constitution. The fact that the communists did the same, perhaps even more blatantly, does not affect this criticism; they are employing tactics and have resources at their disposal with which the socialists partly cannot and partly should not compete.

Finally, the socialists did not exploit to any degree the importance of the work they had done in the government. Apparently they expected Blum's successful mission to America to achieve miracles for them, but it came too late materially to affect the issue and, in any case, was received with some scepticism in working-class circles.

Political Tensions Increased

The foundation of the new Government has become more difficult. In the former Assembly, socialists and communists together had a majority; now they are in a slight minority. Together with the radical groups they would have a majority, and some papers, for example *Franc Tireur*, have proclaimed such a revival of the old Popular

Front. The radicals and their associates, however, have moved far away from the spirit of the old Popular Front, and are unlikely to be willing to co-operate with the communists. An alliance between the Socialist Party and the M.R.P., suggested in some quarters before the elections, seems out of the question. The socialists could hardly have agreed to this in any case, as it would have meant political suicide for them. A bloc of the Right is also impossible, since the M.R.P. shows no inclination to compromise itself by such a move.

There remains only the formula of yesterday, the coalition of the Big Three, possibly enlarged by the radical groups. The M.R.P., as the strongest party, can claim to form the Government. Yet an ardent Catholic at the head of a coalition in which the anti-clerical parties have the majority would create a strange and difficult situation. Bidault is sure to meet with strong opposition from the communists. But even the M.R.P. would not like to see the communists pushed into opposition, especially as to-morrow wage increases will be on the agenda, which will mean new and unforeseen difficulties for the Government. Therefore the old majority under socialist leadership still seems the only practical solution. The socialists are naturally extremely reluctant to renew an experiment which might well cost them more dearly than the previous one.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that in the new Chamber political intrigue is likely to play a bigger rôle than in the first Assembly. A number of the Ministers of yesterday and of other well-known representatives of the resistance have not come back, such as Soustelle[4], Capitant[5], Avinin[6], Lucien Rose[7], Pierre Bloch[8]; instead, Ministers of the pre-war days and other personalities of very doubtful reputation from the era of the Third Republic have re-appeared on the political scene, such a Daladier, Paul Reynaud, Mendès-France, Paul Bastide[9], Louis Rollin[10], Maurice Pêche[11], Jules Julien[12] and General Giraud. From the outset, this second National Assembly, which it is still hoped will provide France with a new constitution within three months, will have to face increased difficulties and a more tense political situation.

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Socialist Inquest on Elections

By a French Correspondent

THE defeat suffered by the Socialist Party on June 2nd was discussed at a National Council conference (which brought together the secretaries of the socialist federations), held on Whit Sunday. The delegates were not in a defeatist mood. For the Socialist Party still musters the support of 4,200,000 voters, and its parliamentary group occupies the third place as before. However, this setback, coming as it did as a surprise to most socialists, has apparently made a very deep impression.

As could be expected, the Left Wing blamed the Party for having identified itself too much with the anti-communist campaign, the charge from the Right Wing was that it had not dissociated itself clearly and early enough from the communists. Both these arguments are inclusive. For example, the socialist Minister of the Interior, Le Troquer, who was particularly antagonistic to the communists, was faced at the elections with a loss of 20,000 votes in his Paris constituency. In another constituency, a Left wing socialist, Arès Lapoque[13], who favoured close co-operation with the communists, lost 7,000 votes, a percentage loss equal to that suffered by Le Troquer.

Serious socialists cannot fail to realise that their losses - in so far as they were avoidable, were not caused by the one or the other of these tactics, but by a constant wavering between them, which repelled voters from opposite camps.

It is true, as Léon Blum put it in *Populaire*, that the socialists were the main target of attack, because they had occupied the key government posts. The entire responsibility for the Government's financial and economic policy, for the effectively blocked wages and the steeply rising prices, rested with the Socialist Party. They were blamed for food shortages, three consecutive Ministers having failed to remedy the position (Pineau [14], Ramadier and Prigent [15]).

As many delegates to the National Council admitted, the economic policy of the socialists had in fact been unsatisfactory. Why did André Philip's attempt to block both wages and prices not yield the expected results? The starting point was unsound; the means adopted were inadequate; the freedom of the socialists to act was too restricted. This, rather than any personal shortcomings of the Minister, account for the lack of success.

When taking over the double burden of the economic and financial Ministry, André Philip was faced with a total deficit of 300 milliards. As the de Gaulle Government's former policy of military prestige and State subsidies could not be wiped out from one day to the next, this deficit could only be reduced by less than a quarter. Moreover, the moment had passed when an essential reduction in the enormously inflated mass of notes in circulation could have been made. They had been exchanged at their nominal value, and thus a chance had been missed for eliminating this factor which, at a time when goods were in short supply, was bound to drive up prices and encourage the black market.

In trying to deal with the problems facing the Government, the Socialist Party was the prisoner of its uneasy position between the two other coalition parties, as well as of its own lack of courage. In the case of the military budget, which, in view of the impoverishment of the nation, still remained far too high, both the M.R.P. and the communists proved equally obstructive. In regard to a radical price policy, the M.R.P., with its adherence to economic Liberalism, proved an obstacle; on the other hand, the brutal police methods favoured by the communists repelled the socialists.

Filling the Place of the Radicals

Besides the many outside influences which acted as brakes on the Socialist Party's efforts, its own peculiar position was a big handicap. Ever since the liberation of France it has become more and more cut off from the mass of the workers, who during the resistance had been attracted by the communists, particularly because of the prestige of the Red Army. It is also cut off from all those with Christian leanings, who are being captured by the M.R.P. Thus the socialists are filling the rôle abandoned by the radicals and are becoming more and more the representatives of the progressive middle-classes, of the "petit-bourgeois" and the professional classes. The instability of these sections of the population has been shown in the recent elections.

In order to compensate for the loss of working-class support by winning the small farmers' vote, the socialists held on hard to the Ministry of Agriculture, where they had certain undeniable achievements. But this concern for the same farmers prevented them from energetically tackling the food problem, the most essential problem for the mass of the people. Concessions to the peasants whose unbelievably backward methods impose

such a heavy burden on French economy; concessions to the small traders, that dreaded class of election agents who, almost without exception, are as responsible for price increases and the black market as the big traders - all these concessions have greatly impeded the adoption of those socialist measures which the situation urgently required.

The same lack of a firm attitude was noticeable in the sphere of foreign policy. The socialists did not dare to come forward and advocate their won international policy. Léon Blum's comments on this point were not very satisfactory. We socialists, he wrote, have demanded the internationalisation of the coal mines and the heavy industries of the Ruhr, and a long occupation of the Left bank of the Rhine by international forces, whilst opposing the political dismemberment of Germany. De Gaulle stood for the dismemberment of Germany both in the east and the west, and the M.R.P. as well as the communists defended this thesis in opposition to ours. It is more simple, and appeals to the slumbering nationalistic instincts; it seems to provide a direct answer to the problem of security, though, in fact, this is an illusion.

Blum believes that the socialist attitude to foreign policy, although sound, caused a loss of votes. If he had been in France during the elections, he might have held different views. For this issue played hardly any rôle at all in the elections, and differences between the parties seemed non-existent.

Prospects for the Future

What decisions did the National Council take? Are they an indication that the Socialist Party will take steps to overcome its weaknesses? The party conference seemed conscious of the need for an independent and bold socialist policy which must draw its inspiration from the best traditions of French Socialism. The socialist ideal of a just and free society could attract the young generation now wavering between a Catholicism modernised by a certain social taint, and a Communism dressed up in a nationalistic, republican or democratic attire as may fit the occasion.

Daniel Mayer stressed the need to show that our day-to-day activities serve a long-term higher aim. His appeal to start a "socialist crusade", to demonstrate

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Italy after the Polls

By a Correspondent

Of the sixteen Italian provinces eight had a republican and eight a monarchist majority in the recent elections. Worse still, the eight provinces which voted for the Monarchy are the two islands and the six contiguous provinces of the south. Thus, eighty-five years after the unification of Italy, the division between a "continental" Italy and a "peninsular and insular" Italy, so familiar to students of the economic and social structure of the country, has emerged as a sharp political division. The borderline between the "two Europes" - sometimes broadly distinguished as the capitalistic progressive west and the backward peasant east - happens to cut right across the Italian peninsula, dividing it into two cultural and social worlds.

No other European nation shows an equally deep division. One must look to the

relations between South and North America, or between England and Ireland at the time of their union, to find any analogy to this political linking together of two different economic systems and even civilisations. Therefore, even apart from any immediate trouble caused by Sicilian separatists or the Neapolitan populace, by conspiring generals or monarchist unions headed by landowners and provincial or Roman lawyers, the "questione meridionale", the problem of the "Mezzogiorno" and its links with the Italy of the Po valley, is bound to remain one of the most important problems of Italy's future.

But is there any danger, as the analogy of the American Southern States and of Ireland seems to suggest, that Italy might be split by a secessionist movement of the monarchist clerical south against the republican democratic north?

Familiar Pattern in Italian Politics

There is one first obvious remark to be made. The south has been shown to possess a very strong republican minority, and the north has also a very strong monarchist minority. For instance, Bergamo in the north - a stronghold of professed republicans - has voted for the monarchy, while in the south such a backward rural province as Lucania has given two-fifth of its votes to the republic. But we must not consider numbers only. The republicans in the south comprise the main part of the educated vanguard, leaving to the monarchists a very poor leadership, not at all comparable with the leaders of the southern "confederates" in America or the Irish independence movements. On the other hand, the reactionary trends in the north (which after the defeat of the monarchy may look for new entrenchments) are far more dynamic and actively dangerous than those of the south, where we have plenty of local troubles and sporadic acts of brigandry, but also a pronounced political indifference among the masses. The same mountainous territory which may favour guerrilla warfare and local disturbances is also an obstacle to any organised large-scale southern revolt, especially when it is combined with the provincial narrowness of outlook and the great variety of social conditions which exist within the southern provinces. Moreover, the monarchist landowners are far too afraid of any social agrarian movements to encourage local lawlessness. They know that their only protection against the small peasants and landworkers is the centralised Italian State with its police, its army and its prefects.

Therefore it is very likely that future developments will follow the trend of Italian evolution under Cavour, Giolitti and Mussolini. The north will create the political mould into which the whole of Italy has fit, and the conservative forces of the south will fight for a compromise through bribery, electoral manoeuvres, and many other forms of pressure. They will try to get the best political deal out of the existing régime. They will continue to use their traditional methods of "personalismo", which means stress on personal loyalty to "great old men" like Orlando^[16], Nitti^[17], De Nicola^[18] or Croce^[19] instead of programmes, and of "transformismo", which means selling parliamentary opposition groups to the government in exchange for certain material concessions, such as subsidies, public works or the nomination of "clients" to certain administrative positions.

It is not so much an open struggle between the conflicting forces as compromises, reached after hard bargaining, and the sharing of power between northern industrialists and southern landowners, which has characterised recent Italian history. Even fascism, which was an active and dynamic force in the north, had to be imported into the south. "Revolutionary" fascism and southern conservatism went along together in a series of compromises. The dual character of the Italian State with its monarchist and its fascist

head (about which Mussolini in his memoirs of 1943 complained so bitterly) was made possible because of this continual compromise between the dynamic anti-socialist forces of the north and the reactionary stagnant forces of the south.

If this is a permanent trend in the political development of Italy, it may be expected that the southern conservatives will press for greater autonomy in order to counteract any social reforms which the central government in Rome, under the influence of the Left,

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the "scientific, democratic, humane, national as well as international Socialism of Jean Jaurès, Jules Guesde and Edouard Vaillant [20]" is very timely indeed. It is, however, rather disquieting that the same conference which adopted this appeal did not dare to face up frankly to the new political situation. It is true, a motion to reject any participation in the government was defeated by a large majority (3,375 against 935). It is also true that on certain immediate issues, such as the wage question, an attitude to the new government itself, a clear decision was evaded.

As a new feature, besides the usual written resolutions a "verbal declaration" was adopted, which has been interpreted to mean that the socialists will not take over the leadership, or any key positions in the government, and that they will insist on an agreed concrete programme and a pact between the majority parties. This in itself is sound enough. But one cannot help detecting behind this unwritten declaration a readiness to agree to form a government should all other combinations fail, and the M.R.P. and communists get into an impasse.

Daniel Mayer wrote in the *Populaire* that this verbal declaration has only a negative character. Let us hope that this does not apply to the whole attitude of the Socialist Party! If to-morrow the socialists are again pushed into a position which they do not want to occupy; if to-morrow they support a policy with which to-day they are in disagreement - then they will sink even deeper into that unfortunate, uneasy and thankless position of a mere buffer party without a mission and a direction of its own. French Socialism faces the most serious crisis of its existence.

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might introduce. Since the call for autonomy comes also to some extent from the progressive quarters in the south, the issue may become rather confused. The latter, however, will at the same time strive to gain a hold themselves on the government and the administration. As for the administration and the police, they are in a large degree "southern" controlled, because for some considerable time jobs of this kind have been practically the only outlet for a numerous rising middle class without industry. This poor middle class of the south, including the small-holders, feel in relation to the landless millions of agricultural workers like the southern "poor whites" in the U.S.A. in relation to the negroes.

Thus the conservative south, dominated by social fears rather than by political ambitions, will not constitute a big opposition bloc against the government. It will act

through some of the governmental parties themselves which will do their utmost not to offend the prejudices and feelings of such a powerful electoral force. The case has been quoted of a family in the province of Naples which distributed its members in the five main parties in order to have access to some official positions, however the tide might turn. We know of other cases where people have joined two or even three parties at once, just as in a sweepstake they will put their money on two or three lists.

This southern pattern of politics has been attacked time and again, ever since the creation of modern Italy. Cavour himself was even reluctant to move the capital from Turin to Rome in view of Piedmontese austerity as compared with Roman corruption. Yet so far nothing has changed. A situation might, therefore, develop within the new Italian republic, which would be akin to, if not worse than, the twenty years of Giolitti rule with its combination of parliamentary democracy and secret deals between parties on the one hand, and on the other its utter indifference and inactivity with regard to the urgent reforms in the south which might shake the power of its ruling families and cliques.

Economic Backwardness

Of course, there is no purely political or moral cure for the evils we have described. Their roots lie in the economic backwardness of the south, its over-population, and the lack of productive outlets which prevails in the south except for some places of intense development in the vicinity of Naples, Messina and parts of Apulia. The soil is poor, the climate unfavourable and the extensive deforestation, which was imposed by the necessity to pay high taxes, leads to soil erosion. Widespread malaria accounts largely for the general apathy which is so characteristic of southern Italians. There are few cattle and there is hardly any variety of products. In the interest of an autarchic economy cereals were grown instead of the olive and almond trees for which the soil is suited. The standard of living of the peasants is very poor and their diet quite inadequate.

The south still is, as it was two thousand years ago, a country of very large, badly cultivated estates, the typical latifundia of absentee owners, and of large numbers of very small farms of less than one hectare [21] whose owners depend on seasonal work on the latifundia to make their living. In Sicily, less than 800 persons own one-third of the land. In Apulia - the stronghold of the monarchists within the Liberal Party - an investigation into fifteen parishes has shown that 36,600 proprietors possess 26,000 hectares while 543 landowners hold 770,000 hectares. Thus, 1.2 per cent. of the owners possess nearly two-thirds of the cultivated land.

The public works started under fascism achieved results not to be underrated in road building, irrigation and rehousing. But they have only widened the gulf between rich proprietors and landless people, because the great latifundia, without any expenses to their owners, rose in value, and the hopes of the small farmers to buy land were even more frustrated. In Apulia, for example, three quarters of the agricultural population consists still of landless rural workers, living on the fringe of starvation in over-crowded large villages or cities where there is an average of up to eight persons to one small room, in houses without running water or W.C's.

To get to the roots of the Italian problem one must study the reason why the northern industrialists have so completely failed to invest money in the modernisation of the south and have preferred instead to strive for foreign markets, or for State and army orders. Anyhow, it is a fact that the south lacks agricultural machinery to an unbelievable extent. If these factors of Italian economy cannot be altered by a policy

which combines more comprehensive planning on nation-wide scale with a greater freedom for importing industrial goods (which implies foreign loans), no way will be found to abolish the poverty of the south, and no changes can be expected in the conservative structure of southern Italy with its appalling features of parasitic exploitation.

In the past, emigration has been the sole outlet for the poor peasants. But neither emigration nor the flow homeward of savings from abroad have touched the real problems. Rather have they strengthened the feeling that only individuals or families can work out their salvation, whilst the circumstances themselves remain unchangeable and eternal. The exodus of the most enterprising elements - necessary as it has been and will continue to be - has even increased the stagnation of southern society.

Brake on Italian Democracy

Thus the south, torn between passive acceptance of suffering and sporadic revolts, between unconstructive opposition and boundless opportunism, between prostration and individual social advancement by way of parasitic professions, puts the new Italian democracy to a very hard test. The south will act as a brake and be a deadweight on any progress emanating from the Po valley, but it will join any dynamic anti-communist force emerging from the north. It will not be a menace to Italian unity, but to Italian democracy.

Still, this time Italy, which after the First World War was the weakest link of the democracies, has followed the evolution of France rather than the Greek pattern. It is not the strength of its reactionary or fascist forces which should astonish us, but rather the persistency and calm determination of the democratic forces, which are asserting themselves against very heavy odds in an atmosphere of defeat, poverty, black market and sharp social and geographical contrasts. But this democracy, if it is to survive on a sure foundation, requires help from other countries, on whose economic and immigration policy it may largely depend whether Italy will be able to recover economically, and thus to give stability to its newly won political freedom.

EUROPE SPEAKS aims, through the publication of reports, documents and articles, to help towards a better understanding of the Europe of to-day. It will be concerned to underline those developments which contribute to the achievement of social justice in the individual countries and the unification of Europe as a whole.

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Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - *Benôit Frachon (1893-1975), Mitglied der französischen kommunistischen Partei (ab 1920), Mitglied des allgemeinen Gewerkschaftsbundes „Confédération Générale du Travail“ (ab 1909), Mitglied und Generalsekretär der Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire (1933 und 1945).*
- 2 - *François Mauriac (1885-1970), französischer Schriftsteller, während des Zweiten Weltkriegs in der Résistance, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg großer publizistischer Einfluss durch Artikel in „L'Express“ und wöchentliche „Bloc-Notes“ in „Le Figaro“, zahlreiche Romane und Theaterstücke, Literaturnobelpreis (1952).*
- 3 - *„Epoque“, französische, radikal antikommunistische Zeitung. Weitere Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.*
- 4 - *Jacques Soustelle (1912-1990), französischer Politiker und Ethnologe, Mitglied der französischen Résistance, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg zunächst Informations- (1945) und Kolonialminister (1945-1946), dann Generalsekretär von de Gaulles Partei RPF (1947-1951), Beteiligung am Umsturz vom 13. Mai 1958 und am Aufbau der V. französischen Republik (1958), Informationsminister (1958-1959) und Minister für Saharafragen, Überseegebiete und Atomenergie (1959-1960) unter de Gaulle, Bruch mit de Gaulle wegen dessen Algerienpolitik und Exil (1961-1968).*
- 5 - *Réne Capitant (1901-1970), Mitbegründer der französischen Widerstandsbewegung „Combat“ und Zusammenarbeit mit de Gaulle im Comité français de la Libération, Minister für Bildung in der provisorischen Regierung (1944-1945), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Abgeordneter und weitere politische Ämter bis zu seinem Tod (1970).*
- 6 - *Antoine Avinin (1902-1962), linker Katholik, Mitbegründer und Leiter der französischen Widerstandsgruppe „Franc Liberté“ (später umbenannt in „Franc-Tireur“).*
- 7 - *Lucien Rose (1916-2004), französischer Gewerkschaftsfunktionär und Journalist, Mitglied des S.N.C.F. und der Widerstandsgruppen „Libération“, „Franc Tireur“ und „Résistance démocratique et socialiste“, lebte im Untergrund, von der Gestapo gesucht, regionaler Chef des „Mouvement Unis de Résistance“ (M.U.R.), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Mitglied der verfassungsgebenden Versammlung (1945-1946), Journalist und politische Posten bis in die 1980er Jahre, u.a. stellv. Bürgermeister von Rennes (1977-1995).*
- 8 - *Pierre Bloch (1905-1999), französischer sozialistischer Politiker, jüngstens Mitglied der Volksfront Regierung Leon Blums (1936), Mitglied der französischen Widerstandsbewegung, Gefangennahme und Flucht aus deutscher Gefangenschaft (1940), mit seiner Frau Organisation von Widerstandsaktionen, Inhaftierung (1941), erneute Flucht (1942), Mitglied des französischen nationalen Befreiungskomitees, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg u.a. Präsident des internationalen Bundes gegen Rassismus und Antisemitismus (1968-1992).*
- 9 - *Paul Bastide (1892-1974), französischer Jurist und Politiker (Radikalsozialist), Handelsminister in der Regierung Blums (1936-1938), Gegner von Marschall Pétain und Mitbegründer der Résistance („Consail National de la résistance“), nach der Befreiung Frankreichs Mitbegründer der Zeitung l'Aurore (1944), Mitglied der*

- 10 - Louis Rollin (1879-1952), französischer Politiker, Abgeordneter des Departements Seine (1919-1940, 1946-1952), verschiedene Ministerposten in mehreren Regierungen (1929-1940), zuletzt Kolonialminister in der Regierung Paul Reynaud (1940).
- 11 - Maurice Petche = Maurice Petsche (1895-1951), französischer Politiker, Abgeordneter des Departements Hautes-Alpes (ab 1925), Staatssekretär in verschiedenen Regierungen (1930-1932, 1948-1949), Finanzminister (1949-1951), Initiator der Europäischen Investitionsbank (1950).
- 12 - Jules Julien = Alfred Jules-Julien (1882-1977), französischer Politiker, Abgeordneter des Départements Rhône (1931-1942, 1946-1955), Staatssekretär in verschiedenen Regierungen (1936-1938), Minister für Post und Telekommunikation (1938-1940), Staatssekretär im Handelsministerium (1948-1949).
- 13 - Arès Lapoque = Jacques Arrès Lapoque (1917-1982), französischer Sozialist, Sekretär der sozialistischen Studenten in Bordeaux, während der deutschen Besatzung Frankreichs in der Untergrundorganisation der Sozialistischen Partei aktiv, nach „Europe speaks“ trat er für eine Zusammenarbeit mit der französischen KP ein, in Abwesenheit zum Tode verurteilt, nach der Befreiung Sekretär der SFIO (1945) und Mitglied der verfassunggebenden Versammlung (1945-1946).
- 14 - Christian Pineau (1904-1995), vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg militanter Syndikalist, Mitglied der Résistance, Mitbegründer der Bewegung „Libération-Nord“, Verhaftung und Deportation nach Buchenwald, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg Abgeordneter der Sozialisten, mehrere Ministerposten (1947-1958).
- 15 - Prigent = François Tanguy-Prigent (1909-1970), französischer Politiker, im Zweiten Weltkrieg Anschluss an die Résistance, während der deutschen Okkupation Mitglied in der Bewegung Libération-Nord, nach der Befreiung Minister für Landwirtschaft (1944-1947), für die PSU in der Nationalversammlung (1962-1967).
- 16 - Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952), italienischer Politiker (Liberaler), Minister für Bildung unter Victor Emanuel III. (1903), Justizminister (1907-1909; 1914), Innenminister (1916), als Ministerpräsident (1917-1919) Führer der italienischen Delegation in Versailles, anfängliche Unterstützung Mussolinis (bis zur Ermordung Matteottis), nach Mussolinis Fall Führer der Konservativen Demokratischen Union.
- 17 - Francesco Saverio Nitti (1868-1953), italienischer Politiker, Minister für Wirtschaft, Industrie und Kommerz (1911-1914), Nachfolger Orlandos als Ministerpräsident (1919-1920).
- 18 - Enrico de Nicola (1877-1959), italienischer Jurist, Journalist und Politiker, Abgeordneter (1909), mit dem Beginn des Faschismus Rückzug aus dem politischen Leben, provisorisches Staatsoberhaupt (1946-1948), Senator auf Lebenszeit, Präsident des Senats.
- 19 - Benedetto Croce (-), italienischer Philosoph, Humanist, Historiker und Politiker, Autor eines viel beachteten Manifests gegen den (1925), Unterrichtsminister (1920-1921, 1944), Führer der Liberalen Partei (1943-1947).
- 20 - Edouard Vaillant (1840-1915), französischer Politiker, Teilnehmer der Pariser Kommune, Mitbegründer der SFIO (1905), Abgeordneter (1893-1915).
- 21 - Fußnote im Original: 1hectare = 1,42 acres.