

# THE PLACE OF WESTERN GERMANY IN WORLD AFFAIRS IN 1949

*A Dalhousian Abroad*

AT various times during the late war it was fashionable to publish outline maps showing, in various degrees of shading, the extent of Allied or Axis domination over particular parts of the earth's surface. If such a map were prepared to-day, showing the extent of Soviet domination in Europe and Asia, the importance of Western Germany in the present struggle would be very obvious. A map showing the distribution of European coal supplies and of steel producing capacity would be even more instructive.

Whether Communist penetration into Italy, France, the Low Countries and Scandinavia can be made effective without a war of guns and bombs, whether the democracies can launch a successful counter-attack against the present Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and whether, in the last resort, we have to go to war again, will be largely determined by events that will take place in Western Germany during the next twelve months. Washington, New York, London, Moscow, Paris and Berlin all have their part to play in this ghastly and unnecessary melodrama; but the most important moves will be made in Frankfurt-am-Main—ancient crowning place of the Holy Roman Emperors and seat of the Western German Parliament of 1848—soon to be the seat of the new government of Western Germany. This is indeed a serious responsibility to fall upon a new government, working under a new constitution, in a country as poverty-stricken and as barren of ideas and ideals as is Western Germany to-day. If world peace depends on such a foundation, can it indeed even be regarded as within the realms of possibility?

For three and a half years, the British and United States Governments and their representatives in Germany have struggled, with varying degrees of support from the French, to establish a reasonable basis of economic life and a stable government in the whole of Germany. In this they have clearly failed, nor does it seem profitable to continue the struggle. They have been forced, therefore, to attempt to make an economic and political entity of Western Germany and to try to inject into that entity enough vital protoplasm to give it

life, and enough food and materials to enable it to grow strong.

The facts are sufficiently interesting to warrant a short statistical digression. The population of Western Germany was, according to the census of 29 October, 1946, 45.4 million. Since that date there will have been some increase due partly to the surplus of births over deaths and partly to the influx of immigrants from Eastern Germany. A comparison of the figures with those of the 1939 census and by sex is interesting:

*Population of Zones of Occupation in Western Germany*

	1946	1939
	(millions)	
Males.....	20.6	19.6
Females.....	24.8	20.4
Total.....	45.4	40.0

Since 1939, the total population of the area has increased by more than five million; moreover, it now contains a surplus of over four million females (compared with less than a million before the war), most of whom are now aged between 20 and 45. They correspond to the men of those ages who were killed during the war; but there are now no husbands available for them. This is, and will continue to be, a very serious social problem.

Western Germany has, in short, a population approximately equal to that of the United Kingdom with an approximately similar distribution between urban and rural residents and between industrial and agricultural employment.

Western Germany, however, can as yet support little more than a bare minimum standard of living for its inhabitants, even though it will receive in the year ending 30 June, 1949, approximately \$1,300 million worth of goods free of charge in the form of aid supplied by the United States and United Kingdom Governments.

There have been great improvements since 1945. Hard coal production in the Ruhr area has risen from an average of 127,000 tons per working day in the last half of 1945 to just over 300,000 tons a day in November, 1948. (The average in 1936 was 384,000 tons).

The general index of industrial production has now reached nearly 70% of the 1936 rate—compared with 36% in 1946. Steel production, which reached over 14 million ingot tons in

1936 (and higher figures during the war) had risen by the end of 1948 to a rate equivalent to over 7 million ingot tons a year. (The 1946 production was less than two million ingot tons.)

The currency reform of June, 1948, has almost accomplished miracles. The transition from a cigarette economy to a money economy, in the space of one weekend, produced unbelievable results. Goods appeared in the shops, and Germans said to one another, wonderingly, "Money will buy things again."

But much remains to be done. The rate of increase in coal production—which had previously been stimulated by special rations of foods and consumer goods for miners and their families—has not been nearly as great as the rate of increase in other industries. The average age of coal miners is much too high. Housing conditions in the Ruhr are unbelievably bad—so bad that married men can, in practice, hardly ever be attracted into the area. Much of the machinery of the mines is in urgent need of repair or replacement.

The production of ingot steel is increasing; but the rolling mills cannot keep pace with it—owing mainly to the shortage of electric power, which, even in October, 1948, necessitated complete stoppages in many Ruhr plants between seven o'clock in the morning and eight o'clock at night.

The transport system has recovered miraculously from the dark days of 1945 and 1946. But the railways are barely able to handle the traffic offered to them in good weather. If the weather is bad, and more traffic has to be carried by rail because canals and rivers are frozen, there is still danger of a serious breakdown. The standard of maintenance of the rolling stock and permanent way would throw a Canadian railway engineer into hysterics.

In the financial field, banks are only just beginning to operate again on a normal basis. Practically all the state budgets are in a precarious position. Taxation is almost unbearable in some income groups. All forms of investment are inhibited by the high cost of bank loans and the risks and uncertainties in the political field. Internal prices and wages are in a chaotic state. The exports of Western Germany suffice to pay for little more than a third of her imports, which are chosen on the basis of a standard of austerity that North America has not known for a hundred years.

Two years ago, the average standard of living in Western Germany compared unfavourably with that in Canada before

Confederation. To raise it to Canadian pre-war standards cannot take less than a full generation of peace. The reconstruction of the Ruhr towns and the other badly bombed cities of Western Germany alone will take nearly thirty years. To-day, three and a half years after the last Allied bomb was dropped on Germany, there are thousands of streets which have not been sufficiently cleared of rubble to permit of two-way traffic, and the bodies of many of those who died are still buried under the ruins of their homes.

Twelve years of Nazi rule—with its negation of all Christian moral standards—followed by three and a half years of military occupation, during the first three of which there was wild inflation, seem almost completely to have sapped the moral fibre of those Germans who remain. Thieves, whether they steal from the occupying forces or from fellow Germans, appear to incur no moral or social obloquy. Prostitution is almost a respectable occupation in some areas. Truthfulness is practically an unknown attribute.

More important, perhaps, is the almost universal lack of any evidence that there is an appreciable number of Germans who are troubled by a social conscience. Generations of rigidly controlled and centralized bureaucracies seem to have inhibited the birth and development of men and women who are prepared to devote their lives to making the world a better place in which to live. There are a few such—including some noteworthy cases of Germans who have returned from positions of relative security in the United States and Great Britain in order to help in the task of reconstruction. There are some, too, among the trade union leaders. But they are all too few.

Yet it is to this country and to these people that we appear to be looking to provide the only real bulwark of the Continent of Europe against the westward progress of Communism! Certainly the few thousands of British, French and American troops—mostly boys in their teens who were too young for the war (one can see whole battalions in which only some NCO's and the senior officers wear any service ribbons)—and the handful of Allied officials in Germany, can do little on their own. Nor can American money, in any quantity, provide more than the minimum basic requirements of a decent existence. Whether that demoralising, police-ridden, poverty-stricken state of servitude, which it is the clear and outspoken intention of the leaders of the Communist Party to introduce into the western world,

is ever extended beyond the limits of the present Iron Curtain across Europe, depends upon whether the people of Western Germany can, in this year, 1949, establish within the area that has been left to them, a state that can live and endure, without civil war, and at peace with its neighbours.

We have witnessed, even in recent months, the subjugation of proud, liberal, free peoples all over the world. The present government of Czechoslovakia boasts openly of its concentration camps. In Warsaw and in Budapest no decision can be taken without reference to the masters. Communist-supported civil war has been raging in China for years. Korea provides an example of the trust that can be placed on Communist assurances. The strikes in France in the autumn of 1948 failed by only a small margin to provoke something closely akin to a civil war. Greece continues to struggle.

Can anyone be deceived for a moment into thinking that the desirability of extending communist influence over the whole of Germany, the possible risks of overt acts, and the probable successes of hidden intrigues, have not been under active consideration in the Kremlin for many months? Is it possible that the rulers of Eastern Germany can afford to allow the standard of life in the Western Zones to rise, while that in the Soviet Zone continues to fall? Is Eastern Europe to be deprived indefinitely of the steel and machinery and chemicals of the Ruhr, on which its existence has depended for sixty years?

No. Clearly we must expect that a brutal, relentless, purposeful attack will be launched in 1949 to extend Communist influence westwards—if indeed it does not begin before this article appears in print—and that its first objective will be Western Germany. The new government and the people behind it will have to be steadfast indeed to withstand this onslaught. If they have to stand alone, they will certainly fail. It is up to the people and governments of the western democracies to assist them by all the means in our power.

In saying this, by no means do we imply that the German people should be forgiven for all the suffering and misery that they have imposed upon the world in two major and three minor wars over the past century. The Germans have richly deserved all the suffering that has been their lot. But it is no part of Christian charity to ask an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Nor is it in our interests to do so. If we allow the

Western German state to succumb to the evils of Communism we merely allow those evils to approach more closely in space and in time to our own borders.

Let it not be imagined, if it is anywhere still imagined that this pestilence will find great difficulty in crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Canada is as deeply concerned in the future prospects of Western Germany as are Holland and Belgium.

What action can we take? How can the government and people of Western Germany be supported in their struggle against this menace?

The United States Congress has voted and will probably continue to vote large sums of money, which can be of great assistance. The British are prepared also to make a financial contribution. Both Governments are seeking ways and means of reducing the burden of occupation costs on the German economy. There is probably little more that can usefully be done in the field of government finance.

Private investors should, however, look again towards Germany. In particular, those who are interested in developing industrial production in Germany that will be of value to the latter may well find useful opportunities for further investment. At present there are restrictions on new investments of this kind, but these cannot continue much longer. Users of goods that Western Germany can produce for export—and there is a wide range of these—can assist by instructing their buyers to look into the German market. Governments can help, in some cases, through their trade representatives in Germany. Any penal tariffs on imports of German goods should be reviewed and, where possible, lowered. Quotas and exchange restrictions should be re-examined in the same way.

Universities, churches and all organizations interested in cultural development can help by fostering schemes for the exchange of students and teachers, journalists and other writers and thinkers. Travel in Western Germany cannot be luxurious, but it is certainly quite comfortable, and hotels are now open again to receive visitors. A great deal of good can come from exchanges of ideas.

German schools, universities and public libraries are lamentably short of books and periodicals of all kinds, particularly those published in Britain or North America since 1936. Any contributions of these that could be made would more than repay their cost in developing in the German people those ideas

and ideals that they must have and hold before they can successfully resist either Communism or those destructive forces that appear to be inherent in the German character and that have caused so much suffering in our time.

In these ways, the democracies can help Western Germany. They do not involve the condonation of anything that the Germans may have done in the past, or even that we should forget. It is, indeed, most important that we should not forget and that children who are too young themselves to remember should be told of the infamy of the German people. But we cannot stand aloof. To pass by on the other side is unthinkable. Our interests to-day and theirs are too close for that.

But this is not enough. Help for Germany will stiffen resistance to Communist pressure but will do nothing to reduce it. The time has come for a vigorous counter-attack by the democracies. We must study the ways of those who resisted German occupation and domination between 1940 and 1945. We must infiltrate behind the Iron Curtain and, with money, words, deeds and even, if necessary, tommy-guns, demonstrate to those people who are still free and those who have not yet ceased to struggle that democracy is a cause for which we are prepared to fight. The democracies have in the past been passive. They have waited until they were attacked. To-day, 1949, we need militant democracies, States and communities that are prepared to do active battle with this enemy. In no other way can we hope to defeat it. In no other way can we hope to preserve our civilization from complete destruction.

From Berchtesgaden in the south to Lubeck in the north, the eastern frontier of Western Germany is the Iron Curtain dividing the democracies from Communism. It is the boundary between light and darkness. But a man can cross it if he be determined. If he is very daring, he can even drive a truck across it. It does not interfere in any way with the passage of radio waves. On the western side of the Iron Curtain, therefore, we can organize our counter-attack. News, views, material help of all kinds and, above all, brave men and women can be prepared in Western Germany for a counter-attack on Communism and launched across the frontier to carry it into effect.

If we can demonstrate our ability to launch and to sustain such an attack, we shall soon find that the non-Communist majorities in all eastern countries—not even excluding Soviet

Russia itself—will come again, gradually, into the open. But we must strike now. We cannot afford to delay. Every month that passes worsens our relative position in any trial of strength. And, we must keep it up once we have begun. The Russian capacity for waiting for a favourable opportunity is infinite.

Western Germany, weak and struggling in every respect, is therefore, the potential battleground. It is, however, for the moment, also a barrier. We must make it a strong barrier and a base from which we can launch our own forward movement. This the major task of the democracies in this year of grace.

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