

CHANGES IN FARM OCCUPANCY

IX—WILL GERMANY BLOW UP?

The losses and disbursements of Germany on account of the war amount to fifty-six and one half billion gold marks, her national wealth has shrunk fifty per cent, and her fluid capital ninety-nine percent, said the German Chancellor to the Reichstag the other day. The figures may be a bit of special pleading by a retained attorney, but true or not true it is some such state of affairs that provokes the question I hear discussed daily—Will Germany blow up and when will it happen? I have heard this question so often that I have had to pull down on my safety valve and blow off steam.

An Attempt to Answer

So here is an attempt to interpret the mind of the home-owning farmers and factory workers in the little country towns of Germany. They and their families are around four-fifths of all the German people and how they feel about things is a fact and a factor of importance. I say feel, because what the back-sweaters of every land do for the most part is to feel in dumb, dull ways, and to think, if they think at all, in inarticulate fashion. Here is a fact that makes interpretation difficult. But also it makes the effort of the social incendiary still more difficult.

Is the soul of the forty-six million home-owning farmers and factory workers of Germany seething with revolt? My answer is No, or not that I can discover after two months in the country regions of Germany. My conclusion is that there will be no revolution in Germany, and there will be short shrift for the fomenters of revolution if they start anything that even looks like a revolution. The home-owning common people are in the saddle at last in central Europe. To be sure, they are but dimly aware of themselves as yet, but they must be reckoned with today and in all future years in this new republic. They have known exactly what to do with the falling mark, and they are well ahead of the game. The peasant farmers are rich and getting richer every day—not in marks but in substantial properties. No matter who may be poor in Germany the home-owning farmers and factory operatives are rolling in wealth, such wealth as they never before enjoyed in all their lives. They know it, and they do not want to be disturbed. The landless wage and salary earners in the cities, and the owners of secondary wealth—stocks, bonds, mortgages and the like—are in sad case, but they are relatively a very small element of population. Besides, they lack leaders strong enough to organize revolt. Germany has no Lenin or Trotsky. And clearly she has no Bismarck. It is a day of small men, and her greatest peril lies in this one fact.

I am moved to write by the anxious inquiries of a Californian with whom I traveled from Constance to Karlsruhe last Sunday. "Will this state of things end in revolution? Will Germany go the way of Russia?" he asked. "I have been living ten months," he said, "on the quivering crust of a volcano crater, expecting the blooming thing to blow up every minute. Isn't that the way you feel in Germany? Aren't you afraid to stay on any longer?"

No, I responded, decidedly not. Whereupon I proceeded to ease my mind somewhat.

Where Agitators Fail

You have been spending your time and money, I said, in Berlin and the Ruhr towns, or so I judge. You have been living in an atmosphere superheated by the phrenzy of labor leaders, the fierce debates of party chiefs, and the wild cries of security-owners beggared by a debased currency, while I have been living out among the home-owning farmers and factory workers in the country towns of Germany. These people are toiling on and plodding along almost as placidly as their oxen in the fields. They are not excited about anything. Indeed I have seen but two excited men, so far, in all South Germany. One was a walking delegate on the tram from Hohenheim to Deger-

loch at the noon hour. Factory workers crowded the cars, going to dinner in their country village homes along the line. The workman beside him was a wit, and every once in a while he would interject a remark that set the car in a roar of laughter. The radical labor leader with his heated talk of revolution retreated to Stuttgart on the next car, cheered on his way by the good-natured raillery of his fellow workmen. So far and no farther does Bolshevism get in the country regions among home-owning farmers and wage-earners.

Fundamental Cravings

Berlin and the Ruhr may be subject to brain storms, but not the country regions of Germany. Berlin in 1923 is not Germany any more than Paris was France in 1789. The revolution that Paris started in that year was fought out and at last settled by the masses of France, that is to say, by the home-owning peasant farmers and the little people possessed of small shops and businesses in the towns and cities of the provinces. They were a majority of the French people then as they are now. What they really wanted was not liberty, equality, and fraternity, but property, peace, and security. Not Paris but the home-owning peopls are France. And not Berlin but the home-owning peasants are Germany today. They own the land and who owns the land rules the realm. No lesson of history is plainer. What they crave is peace and security in the new social order. It is a fundamental human nature craving in every land and Democracy means little more anywhere than an attempt to satisfy this craving.

Reckoning with the Masses

The people I have been closest to in Germany—the country dwellers in the farm villages—are the people John Bright had in mind when he said, "The nation in every country dwells in the cottage. Crowns and mitres, palaces and stately mansions, great armies, wide colonies, and a huge empire do not make a nation. A nation is built on the security, comfort, and contentment of the masses of plain people."

And these people as I see them day by day are planning no war, they have had enough of war, they are fleeing their homeland in millions to escape war. They want no radical socialism of any type and Bolshevism least of all. They will listen to nothing that threatens their newly acquired wealth, and I miss my guess if they do not reckon savagely with any man that confuses the peace and quiet of their daily lives.

Democracy a Fact

There will doubtless be repeated party upheavals in Berlin during the next fifty years, but there will be no social revolution in Germany, in my opinion. Democracy is a fact in Germany and it has come to stay, as I see it. There will be no slump into Communism and no return to Monarchism. So, because the home-owning masses of Germany are opposed to both. Most of the talk about these things is talk by the impoverished upper and middle classes on the one hand and by radical socialists on the other. And nearly all of it is in the large cities and the Occupied Area. But the infected section of population is a very small minority of all the German people. The owners of the substantial, producing properties of this land are a vast majority and instinctively they are thinking in self-defensive terms.

But They Need a Bismarck

First, about stabilizing the mark on some level, any level of assured value. They talk about almost nothing else, and they see that it cannot be done until the question of Reparations is definitely and finally settled. And second, they are agreed upon the critical necessity for a strong man at the head of things—a man big enough and brave enough to solve the Reparations puzzle—a man like Bismarck, for instance, whose name I hear many times a day. If a man of his sort and size cannot be produced by the party in power, a new

IT PAYS TO BOOST

There are a few people in the State who claim we are doing too much boasting in North Carolina. We have been likened unto a man with new plumbing installed in his house who is anxious to show it off to the neighbors. If there is a new bath tub in the house we see no reason for not telling the family about it.

Happily there is nothing of that feeling in Buncombe County. If there is a county in the State that advertises its wares it is Buncombe. If there is a city in the South that tells the world of its fine points it is Asheville. Neither hides her light under a bushel. And it is not bad business. The total valuation of real and personal property in Buncombe in 1920 was \$88,010,204. This year it is reported to be \$110,301,836, a gain of \$22,291,632 in three years! There are a good many counties in the State that would be proud to have as much on the tax books as Buncombe has gained in taxables since 1920. Many counties have less taxable wealth today than in 1920. Not so with Buncombe. She shows a large increase each year; perhaps larger gains than any other county in the State.

Buncombe and Asheville are organized to tell the world what awaits it in the Land of the Sky. Western North Carolina, Inc., is a child of Buncombe and Asheville and is being brought up by the capable Dr. Pratt. The tax books of Buncombe present a mighty strong argument in favor of boosting your community and your State.—S. H. H., Jr., in the Asheville Citizen.

government seems imminent in Berlin—not a revolution but a party reversal. "If only we had a man like Bismarck in office," my chance acquaintances say, "he'd settle things and settle them promptly; and whether we understood his decisions or not we'd follow him implicitly, no matter what it cost." I hear this said or something like it almost everywhere I turn. And, by the way, I never hear Bismarck's name without recalling the ideal and the warning he gave to Germany fifty years ago—"The unity, the development, and the security of the Empire, but no game-cock business," with emphasis on the last phrase.

Devil's Dance of the Mark

But going back to the mark. When I was in Germany fifteen years ago my dollar bought four marks. It bought sixteen thousand marks when I sailed from New York ten weeks ago. Last Friday it bought sixty-six thousand marks. The day before it was worth fifteen thousand marks less; the day following it was fifteen thousand marks more. Today it buys eighty-seven thousand marks. Such is the dance of the mark from day to day and even from hour to hour. Like Pecksniff's pony its motion is mostly up and down. If Germany were deliberately bent upon destroying her upper and middle classes, there could be no surer way than the way of the falling mark. It is just as effective as the more savage way of the Bolsheviks in Russia. It is the gentle art of murder, in De Quincey's phrase.

Its Tragic Results

For instance, I stood beside a frail little woman in black at the coupon window of the Rheinland Credit Bank in Freiburg the other day. She was drawing out the semi-annual interest on her bonds. What she received was thirty-eight thousand marks, which meant in the old days some ten thousand dollars in our money. It was worth just sixty-one cents the day she cashed her coupons. On this pittance she must manage to live during the next six months—that is to say on six pounds of meal or even less. The tears streamed down her cheeks as she counted her money and silently turned away. The eyes of the cashier had a hint of mist in them. "No use," he said, "I see this sort of thing every day and all day long. I've no feeling left. She'll soon stop coming like the rest. She'll die of this thing before her next interest day." It is in this fashion that the falling

mark slays its thousands day by day. They are holders of the fluid capital accumulated in Germany in the long centuries since the Hanse towns began to create such wealth in Central Europe. They are the owners of bank account savings, stocks, bonds, notes, mortgages and other forms of bankable paper. What we call solvent credits in North Carolina are not worth the paper they are written on in Germany.

The effect upon the moral standards and sensibilities of city wage and salary earners is deadly—these classes in particular because they have no chance like the farmers and the factory owners to turn their marks into productive properties. Why save a mark when it will buy less tomorrow than today? The only way to save it is to spend it, they say. Seize upon the day, eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die, becomes a settled philosophy of life. It is the pagan philosophy of Omar and Horace. The sense of thrift is being slowly but certainly destroyed, and thrift is a foundational virtue, because it means prudential foresight and hardy self-denial. And more, it is thrift that accumulates in one generation the social surpluses that become the capital wealth of succeeding generations. Capital wealth is the material body of a civilization, related to it very much as a man's body and blood are related to his life. The destruction of the capital wealth of a people is very like the death of a man's body. When the capital wealth of Russia was destroyed, the result was chaos, and Russian civilization will have to be built anew as our mountaineers used to build their houses—from the stump up, as they say.

Spotlight on Stark Facts

The physical properties of a people are one thing, their fluid capital wealth is another. I trust my readers have this distinction clearly in mind. An inflated currency stimulates a stricken people as oxygen stimulates a pneumonia patient and it is the feverish semblance of life that I am looking on in Germany these days. Destroy the physical properties of a locality by earthquake, fire or flood, and they can be rebuilt almost over night with a sound currency and an unimpaired credit. San Francisco is a perfect illustration of this fact. But destroy the capital wealth of a country, and the untouched physical properties of it fall into decay. Petrograd is a perfect illustration of this contrasting fact.

So much by way of throwing into the spotlight Cuno's statement that the fluid capital wealth of Germany has shrunk ninety-nine percent. If it be so, and from what I see I can well believe it, Germany is mortally stricken for all the charming outward look of things. With half of her national wealth lost

and wasted in war, with her fluid capital reduced to one-percent, with a debased currency steadily destroying both her capital and the owners of it and at the same time destroying the very instincts that create such wealth, Germany's look ahead is desperate—so desperate that the Reparations question is now a question of life or death for German civilization. The mere delay, whatever the cause, has already destroyed more of her fluid capital than all the gold marks she has ever offered to France, more indeed than France has ever demanded. Delay—delay alone—is deadlier to Germany than all the armies of France are. Only a little more of it and the German mark must go the way of the Austrian Krone and the Russian rouble. In which event the day of Germany's recovery is moved forward many years or even many centuries. And the pity of it is that this fundamental fact is lost in the wrath of resentment and resistance—a wrath perfectly natural but utterly fatal.

Germany's Safeguard

When delay has wrought its deadliest damage, then it will be the owners of farm lands, water powers, mines, quarries and industrial plants—the owners of the producing properties of Germany—who must rebuild German civilization. And they must do it in the inescapable ways of toil and self-denial that made Germany great in the days that followed Waterloo. These are the people who today stand opposed to revolutions and revolutionaries. So because they menace the only form of wealth that is left in Germany today. And the opposition lies in deep-seated self-protective instinct. There will be no general social upheaval in Germany as in Russia, or not if I have read these people aright.

The German masses are inured to painful toil and pinching self-denial—to what they call Genugsamkeit. It is an outstanding national characteristic. They are good-humored, even-tempered, and patient almost beyond belief. The peasant farmers like all untutored people in every land are opposed to taxes of any sort for any purpose whatsoever, but they will pay taxes to the last mark if only they can see a settled, certain way ahead. But no matter what taxes they pay into a Reparations fund they will pay them with no thought of revolution, or so in my opinion. And so for Bolshevism or anything like it, their pitchforks are a ready argument which they have the art and the will to use.

So on, and much more to the same effect.

I conclude by saying that I earnestly hope the unwary reader of these notes may not be as limp as my California friend was when I finished with him.—E. C. Branson, Munich, June 13, 1923.

CHANGES IN FARM OCCUPANCY

In the U. S. in 1922

Based on the Report of the U. S. Department of Agriculture showing the percent of all farms in each state which changed owners in 1922, and the percent of all tenants who changed farms.

For the United States 6 percent of all farms had a change of owners, and 27 percent of all farm tenants moved to new farms. In North Carolina 7 percent of all farms changed owners and 28 percent of all tenants moved into different homes. A total of around 270,000 farm people, mainly tenants, in North Carolina each year play fruit basket. Farm tenancy is a constant menace to the safe, sane, and stable agriculture found where farmers own their lands and homes.

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Rank	States	Farms with new owners	Farms with new tenants	Rank	States	Farms with new owners	Farms with new tenants
		percent	percent			percent	percent
1	Maine	4	3	21	Washington	5	18
2	Massachusetts	4	4	21	West Virginia	6	18
3	Connecticut	7	6	27	Utah	9	19
4	Rhode Island	4	7	28	Idaho	8	20
5	New Hampshire	4	11	28	Minnesota	6	20
5	New Jersey	7	11	28	South Dakota	6	20
7	California	6	12	28	Vermont	8	20
8	Pennsylvania	6	13	32	Indiana	5	21
9	Illinois	4	15	32	Iowa	5	21
9	Maryland	5	15	32	Virginia	7	21
9	Nebraska	4	15	35	Missouri	5	22
9	New Mexico	5	15	36	Florida	5	25
9	Wisconsin	6	15	37	Colorado	7	26
14	Arizona	5	16	38	Louisiana	6	27
14	Kansas	5	16	39	North Carolina	7	28
14	New York	6	16	40	Kentucky	7	31
14	Oregon	6	16	40	South Carolina	7	31
14	Wyoming	6	16	40	Texas	4	31
19	Montana	9	17	43	Alabama	6	33
19	North Dakota	6	17	44	Arkansas	7	34
21	Delaware	6	18	44	Tennessee	8	34
21	Michigan	6	18	46	Mississippi	7	35
21	Nevada	2	18	47	Georgia	7	36
21	Ohio	6	18	48	Oklahoma	5	38