

# Fate Of Europe Turns On German Elections Sunday

## Repudiation of Stressemann Government and Triumph of Nationalists Would Plunge Germany Again Into Financial Chaos and Might Provoke Actual Hostilities

By FRANK H. SIMONDS  
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Washington, May 3.—It would be difficult in the extreme to exaggerate the importance and the contribution of the latest speech of the British Prime Minister.

It meets and should finally demolish all lingering suspicion in France that Ramsay MacDonald has any thought of seeking the isolation of the French or anything but the restoration of the Anglo-French friendship and co-operation which perished as a consequence of the joint efforts of Lloyd George and Viscount Curzon.

On the other hand it very neatly avoids supplying ammunition to the German Nationalists in the forthcoming election.

Taken in connection with the assurances sent to Paris in recent days indicating the British Prime Minister's readiness to join with France in energetic action if Germany again defaulted willfully, after the Dawes plan had been adopted, this speech of MacDonald to his Welsh constituents constitutes a very material contribution toward the accommodation of British and French policies. Despite the superficial and even the fundamental differences in British and French outlooks, it is fair to conclude that European events are still moving toward solution, or at least toward adjustment.

The real black spot on the horizon remains the German election, which will take place on Sunday. This election has now resolved itself into a "solemn referendum" upon the Dawes Plan. The German Government has accepted the plan as a basis of negotiation and Stressemann has quite frankly accepted battle on that issue. If he is beaten the defeat will be a clear and final evidence to the world that Germany is in the hands of those who oppose all fair settlement and seek to restore the old order in Germany.

The victory for the Nationalist group, the Pan-German party, whose flaming manifestoes are now a matter of world comment, would end all hope of immediate adjustment. Whether we should then have to face the possibility of new hostilities or not might be a matter of opinion, although belief in such consequences is not lacking in Europe, but it is morally certain that a new economic smash in Germany would follow quickly, that the rentermark would collapse like the old mark and financial and currency chaos would ensue.

Of course it must be obvious why the Nationalists are making this final stand. They perceive quite clearly that if Germany does accept the Dawes plan and it is actually tried out, the restoration of order, industrial prosperity and international cooperation will steadily diminish their chances of triumph. They care little or nothing about their country's real interests, like all the other factions in Germany since the War, they are concerned mainly and even exclusively with their own fortunes.

There is, patently, very grave danger that the Pan-German movement will be successful. When I was in Europe a month ago that success was expected in many quarters. If it does succeed unmistakably, there will almost certainly be a similar triumph of the extremists in France, which votes one week after Germany. Then two new governments freshly come from the people and led by men recently committed to extreme courses will confront each other. That is the danger Ramsay MacDonald has always foreseen and that is the explanation of his very cautious line.

If Germany, by reason of the triumph of the Nationalists, now rejects the Dawes report, then the alternative for the British will be either to support France against Germany or else to leave France with free hands to act as she may deem necessary, supported, as she would be by Belgium, and in event of hostilities by Poland and perhaps by Czechoslovakia. If MacDonald

should choose the latter course, then a conflict would seem almost inevitable; if he choose the former there might still be a chance of German yielding, although it would be confessedly slight.

MacDonald's declaration that isolation is the last thing he seeks for France is evidently a warning to those German Nationalists who have been preaching that the break between France and Britain is absolute and that the hour has come when Germany can resist France not only deprived of British aid but suffering from the moral handicap of British disapproval. Although he balanced this assertion with a plea for a fair chance for Germany, the fair chance was comprehended in the acceptance of the Dawes report upon which the Pan-Germans have declared war.

At the moment, it is plain that the European situation is more favorable, so far as Allied co-operation and Allied moderation are concerned, than at any moment since the close of the war. The Dawes report gives to the Allied claim against Germany an economic foundation, where moral and legal warrant have always been present. German rejection now will not be based upon any claim that the sums demanded are unreasonable and beyond German capacity. The issue is between payment and not payment of what is now universally regarded as possible.

Rejection of the Dawes plan by Germany, in its Sunday election, should quite obviously restore the Allied front, because it will be the rejection of terms accepted by all the Allies. It will be a quick demonstration of the justice of the French argument that Germany has never meant to pay and that all her course has been directed by those who seek escape from all reparations. In all human probability, too, that rejection will mean the ruin of Germany as a modern state for it will insure immediate economic collapse and probably invasion and consequent devastation, if war follows.

That the whole fabric of European civilization may be endangered is also quite patent. Therefore it is not too much to say that the fate of Europe in a real sense turns upon the Sunday election in Germany.

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