



In the horse-meat restaurant "Zum Ollen Fritz" in Berlin.

# THE GERMAN CRISIS

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ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES ABBÉ



FARRAR & RINEHART

INCORPORATED

*On Murray Hill, NEW YORK*

## THE GERMAN CRISIS

### CHAPTER I

#### *Hitlerites and Reds Imperil the German Republic*

**F**IFTY thousand Bolsheviks made the Russian revolution. Germany has an estimated six million voters for its Communist Party. Five hundred thousand Fascists put Mussolini in power in Italy. Adolf Hitler has a possible twelve million voters behind the National Socialist Party in Germany.

In the answer to this question and to all its correlates, every American citizen—man, woman and child—has an immediate, monetary interest to the extent of about \$33 apiece. From a broader point of view we, as well as the rest of the world, may have in Germany an interest much greater than can be measured in dollars. For events here cannot fail to have political and social as well as economic consequences for Germany's neighbors. But it so happens that it is possible to measure with fair exactness just what we stand to lose in cold cash if Germany "goes under" and this sum, by odd coincidence, almost precisely equals the total expenditures for a year by our Federal Government.

About four billion dollars is the total American stake in Germany, and this is equal to more than one per cent of our national wealth, is equal to five per cent of our national income, and is a far larger stake than we have in any other foreign country save Canada. Divided among our 122,000,000 population, it means that each American family of three has a stake

of \$100 in Germany. America alone has thirty-eight per cent of the total direct foreign investments in Germany and thus has a larger interest in the preservation of private capitalism in this country than any other country in the world except Germany itself.

Four billion dollars is a considerably larger sum than most current estimates of America's interest in Germany. How this huge amount is calculated deserves exposition in another chapter. Here it is sufficient to say that it is an amount rather under a possible maximum, is vastly under the sum of indirect losses that would result from a German "collapse," and that obviously no American can be indifferent to the fate of a country in which the United States, for better or for worse, has become so deeply engaged. Its loss would fall heavily on the balance sheet of even the wealthiest country.

Conceivably this and other foreign sums directly and indirectly bound up with Germany's stability could only be lost entirely if Germany falls into prolonged civil war or abandons the system of private capitalism and repudiates its private as well as its public debts. This would certainly happen under Communism, might happen under other forms of government, could not happen under the German Republic.

Today, at the beginning of the fourteenth year of the German Republic, its stability appears more seriously threatened than ever before. From election statistics one may gather that considerably more than a majority of the German people are against the Republic. The strength of Hitler's forces, the forces of German Fascism, is approaching the democratically decisive fifty-one per cent. Against him, but against the Republic as well, are the forces of German Communism, also steadily rising, though not so fast. The two resolutely anti-Republic

parties number far more than one-half of the population, if the tale of local voting holds true for the Reich.

In this critical period in the history of the Republic the critical dates crowd one another. Without counting on any violent attempt by one or another group to take power, the operation of the democratic system sets forth three immediately decisive moments in the nearest future. On any one of three dates within the next four months the German Republic may be jeopardized. On February 23 the Reichstag is due to meet. If Chancellor Heinrich Brüning fails this time to carry his minority Government through, Hitler may come in. In May, by the fifth at the latest, a successor to the eighty-five-year-old Hindenburg must be chosen. It is no longer absurd to conceive that Hitler himself might become President of Germany, and it seems improbable that any one except Hindenburg could be elected President without Hitler's support.

A Hitler man in the Presidency would mean Hitler eventually master of the Reich. In May, the twentieth at the latest, Prussia, two-thirds of the Reich, must elect a new Diet. Hitler's following has increased so enormously since the Reichstag election of September, 1930, that he has today at least an even chance to win more than 50 per cent of the seats in the Prussian Legislature, control of the Prussian Government and therewith control of nearly half the armed forces of Germany—the Prussian police.

By the statistics and by the rules of democracy, Hitler should win. But the rules of democracy presuppose that all the voters, or at least a majority of them, are democratic and will abide by the rule of the majority. Hitler has promised to take power only by legal means. He has made no promise that he will resign if his majority becomes a minority. He has in fact

promised to abolish democracy and parliamentary government the moment a democratic vote puts the instruments of power in his hands. Faced with this prospect, the present masters of the Reich and of Prussia may be forced to decide whether for the sake of the democracy it is better for democrats to establish a dictatorship or turn over power to a Fascist dictator who openly announces he will never give it back. Civil war is a conceivable outcome in any case.

But is civil war really probable? Will Hitler come to power after all? What will Hitlerism mean to world economics and politics? Will Communism be the probable successor to Fascism?

These are questions that must concern the outside world, for upon their answer depend the answers to the more specific questions: Can Germany pay reparations? Will she? Can Germany pay her private obligations? Will she? And for Americans the other question peculiarly pertinent for Germany's greatest creditor: What has Germany done with our money?

Not to presume to answer these questions categorically, but to provide as nearly as possible the necessary background for framing an intelligent judgment toward their answer, the *New York Evening Post* has undertaken an eyewitness survey of Germany. Statistics never tell the whole story of a nation's disposition, and the disposition of the German people is a large factor in the problem. In Berlin and outside of Berlin, on the farms, in the factories, the mines and the villages, from the North Sea to the Rhine, through Central, Southern, Western Germany the answers will be sought.

Without prejudice, the opinion may now be risked that Germany is industrially the strongest power in Europe, is financially the least secure, is politically the most divided, and

harbors socially the most explosive possibilities. How poor is Germany? That is perhaps the most fundamental question. How much of her poverty, made the excuse, or formed the reason, for non-payment of reparations, is genuine, and how much is window dressing?

No better start could be made for this investigation into Germany's position than a visit to the poorest of the poor, to the Red heart of the reddest city in Germany, to the street of the barricades, to the German Faubourg Saint Antoine. Out of the famous Paris Faubourg came the French revolution. Pouring from its cellars came the mob that stormed the Bastille, slew the royal family and set Europe aflame. Out of Wedding, thickest populated workers' district in Berlin came the shots that made May Day, 1929, another and a bloody item on the Communists' account for their day of reckoning, and out of Wedding in September, 1930, came the ballots that helped make Berlin, next to Moscow, the strongest Communist city in the world.

How many Americans visiting this city of broad streets, brilliantly lit, of theaters and amusement palaces more elaborate than those of Paris, realize that this Berlin of solid bourgeois appearance is the reddest city outside of Russia? And not merely Socialist red, but revolutionary Communist red, with the Communist Party the largest party in the city.

When the Bolsheviks took Russia they had about one-fourteenth as many partisans in the whole vast Empire as the Communists have today in Berlin alone. In the Reichstag elections of September, 1930, the Communist Party polled 739,235 votes in Berlin out of a total of 2,709,257 votes cast. They nosed out for the first time the Social Democrats, with 738,094. In an election today impartial observers reckon the

Berlin Communists should poll around a million votes, but in any case the two "Marxist" parties control more than half the votes in the capital of Germany.

Of these votes the district of Wedding alone gave nearly 100,000 to the Communists. And if Wedding is the reddest district in Berlin, the Koesliner Strasse is the reddest street in Wedding. It was on the Koesliner Strasse that the barricades went up on the night of May 1, 1929. And it was to the Koesliner Strasse that I went, in the rags of a homeless tramp, to explore the question "How great is Germany's poverty?"

## CHAPTER II

### *Germany's Moscow*

**A**N iron screen guarded the buffet and behind the bars lay a fly-specked platter of fried horsemeat and a pair of horsemeat sausages. The guests were hungry. They sat at their tables and gazed through the bars at the horsemeat. It was dinner time, but they ordered nothing. Their hunger had nothing to do with dinner time.

Of forty guests in the restaurant, only two had anything on their tables. Between one old man and a frowzy woman stood a beaker of malt beer. First he took a sip, put the beaker down and stared at the horsemeat. They were the liveliest guests in the room until we came in.

It was not Russia. "Zum Ollen Fritz" ("At the Sign of Old Fritz") had the seal of Frederick the Great on its door, and a restaurant named after the greatest Hohenzollern must be German even in red Wedding. Here in the dense north of Berlin was a chance to determine if not the extent of German poverty, certainly its most acute form, and here in Zum Ollen Fritz were plentiful witnesses to answer the question why the German capital has more Communists than any city outside Russia.

In the present German crisis Hitler and his Fascists have overrun the stage, but in the wings stand the Communists. German Fascism might have appeared without German Communism. Neither could have appeared without German poverty. Poverty in various degrees is present in every country.

Unemployment is widespread all over the world. Discontent is no monopoly of Germany and many outside this country must ask themselves why Germany is in any more danger of radical alteration of its Government or of its economic system than any other country with an equal percentage of jobless. There are good reasons why.

The first is that here the discontent that proceeds from poverty is politically organized. The second is that the poverty of certain classes of the population is unusually acute. The third is that the political and economic discontent is of long standing. We in America are comparative newcomers to economic depression and it is difficult for us to realize that the nations of Central Europe have never regained a pre-war standard of business stability and of living.

The political organization of discontent in Germany makes it impossible to measure the consequences that may result from various degrees of unemployment in the terms of the same degrees of unemployment in other countries. We may have in America more or fewer jobless in proportion to our population than has Germany but the consequences of a growing number of jobless in Germany may be far more serious than the consequences from an equal growth of unemployment in the United States or England.

It may be taken for granted that every jobless man is a discontented man, in any country. But the degrees of their discontent vary with the extent of their poverty and with the character of the political organization of the country. In a land such as the United States where even the jobless, by drawing on their savings or on the resources of their employed friends and relatives or on the assistance of public organizations, may continue to live on a comparatively tolerable stand-

ard, the degree of discontent remains within the bounds of the system.

A jobless man in America expresses his discontent usually by voting in opposition to the men or the party in power. He may change his vote from Republican to Democratic or vice versa. The inconsequential size of the American Communist Party is sufficient index that not many even of the American jobless are inclined to go farther. But if he were so inclined, and wished to express his opposition not merely to the party in power, but to the Government itself and to the capitalist system, he would find no adequate political vehicle to satisfy his inclination. This is as much as to say that the American Communist Party is small because nobody votes for it, and that nobody votes for it because it is small.

This true political paradox is directly reversed in Germany. Here the discontent is greater because most of Germany's jobless, though helped by the dole, live today on a level that would be quite intolerable for most Americans and a level that in varying degrees has become intolerable also for the German. Every day that the crisis continues there increase not only the whole number of unemployed and the number of those receiving a dole averaging less than \$4 a week, but also the number of those who have exhausted their right to the dole and are relegated to the so-called communal charity, averaging \$1.75 a week. There were 700,000 on this minimum dole at the end of 1930; there were 1,500,000 attempting to live on it at the end of 1931. Before regaining the right to the \$4 dole the unemployed man must find work and continue at his job twenty-six weeks.

Granted that the discontent is more acute, the next question in attempting to define the chief difference between this country

and other countries in the world crisis is that of the political outlets. Here Germany is unique. It has two chief outlets for revolutionary feeling, each providing a vehicle for the most diverse discontents, each promising a radical change in the government and in the system. On the one hand is the Communist Party, promising everything to the worker; on the other hand is the National Socialist Party of Adolf Hitler, promising everything to everybody. And aside from these reasons, both parties are large because many people vote for them and many people vote for them because they are large.

That is to say, the two extreme parties followed the course of development of most political movements. They first reached a certain size through the votes of persons who were willing to throw away their votes for their principles. But the larger they grew the more attractive they became. In politics more than in any other realm the rule holds true that nothing succeeds like success. Today nobody feels he is throwing away his vote by casting it for a party that gave Hitler 6,406,000 votes at the Reichstag election of 1930 or for a party that gave "Moscow" 4,590,000.

Today the political movement has become a landslide toward the two most radical groups, and the National Socialists and the Communists appear to have attained the position of first and second strongest parties in the country, with a probable absolute majority of all the voters in Germany.

Not all German discontent proceeds from material impoverishment, but one definition of the two radical parties in Germany is that the Communists are people who never had anything, and the National Socialists are people who had something and lost it. This could cover a good majority of the population, although it provides no accurate clue to the amount

of wealth and the productive capacity, nor to the solvency of the country as a whole.

How far the trend toward radicalization of the population has been influenced by the economic depression is expressed in a striking way by comparing the growth of unemployment with the growth of the vote for the Nazis and for the Communists. The comparison may also give some clue to the future political consequences of a continued growth in unemployment.

Taking the various Reichstag elections since 1920 as indexes, Germany had in the 1920 election year 464,000 unemployed and gave the Communist Party 589,000 votes, or 120 per cent of the jobless. The National Socialists did not then exist.

Skipping the 1924 elections as unrepresentative, inasmuch as they were strongly influenced by the backwash of the inflation, Germany had in the 1928 election year, 2,500,000 unemployed and gave the Communists 3,263,000, or 124 per cent of the unemployed, and the National Socialists 809,000, or 30 per cent of the unemployed. Both radical parties together polled 4,072,000, about 160 per cent of the unemployed.

In election year 1930, Germany had 4,438,000 unemployed, and gave the Communists 4,590,000, slightly more than 100 per cent of the unemployed, and the National Socialists 6,406,000, or 140 per cent of the unemployed. Both radical parties together got 10,996,000, or about 240 per cent of the unemployed.

It will be seen that the radical vote was always larger than the number of unemployed, and that it not only increased as the number of unemployed increased, but increased at a faster rate.

The acceleration of the increase of the radical vote was



from 120 per cent of the unemployed in 1920 to 160 per cent in 1928 and 240 per cent in 1930. From 120 per cent to 160 per cent was an increase of 40 per cent. From 160 per cent to 240 per cent was an increase of 80 per cent. If it is assumed that this rate of acceleration will continue to hold true, then at the next election the radical parties should poll 240 per cent plus 160 per cent, or 400 per cent of the total number of unemployed. If the unemployed number 5,000,000 at the next election the radical parties, according to this calculation, should poll at least 20,000,000 votes out of the total 35,000,000.

This would correspond approximately to the forecasts of the National Socialists, who have asserted they could poll 15,000,000 votes in 1932, and of the Communists, who anticipate around 6,000,000. The calculation, however, is not offered as a prophecy of the outcome of such an election; its statistical basis is too short and there are too many other elements entering into the problem. Certain other limits make it appear probable that the National Socialist vote would be below 15,000,000. But the value of the calculation as an illustration of the relation between unemployment and radicalism is clear.

Throughout Germany the radical vote goes hand in hand with the misery of unemployment. Two-thirds of the Communist vote and one-half of the National Socialist vote at the 1930 elections came from regions containing much less than one-half the population of Germany, but regions where the percentage of unemployment was considerably above that of the whole country.

Jobless centers and Communist centers are Berlin and its industrial environs, the giant chemical works of Merseburg, the mill towns of Thuringia and Saxony, the steel and coal regions of the Ruhr and Westphalia, the mines of Silesia. Few

of these places are on the itinerary of tourists to Germany, but all deserve visiting in the attempt to render a whole picture of what is today transpiring in this country and an idea of what the future may hold in store.

Of the great cities in Germany, Berlin, with its 500,000 jobless and its 1930 Communist vote of 739,235 and its National Socialist vote of 395,988, stands near the top of the list for unemployment and radicalism. And in Berlin the homeless customers of Zum Ollen Fritz were capable teachers to supplement the lessons of statistics. In their rags and their bitterness they represented essential cause and effect in the round of events that has made this nation focal object of the fears of Europe.

They accepted me. My uniform matched theirs—the uniform of the homeless—rags. My companions, experts in the field to be explored, were better dressed. Max, leader of the barricade fighting on the Koesliner Strasse in 1929, was a blacksmith by trade, but he wore a stiff collar. With the exception of four years in the penitentiary for inciting to Communist uprising he had been looking for work since 1923. He was now under sentence again for a seditious speech and would begin to serve his time in a few days. Hans, chief of the Wedding section of the forbidden “Red Front Bund,” had been sought by the police for the last three months. Otto was a journalist.

All three were long-time members of the Communist Party. In Wedding that meant welcome everywhere behind the scenes.

“Comrade,” called Max. “Four small beers.” The waiter brightened at the largest order of the evening. At the surrounding tables heads turned to view with apathetic envy the affluent comrades who could afford four four-cent beers.



## CHAPTER V

### *The Great Nazi-Communist Clashes of 1931*

A MAN stood up in the gallery, wrenched his chair from its fastenings and flung it with all his force on a struggling mass beneath him in the auditorium. "Kill him!" came muffled from the snarl of fighters. A rush of reinforcements from the platform swept us aside. Fists impacted on flesh. The police broke through the door and the "evening of discussion" between National Socialists and the Communists came to an end.

The night before, an American banker had called up to ask if he should send his family out of Germany; what would happen when Hitler came to power? I recommended that he visit a Nazi-Communist "discussion" and form there his opinion.

Instructive also is the list of dead and wounded in political conflict in Germany. Forty wounded every day in the year and one dead every other day of the year is the average to date, according to figures furnished by the respective belligerents.

"Are we going to have civil war?" inquired one German.

"We already have civil war," was the answer.

Between the National Socialists and Communists are a good many common characteristics, but the strongest mutual attribute is hatred. For both parties hatred is the fundamental motive force.

The Nazis hate in about the following order:

1. Communists.
2. Jews.
3. Socialists.
4. France and her allies.
5. The Treaty of Versailles.

The Communists hate in about the following order:

1. National Socialists.
2. Police.
3. Socialists.
4. Capitalists and their allies.
5. The Treaty of Versailles.

Each of the two parties would sing of the other as Lissauer did of England in his famous "Hymn of Hate," that it might have many minor hatreds, but its one true, never-dying, flawless and eternal hatred was for the other. It is even possible to measure their mutual hatred statistically. National Socialist headquarters in Berlin report that from December 1, 1930, to December 1, 1931, seventy-nine National Socialists were shot, stabbed, clubbed or kicked to death by Reds. The Red Bureau for Judicial Assistance reports that in the same period 103 workers were shot, stabbed, clubbed or kicked to death by National Socialists and by the police, fifty-two by the police, and fifty-one by the Nazis.

This makes a total of 182 killed in action for the Swastika Banner and the Red Flag during twelve months. But it is only a fraction of the total casualties. According to National Socialist headquarters there have been wounded in political affrays during the last twelve months about 5,500 Nazis. The Reds report wounded during that period 9,500. The wounds

range all the way from broken noses to broken backs, from flesh wounds to permanent crippling.

If all these casualties fell on one day, with a headline reading "Nazis, Communists battle; 182 dead, 15,000 wounded," there would be no hesitation in denominating the action as civil war. Considering that probably not 10 per cent of the combatants ever saw each other before the battle, and that nothing personal was intended, the warlike character of the conflict is plainly established.

The Nazis have put the matter on a business basis and established accident insurance, called "Help for the Wounded." Every member of the party is obligated to pay 90 cents a year premium. If properly paid up when caught in an affray he may then count upon \$500 being paid to his survivors if he is killed, or \$1,250 to himself if he is completely and permanently incapacitated. A commercial insurance company formerly undertook this business but speedily abandoned it when the number of injured swallowed up the premiums and left a deficit.

If it were possible with absolute accuracy to weigh each of the ten chief hatreds of the National Socialists and of the Communists it might be possible therefrom to deduce the future of Germany. For the outside world it is important to note, however, that the 12,000,000 National Socialists and the 6,000,000 Communists unite in two hatreds: of the Socialists and of the Treaty of Versailles. The National Socialists hate the Socialists because the Socialists do not hate the Treaty of Versailles sufficiently to satisfy the National Socialists. The Communists hate the Socialists because the Socialists do not hate the National Socialists sufficiently for the Communists. But both National Socialists and Communists hate the Treaty of Versailles and the whole population of Germany hates the



Hans Sander, captain of the Falkenstein football team, has no rival in "Saxon Siberia," although jobless for two years, during which time he has eaten only bread and potatoes.

Treaty of Versailles. The only difference in opinion among all Germans about the Treaty of Versailles is in the method to be employed to get rid of it, and the significant characteristic of the Nazi and Communist methods is that both propose to get rid of it by force.

"With Scheringer against the Versailles Treaty" was a huge red banner stretched across the side of the hall for the Nazi-Communist "evening of discussion." The banner plainly told the evening was under the auspices of the Communists. Scheringer, young lieutenant of the Reichswehr, was, until a few months ago, a National Socialist hero. He is today a Communist hero.

As an active officer in the Reichswehr Lieutenant Scheringer had violated discipline by propagating National Socialism among his brother officers. He was arrested last year and after a sensational trial sentenced to a term of fortress confinement. Suddenly, from his cell, he issued a statement that he had turned Communist, that he was convinced that only a Red Germany could regain its freedom. Fifteen brother officers and ex-officers joined him. Conveniently for the authorities he made an attempt to escape. Immediately he was transferred from the comparative liberty of fortress confinement to jail. His conversion to Communism had fired the imagination of young Germany, lured very little by the promises of a Communist economic system, but longing for national freedom. In his cell the authorities announced they had found preparations for another jail break. He was put in solitary. But his name is a Red slogan.

Underneath the banner that bore it sat 500 Communists and perhaps 200 National Socialists. Around the periphery of the hall, down the aisles and in front of the platform stood

another 100 Communist youths, one-time members of the forbidden "Red Front Bund," now reorganized as "The Fighting Bund Against Fascism."

On the lapel of the leader of the Red Guard was a silver fist. The young centurion gave a sharp command. One hundred fists doubled tightly and "Heil Moscow! Heil Moscow! Heil Moscow!" opened the meeting.

The 200 National Socialists squirmed, but did nothing. They were outnumbered two to one. For two hours they sat and listened to a Communist speaker debate the question "Are the National Socialists national; are they Socialist?"

The Red Guards stood and glowered at the Nazis. "Stalin lives in the palace of the Czar," shouted one Nazi, unable to control himself. Fifty Red Guards leaped to their feet and a sound like the growling of savage animals came from their throats. "Yes," shouted the Communist speaker ironically, "and Stalin is learning the Rumba."

"Hitler," yelled a Red Guard, "is living in the Brown House, calls his party a Labor Party." The hundred Red Guards leaned threateningly forward and dared the Nazis to deny it.

Above this level of debate came the concluding sentence of the Communist speaker, hurled with malice aforethought at his National Socialist listeners: "Do you want to know when the Treaty of Versailles will be destroyed? When the Red flag waves from Vladivostock to the Rhine, and a Red Army stands at the French frontier."

The words had a familiar ring. I had heard them last from the intellectual leader of a group that stands very near, not to the Communists, but to the National Socialists. I had heard them from a German Nationalist leader. I had heard them from an ex-officer representative of many of his caste. "The

Red Army on the Rhine." It had a swing to it and a menace for France. But how about the menace for Germany?

Granted an hour to reply, a National Socialist speaker rejected the "Red Army on the Rhine," denied that Hitler had any intention of making friends with France, asserted that "We shall only treat with France when Germany under National Socialism has become strong enough to win back all that has been taken from us, to win back our national self-respect, our national rights. We shall tear up the Versailles Treaty without any Red Army."

"Heil," he shouted, "Heil Hitler!"

Up went 200 hands, palms out, in the Fascist salute, and thrice "Heil Hitler" rang defiantly in the ears of the outraged Communists. The Red Guards charged up and down the aisles.

Clanging his bell and shouting for order, the chairman achieved quiet, and the Communist speaker took the floor for another hour. Four solid hours the debate had lasted, and the thousand listeners were as attentive at the end as at the beginning. Politics for the German today is no abstract matter, but one of life and death. When people are bored by politics, it is a time of stability. When people sit from eight until midnight, devoting their closest attention and expending their emotions on a political discussion, it is a time ripe for trouble.

For the last hour the talk was all of Russia. "Soviet Germany!" cried the Communist speaker. "Soviet Europe!" From all except the National Socialists came again the triple cheer "Heil Moscow!" and the congregation, standing, struck up the Internationale. All the Communists bared their heads. The Nazis kept their hats on. The Communists knocked them off. With swinging rubber billies the riot squad charged the hall. Outside the siren of police trucks bringing the reserves pierced

high above the curses of the combatants. The police were on time. They knew the moment to take a hand in a National Socialist-Communist "discussion" was when the Internationale, Moscow's hymn, the "Battle Song of the Proletariat," began.

For it is the Internationale, not the song, but the institution, the point of view, that separates the Nazis and the Communists most widely. From extreme left to extreme right in Germany the political graph is not a straight line. It is a nearly complete circle.

Picture a circle with a narrow gap at its top. To the left of the gap stand the Communists. To the right of the gap stand the National Socialists. In the gap stands Moscow.

Around the circle, from the Social Democrats just below the Communists, through the Center Party (Catholic), at the bottom of the circle, to the Nationalists just below the National Socialists, range the other parties in Germany. At the left the Communists with an estimated 6,000,000 votes in an election today, and the Social Democrats with another 6,000,000; at the right the National Socialists with their 12,000,000.

Twelve million divided "Marxists" against 12,000,000 united National Socialists make it understandable why the other ten or twelve million of the "bourgeois" parties, still ruling the Republic, are uneasy over an election that would transform these paper votes into mandates.

For the outside world one of the most important things to realize about the present situation in Germany is that out of 36,000,000 voters, about 24,000,000 National Socialists, Communists and Social Democrats, or two-thirds of the whole, are definitely hostile to the present form of economic state. And out of the 36,000,000 voters, about 18,000,000 National So-

cialists and Communists are definitely hostile to the present form of political state.

The gap in the circle between the National Socialists and the Communists represents Russian control of Communism. With a few common ideas, but with many common feelings, the masses of the Nazis and the Communists, not their leaders but the masses, are separated today chiefly by that gap. And the truest paradox of German politics is that it is the similarity in the feelings of the Nazi and the Communist masses, and not their hatred of one another, that makes them most significant for the outside world as well as for their own country.

With their customary logic, the National Socialists declare: "There is no internationalism among plants nor among animals. Why should there be internationalism among men?"

But what if Hitler fails to appease the hunger of the 15,000,000 Germans who, if not starving, would, nevertheless, at any hour of the day be all too willing to sit down and devour a square meal—the 15,000,000 who, to put it most conservatively, never have enough of the right kind of food? How long, then, will the hatred of the two revolutionary parties for one another persist? More specifically, how long will the Nazi masses stick to Hitler?

What the Communists hope, what the "bourgeois" parties fear and what the National Socialists deny will happen is that after Hitler takes power, fails to alleviate the economic woes of Germany, is forced to capitulate to France, cannot fulfill most of his promises, the masses of the National Socialists will desert to the Communists. United, the masses of the Nazis and the Communists would make a force irresistible. Even if the Communists gained only part of the Nazis plus a further part of the Social Democrats, their strength would be calcu-

lably near the revolution point. With this hope and at this stage of the game the Communist Party of Germany has determined upon a waiting policy, to let Hitler make the first move. Much contact with Communists, with National Socialists and with Social Democrats has convinced me that the Communists will not attempt armed resistance to Hitler's taking power. Much less will they attempt a revolution before he takes power.

I asked a German Communist: "What will you do when Hitler comes in?"

"We will try," he answered, "to get the Social Democrats to declare with us a general strike and run Hitler out the way the general strike ran out Kapp in 1919."

"But," I objected, "Kapp took the government by force and the Social Democrats were clear in their minds that as democrats they had to defend the democracy. The Social Democratic Government in 1919 itself declared the general strike. Will the Social Democratic leaders go with the Communists now to declare a general strike if Hitler comes to power legally?"

"Not much hope," he admitted.

"You have 6,000,000 Communist voters. It only took 50,000 Bolsheviks to make the Russian revolution. I know the conditions were entirely different. But why can't your 6,000,000 oppose Hitler by force?"

"We haven't got the guns," was the sententious reply. "The Soviet Union is not ready for a German revolution. We think if Hitler comes in he will run the country down so fast that by next autumn we can take power."

"But Hitler will then have all the guns."

"Yes, Hitler will have the guns."

I asked a Social Democrat: "What will you do to keep Hitler from taking power?"

"What can we do," he answered, "if Hitler has the votes?"

I asked a National Socialist: "What will you do when you get power?"

He might have launched a long discussion of the party program, but his only reply was: "Keep it."