

THE SHADOWS LENGTHEN

A contribution to the discussion of "Political Union"

by Alfred Mozer

A year and a half ago I attempted to analyze European integration in the "Neue Rundschau." Under the title, "The Shadow of the General," I examined the situation after de Gaulle's veto on Great Britain's entry into EEC and before ratification by the Bundestag of the Franco-German Treaty. The decisive point for the future seemed to me to be how France's EEC partners would react to her change of course from integration to coalition, from the worth while concept of a greater Europe to the little-European concept which, through the medium of that very same Franco-German Treaty, must inevitably ensure the political hegemony of France in the Community of the Six.

"Coalitions and not integration are on the horizon. Nationalism dreams of a new renaissance. However, the various nationalisms do not add up to Europe. Here is the point on which resistance can be organized. It is only if we are willing to see this danger that we will be able to overcome it."

That was my concluding remark. Now, a year and a half later, it is worth while to ask how things have been shaping.

The shock of the French veto has not been overcome. This is evident from happenings in EEC since that fatal January of 1963. The decisive point in appraising the situation is not the determination of the Commission in Brussels to move forward. Nor the ad hoc optimism of its annual report and the interpretations thereof. It is the attitude of the Council of Ministers as the organ of decision. It was the German Foreign Minister, Dr. Gerhard Schroder, who a few weeks after de Gaulle's veto saved the face of the Council of Ministers by clothing a nasty business in friendly form: the decisions of the Council of Ministers, he said, were in future to be "synchronized." But what else did this mean but giving legal form to the mistrust which had been aroused? Up to that time there had been the degree of confidence which enabled the partners to make decisions when the proposals submitted were ripe. Everyone was convinced that the will to implement the Treaty was present on all sides, and that in this way a decision made today, even if it entailed great sacrifices for one partner, would be followed tomorrow by the next decision laying obligations on another partner. Now, however, everyone was "on his guard." Schroder's synchronization meant that in future decisions -- if there should be any -- had to be balanced out because confidence in fair dealing was shaken. In this way, Schroder helped to get the Council out of the impasse. Since then -- to the horror of the author of "Parlez-vous Frananglais?" -- the watchword in the Council of Ministers has been package deal. This linguistic concession is the only one which the father of the anti-English veto was not able to prevent. And economists and jurists in Cambridge have since been making witty remarks about the fact that the pragmatic continental legal positivists in the Community are now for the first time practising the British approach.

If France's partners were conscious of the French change of course in its full significance, and -- above all -- if they themselves held fast to the old principles of European integration, the common conception of the Five of which we have heard so much must perforce become a reality after a certain time and set a limit to the ukases of the head of the French State. But this conception has not so far been translated into action -- a fact which is important enough for its causes to be worth exploring. In the final analysis, it is not only interesting to know why de Gaulle has been gaining ground, but at least equally useful to ask why his opponents are in danger of losing it.

In approaching this question, the first thing we notice is that it is all too convenient to blame the French for the laborious progress of EEC, the flagging élan, the endless Council of Minister sessions which produce no decisions or only half-decisions. De Gaulle took a political decision on the geographical frontiers of the Community. In doing so, he simultaneously manifested the primacy of politics over economics. This principle can and must be accepted, even if one in no way agrees with the political content which he gives to it in practice. But within the political limits drawn by de Gaulle there is no question of any refusal or even slackening of French cooperation in the Community. On the contrary, we are often enough astounded at the assurance and rapidity with which French representatives assess and accept a package deal. The EEC Commission is, therefore, often reproached, quite unjustly, with preferring to work in close collaboration with the French delegation. In reality, the superiority of the French negotiators stems from the earnest and successful exertion to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of a proposal for each of the member countries and to conclude from this what acceptable total result is possible, whereas other delegations are incapable of looking beyond their parish pump -- or maybe windmill.

Of course, one may ask how such a French attitude in EEC can be reconciled with the refusal of integration by the official leadership of the State. Only one explanation for this seems acceptable to me. The head of the French State has postulated the primacy of the political. In this field -- i.e. foreign policy and defense -- he holds adamantly to the principle of exclusive and absolute national sovereignty. Within the field which seems to him susceptible of political domination, there is no reluctance to allow the economies to become interwoven. First, because according to his concept, this is a secondary field and, secondly, because such economic interlocking can be made to serve his political concept. Precisely this, it seems to me, is the Achilles heel of de Gaulle and his concept. Of course, economic integration does not automatically produce political integration. But as the interlocking of the economies advances, there will be an increasing urge to accept a common political concept for a territory which, economically, is bound together for better, for worse. This interlocking of the economies remains effective even if de Gaulle's partners do not swallow his political concept. What political concept will be served by this economic area

depends on whether France's partners leave the initiative to M. de Gaulle or have the will and the ability to set against his objective a concept of their own. And it is anything but a foregone conclusion that the democratic Europeans would be the losers in this controversy. But they cannot win unless they get to grips with the key problem, i.e. the political concept.

Of this there is no sign anywhere. What can be seen in the Community's sphere of work forces us, as we assess the behavior of France's five partners, to two conclusions. Speaking very generally, the implementation of economic integration has entered a phase of increasing difficulties inherent in the matter itself. Even without the de Gaulle intermezzo, we would not have escaped this phase. We are dealing here with serious problems which have to be taken seriously. In the tasks to be mastered, a chain reaction is developing which results from the inner logic of economic activity and refuses to be controlled by the legal niceties of international treaties. Often, too, one gets the impression that the governments are only now beginning to discover what they decided by Treaty seven years ago. The understandable urge of national administrations to justify their existence often increases the complications and stratagems and obliges the Commission -- unless it is prepared to capitulate -- to accept compromise solutions. The journalistic world of the country concerned embroiders on these more or less wittily -- usually less -- and rubs them into the Commission. It's all the fault of those Eurocrats!

The second point which must be noted is, however, much more serious because it is unexpected, incalculable and mortally dangerous for the further progress of integration. Instead of the desirable democratic European concept of the Five as a counter to proclamations at French press conferences, we see, in the train of the Gaullist veto, a throwback to individual nationalisms. When one of the Six breaks with the Community way of thinking, we find that his partners do not come out even more strongly in support of the Community purpose, but that neo-nationalism is stimulated in the others, providing "proof" that nationalism is triumphant. The fact that those concerned are not even conscious of this neo-nationalism does not improve matters. Moreover, this neo-nationalism is not more attractive when it is camouflaged as anti-Gaullism. Spaak once said that the Europeans should set up a monument to Stalin because they had his aggressiveness to thank for the first steps towards the unification of Europe. Today we could vary this phrase. Anti-Gaullists of this sort must thank the General for enabling them to deck out their neo-nationalism with theatrical expressions of anti-Gaullism. Unfortunately, they are hardly conscious of the fact that they are de Gaulle's fifth column in implementing his concept. In the last analysis, it is not Dutch, German or Italian neo-nationalism which offers escape from the present French course, but only a European concept.

Where are the causes of the absence of a common concept among the Five to be sought for? If we put this question, we see very clearly that for Europe the German position is much more important and in the long run more decisive than M. de Gaulle. On this point, there should even be agreement between our concept and that of the French Head of State. It was not by chance that the proclamation of his concept of Europe, in the form of the veto against Great Britain, corresponded in time with the Franco-German Treaty. He knew that he could only permit himself this step without fear of a counter-concept from the other Five if he succeeded in dislodging the Federal Republic from the possible front of the Five and winning its support for his own edifice. The whole operation was presented as the expression of friendship between these two neighboring peoples. In my opinion no man in Western Europe who can be taken seriously does not regard the overcoming of a pathological hereditary enmity between these two peoples as an exceptional gain which must in all circumstances be preserved. But this friendship is no invention of M. de Gaulle. Exactly like other peoples, this France presents different faces to the world. One of these is the face of M. de Gaulle. Another is the France of Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, who established a German-French friendship which others exploit to further their own concepts. Does it damage friendship with France and does it make anybody an adversary of France to prefer one no less French concept to the other? Chancellor Erhard praises the successes of the Treaty so far -- thinking of youth exchanges. The French Head of State, however, is not content. He understands something rather different by friendship between peoples.

The Franco-German Treaty was not and is not intended to link the Federal Republic with France, but with a particular political concept of a temporary ruler over France. Explicit or implicit recognition of this explains the trouble taken about the form of ratification by the Bundestag. The Preamble on which the Bundestag agreed takes the least harmful line between two dangerous wrong decisions: either unconditional surrender to de Gaulle's concept of his Europe or the rejection of the Treaty by the representatives of the people -- the latter a decision which then not only affects de Gaulle's political concept but would really have shaken friendship between France and the Federal Republic. (In an interview in "Die Zeit" of 21 August 1964, Foreign Minister Schröder boasted that he was the one who recommended to the then Federal Chancellor, Dr. Adenauer, the form of Treaty with parliamentary ratification. It would be underestimating M. Schröder's intelligence to suppose that he expects to win laurels for this good advice.) It was typical of the Elysée that it did not at first take the German parliamentary commentary seriously. Meanwhile, however, the German apprentice is getting bad marks at the Paris press conferences.

Since then, the German Federal Chancellor has been in search of solutions. He has done the rounds of the capitals of the member countries and taken no end of trouble. And the officials of the Foreign Office are feverishly looking for institutional solutions corresponding to the wishes both of the French Head of State and of that part of the German Government coalition known by

the somewhat wry nickname of "German Gaullists," and also to the wishes of the other partners in the Community.

If my supposition that there is no lack of nationalism in any of the six partners is right -- and I think it can be substantiated -- the institutional solution could hardly be a source of difficulties. After all, hesitation at the idea of giving up any sovereignty must then be quite general. Apart, therefore, from the fact that M. Luns, for instance, is also not yearning for supranational solutions in the political union, this institutional quarrel is devoid of substance. The theoretical dispute about federation or confederation could be developed ad absurdum in terms of the French title of the Swiss Constitution: La constitution fédérale de la confédération helvétique. The question is not one of institutional form but of political content. What policy is the political union to pursue? And it is not a question of going into the smallest details, but of the general direction. I seem to remember that it is a French proverb which says that people must be in agreement before they can discuss.

This then makes the political conflict within the Federal Republic and especially within the great coalition party particularly interesting. The titles "Atlantic-minded" and "Gaullist" indeed indicate a general direction but doubtless lead to judgments which are off the mark. The speakers for those who are called "German Gaullists" are Strauss, Adenauer, Guttenberg and Krone. Given the great variety of motives, it would be unjust to reproach these gentlemen with wishing to throw themselves unconditionally around the neck of the French Head of State. The man behind whom Dr. Adenauer would be ready to trot obediently is still to be born. Up to a short time ago, Herr Strauss considered the European solutions as historically outmoded and in his enthusiastic way was more for German-American bilateralism. However, it was not at the time clear that a platform from which to oppose the Erhard/Shröder team can be built in Germany on the "Gaullist" concept. Strauss did not work out the concept which he now champions; he only picked it up: from Freiherr zu Guttenberg, to be precise.

In July, the latter summed up Germany's great worry in one sentence in his speech to the SCU Party Congress.

"What the Soviet Union wishes to achieve under the guise of lessening of tension is a restoration of the old wartime alliance in which free Germany, the Federal Republic, shall play the role of Nazi Germany."

Out of courtesy he omitted to add that he is afraid of American inclinations to agree to such easing of tension. For this reason, he is looking for support in Paris. Not being M. de Gaulle's tailor, he looks upon the General as the smaller evil.

Doubtless the "Atlantic-minded" are also worried about the bill which might be presented to the Federal Republic as a result of the bilateral talks between Washington and Moscow. As far as one can judge, Dr. Schröder's

foreign policy concept so far, he hopes by maintaining good relations with Washington to ensure that he will have a right to be heard. Whether in doing this he has in mind the possibility that such a right would not remain unnoticed in Moscow and that it could set up an inclination there to allow Bonn to have some say in Moscow also is so far not clear. It need not necessarily be considered out of the question that a German Foreign Minister might today -- even though in a different geographical and political context -- endeavor to be guided by Bismark's policy of reinsurance.

German politicians are without doubt asking themselves today what is the more reasonable foreign policy for Germany -- that of the "Gaullists" or that of the "Atlantic-minded." If, in this context, anxiety about the bill referred to above is fundamental, then the error of the "Gaullists" is certainly clear for all to see. Whereas the debate in Washington is still going on, is so far undecided and can still be influenced, Paris has long since made its decision on this particular question -- and unambiguously to the detriment of Germany. The concept of the present leadership in France -- a geographically limited Europe of the Six, led by the French, able to swing between Washington and Moscow -- actually presupposes that the status quo is maintained in the German question. "The division of Germany is the secret of this form of German-French friendship." The recognition of the Eastern frontiers and the demand for financial help without any say in the French "force de frappe" are so many proofs of what are now the generally accepted bases of the Gaullist concept. For fear of a danger which might possibly threaten, the German "Gaullists" are seeking help from a quarter where this danger is considered a problem already settled, and indeed as a promise of the political concept which is held there.

This line-up also, of course, raises the question of the policy of the USA which, after all, lies behind the alignment of positions in Germany. In Cuba, Kennedy made the American will to resist Communist aggression credible. The German "Gaullists" -- one of them was then ensconced in the Plais Schaumburg -- bitter criticism of Kennedy, which in the summer of 1963 could only be called hatred, was taken for granted. (It is not clear how far this was already Republican outpost skirmishing in Germany in preparation for the American election campaign. Suppositions of this kind would seem to be justified, since it is the same people who today feel it their duty to claim that the candidate Goldwater is harmless and who assure us that the "anti-Goldwater agitation" is a piece of Democratic electioneering beyond the national frontiers.) More important than these considerations is the question whether the reproach against Kennedy's "soft" attitude towards a retreating Khrushchev is justified. It is normally considered (even among German politicians, who then call Bismark to their support) as a sign of the highest political statecraft not to drain the cup of victory to the dregs. Moreover, this policy of Kennedy's has paid off handsomely. It was only in the wake of Kennedy's attitude during and after the Cuba crisis that this process of disintegration of the formerly monolithic Communist bloc, which after all is not without interest for the West, could develop. (By this we

do not mean at all that the different varieties of national Communists are no longer Communists at all.)

From a European angle one must nevertheless conclude that the division of German foreign policy between "Gaullists" and "Atlantic-minded" is a false line-up which in any case amounts to a national instead of a European concept. It will always be a proof of extremely short-sighted policy on the part of the smaller neighbors of the Federal Republic that, after de Gaulle's veto, they followed his example by retiring into their own national backyard. True, de Gaulle's neat move with the Franco-German Treaty left them until recently no other choice -- unless they had taken the Preamble of the German Parliament more seriously than de Gaulle. Today the occasion offers. Today it is becoming evident that de Gaulle has reawakened spirits from the nationalistic past which will again be a question of life and death for the whole of Europe in the by no means distant future when M. de Gaulle has been reduced to the heavy letters which will be his portion in the book of history. The political problem of Europe tomorrow and the day after tomorrow is not the relationship between France and Germany. In order to master this problem neighbors have to be prepared to understand a justified national interest, even if it can for the time being only be solved in terms of the individual and not of constitutional law. The need is to sit down at one table with those forces in Germany which are struggling for a Europe with a democratic structure. Inertia as a principle of foreign policy results only in no external policy at all being applied. In face of a fading dream in France, immobility may, given the obstinancy of the dreamer, have been the only way out; but in Germany today the points are being set for the future. To fall back on the sort of talk we have in the Easter stroll in Faust means in this case surrendering one's personality for the sake of that much-admired national park, whose boundary posts have never, in splendid isolation, provided protection for those within and will never do so in the future.

In all this, the Europeans are today more than ever compelled to rely on each other. As future President of the United States, Johnson will need to be reminded of a partnership of which Kennedy in his time reminded us. How much would be left of this partnership under a President Goldwater is an open question. We know only that he was against the Trade Expansion Act and the Civil Rights Bill and that in the present election campaign he is advocating the abolition of conscription. For the rest, he is an honorable man.

Only after the elections will we be able to see what role Great Britain is likely to play; the same thing applies to the Scandinavian countries which sail in England's wake. If the Conservatives win again, six months would be enough for the opening of a new round in an old talk. If Labor wins, it will probably take two years before Wilson's national brand of socialism comes up against limits of what one country can do.

What are the conclusions to be drawn?

A Community laboriously reducing the gap between economic union and customs union, and failing to satisfy us in its democratic structure, is nevertheless a framework which offers a basis for a legal system within a Community that needs to be broadened geographically and rounded off politically. For the time being, the present leadership in France can block any such further development, but this attempt will succeed only if the neighbors are incapable of reacting to national concepts except by using methods akin to those of the General. However, to toe the line voluntarily in this way does not save "better" national structures at all, because the present interdependence of economic and political events is also destroying the snug idylls in which the advocates of political inertia wish to take refuge.

Instead of this, what is required is the courage to proclaim one's faith in the formation of a European community which, within its boundaries, keeps its members together in an order based on the rule of law and which can face up to the challenges that this Europe, which has to overcome its balkanization, must meet in the framework of an Atlantic partnership in the economic, political and military fields if it wishes to live up to its obligations in a world in ferment.

The need to work towards this end is indisputable, and the conditions in which the work can be undertaken today are better than a year and a half ago. The General's frontal attack is already being reduced to a "hedgehog position." Instead of bowing to the attempt to destroy our rallying point and helping it to be destroyed through one's own inertia, we must be ready to take advantage of the moment when the present paralysis finds its natural end.