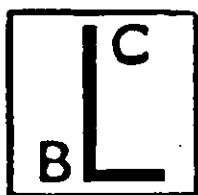


GERMAN DIARY

by

FENNER BROCKWAY



LEFT BOOK CLUB EDITION
NOT FOR SALE TO THE PUBLIC

GERMAN 1

THE AUTHOR

DEATH PAYS A DIVIDEND
(with Frederic Mullally)

THE INDIAN CRISIS

HUNGRY ENGLAND

LABOUR AND LIBERALISM

SOCIALISM AND PACIFISM

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

ENGLISH PRISONS TODAY
(with Stephen Hobhouse)

A NEW WAY WITH CRIME

BLOODY TRAFFIC

WILL ROOSEVELT SUCCEED?

WORKERS' FRONT

INSIDE THE LEFT

GERMAN DIARY

by

FENNER BROCKWAY

LONDON
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD
1946

Copyright 1946 by Fenner Brockway

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY RICHARD CLAY AND COMPANY, LTD.
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

I WOULD like to dedicate this book to four people: *Fred Perkins*, an English soldier in Hamburg who inspired my visit to Germany, *Kurt Schumacher*, the leader of the reborn Socialist Movement in Germany, *Heinz Heydorn*, one of the leaders of the new Socialist Youth of Germany, and *Major Luxton*, an officer of the Occupation for whom freedom has no frontiers.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SINCE THIS Diary was written, the position in the British zone in Germany has deteriorated seriously. This is clear from the reports of all observers and is confirmed by the letters which I am receiving from both British personnel and Germans. "Things are getting steadily worse," writes a British official. "There is no doubt that there is a rising feeling against the British," writes a soldier. "The enthusiasm for the English is disappearing everywhere," writes a prominent German Trade Unionist. "Only Nazis and militarists are satisfied: the Occupation is fulfilling their prophecies. The people are either looking towards Russia, reverting to Nazism or finding an escape in Nihilism."

Let us acknowledge the advances carried through since these pages were written. The economy of the British and American zones has been co-ordinated. A part of the German fishing fleet has been restored. The steel industry of the Ruhr has been taken over with a view to nationalisation. An amnesty has been granted to Nazis under twenty-seven years of age on the ground that they never had an opportunity to acquire any other political faith. Rations have been increased by 200 calories a day.

But these measures are woefully inadequate compared with the general deterioration which has set in. Why this worsening? "It is mainly due," writes the soldier whom I have already quoted, "to the continuing food shortage, the eviction of Germans from their homes, and the feeling of frustration at the absence of any plan to reorganise production in the British zone."

Take these points in turn. The basic ration in the towns of the British zone has been increased, but it is *still less than half* of ours at home. The cases of Hunger-Oedema and tuberculosis in the hospitals continue to mount. (See Appendix.) The discontent with the food shortage is increased by the reports which are received from the Russian zone that rations have been increased there—and by the daily contrast with the standard of life which the British personnel are enjoying in the midst of the German hunger.

The seizure of German homes and furniture to serve British staff needs and to house their families has caused a wave of resentment more bitter than any since the Occupation. In Hamburg, where thousands are already living in cellars and shelters, thirty thousand people* have been turned into the streets and a large part of their furniture confiscated. This mass eviction is not primarily for the purpose of accommodating the wives and children of British personnel, but for the provision of new British headquarters for the zone. It is natural that the people should be bitter when housing materials and workmen are utilised on this elaborate "Hamburg Project".

The third ground for despair among the German people is the lack of evidence of any plan for industrial reorganisation and recovery in the British zone. The British have recently called in the services of Dr. Agartz, the Socialist economic expert, but so far the German people have to bear their present privations without any ground to hope for better things in the future. They see no end to the tunnel of inhuman existence in which they grope darkly. There is no sign of a constructive plan to enable them to cling to the light.

Here again they are observing the difference in the Russian zone, where industrial reorganisation is proceeding rapidly. Their memories of the early Russian ruthlessness in dismantling workplaces and homes become dim as they hear of the busy factories and the developing production which is now proceeding. The higher rations in the Russian zone, an election bribe, the busy factories may be serving the Russian economy rather than a planned Germany economy; but hungry and destitute people don't pause to weigh these political and long-term considerations. They see recovery being organised in the Russian zone whilst in the British zone industry remains stagnant—and their hopes begin to drift to Russia.

An as international Socialist, I am not concerned whether Russia or Britain is the instrument which provides for industrial recovery to Germany. I want the hunger ended, I want the German people to have the opportunity to lift themselves from Nazism and War and their consequences, and to become a partner in a co-operative world. I want that

* This is the official estimate. German Socialists say that it is based on the normal population of the two affected districts and overlooks the overcrowding which followed bomb destruction. They estimate the number of evicted people at 80,000.

as a matter of human decency and freedom apart from any political considerations. But I am also a Democratic Socialist and I want the future Germany to be a Democratic Socialist, rather than a Totalitarian Communist, State. I love liberty, and no democrat who has learned of Russian methods in Germany, as I did during my visit, would wish to see them extended.

Germany is now the battleground on which the issue of Democratic Socialism or Totalitarian Communism for the whole of Europe may be decided. Many of those serving in the Political Section of the British administration in Germany understand this. I think Mr. John Hynd understands it. But at present this understanding is being only timidly reflected in policy. The British are giving a certain degree of support to the Social Democrats as against the Communists; but because of the growing unpopularity of the British this may prove to be a handicap to the Social Democrats rather than a help. The way to help Democratic Socialism in Germany is to provide the conditions and the opportunity for it to function.

We have a Labour Government. It should be the leadership of Democratic Socialism in Germany, Europe and the world. Believing that a Democratic Socialist Germany is the surest guarantee that Nazism will not revive and that Germany will grow to co-operate with other peoples to maintain peace, realising that what happens in Germany will be perhaps the biggest factor in determining the future pattern of Europe, our Government should consciously plan to create conditions in the British zone which are a model of the Democratic Socialist approach.

In the final pages of this book I have outlined a suggested Socialist policy for Germany. I repeat that I am aware of the difficulties—the difficulty of the world food shortage, the difficulty of planning industrial recovery in the British zone whilst there is the shortage of Ruhr coal. But no one can be blind to the unequal distribution of food in the world, to the contrast between the hunger in Germany and the plenty just across its frontiers, some of which could reach Germany if its industries were restarted so that goods were available for export in exchange. Nor can one accept the view that nothing can be done on a big scale to restart those industries until more Ruhr coal is available. So long as we are responsible for the administration of the British zone, we should plan its industrial recovery with no less thoroughness than we should apply if the territory were British, and we should utilise all world

resources to get its industries going. At present German industry is treated as a Cinderella, at the end of the queue. Germans have some reason for suspecting that we are more concerned to extort the secrets of their industrial processes for the benefit of British capitalist enterprises than to get their factories at work again.

Britain can make this new approach to the German problem, but even so it would not be solved. Unless relations between Britain, America and Russia are improved, Germany will remain divided, her nationhood denied, and the frontier between its Western and Eastern zones will become the frontier of the Third World War. This leads to a question which goes beyond the scope of this book, but I believe the answer is to be found in the extension of the policy which I have urged for Germany—in the adoption of a challengingly Socialist policy, democratic and international, in all foreign affairs. British policy towards Indonesia, Greece, Spain, to cite only three examples, gives Russia reason for concluding that there has been no change, that there is a continuity with the Tory imperialist policy which preceded it. We need, not only in Germany but everywhere in the world, a foreign policy which breaks completely with Britain's imperialist past, which boldly gives a lead to the peoples to turn to a Democratic Socialism which is internationally inspired. If that became our policy, openly avowed and courageously practised, Russia would have no ground for maintaining her doubts, and her power to misinterpret our aims and actions to the millions of people under her influence would progressively diminish.

Britain should be as clearly the instrument of Democratic Socialism in the world as Russia is the instrument of Totalitarian Communism. When we become that, millions of the common peoples of all lands will rally to us as allies and we shall be in a position to reach an understanding with Russia, accepting the economic basis of Socialism which is hers, but determined to maintain in Britain, and wherever our influence extends, the superstructure of democracy and liberty which is particularly ours.

Without such an agreement, there is no hope of Germany becoming a political and economic unit, a united democratic nation in a peaceful world.

FENNER BROCKWAY.

September, 1946.

P.S.—As these pages went to press, news came of the American "New Deal" for Germany. It defined the future

function of the Allies as "Control and inspection" and declared for a democratic government through a constituent assembly for the whole of Germany and a national council representative of state and provincial governments. It declared that the time had come to settle peace terms with a German government and re-opened the question of the extent of the territory to be ceded to Poland on the east. It insisted that Germany should be an economic unit and that industry should be levelled upwards if reparations are to be taken from current output.

Simultaneously it was announced that German executives are to be set up for the joint control of economic affairs in the American and British zones. They will control food rationing, distribution of food imports, taxation, customs, and production for foreign trade.

This is a welcome advance and, if Russia and France will support these proposals, new hope will come to Germany. But if democracy is to have a chance, Germany must get the foodstuffs she needs to conquer hunger and the raw materials she needs to restart housing and industry: *without these, elaborate schemes for democratic constitutions will count for little.* Given the opportunity, Germany may yet become not only a successful democracy, but a Democratic Socialist society.

Will Russia concur? By the time this is read, events may have given the answer. I hope for the sake of Europe it is favourable.