

Conclusion

What we Germans lack is active interest in the course of political affairs, interest that is not only aroused at elections which take place at considerable intervals, but that is concerned with all the great and small questions of political life. It is the duty of the educated classes to take this political education in hand—the duty of the intellectual leaders, whom the Germans follow more readily than does any other nation. The indolent indifference towards political life of men who are æsthetically and intellectually sensitive, though in earlier times it was harmless, is now out of place. The present, which is full of grave and great political tasks, and which has, by means of Parliaments, given the people a share in State affairs, demands a political generation. It is not the duty of the Government in the present time to concede new rights to Parliament, but to rouse the political interest of all classes of the nation by means of a vigorous and determined national policy, great in its aims and energetic in the means it employs. The criticism to which every policy that is not colourless must give rise does no harm, so long as positive interest is aroused. The worst thing in political life is torpor, a general and stifling calm.

Rest is only permissible to him who has no more duties to fulfil. No nation can assert that of itself, least of all the Germans who so recently embarked on a new course towards new goals. The number of problems we have solved since 1870 is small compared with the number that still await solution. We may