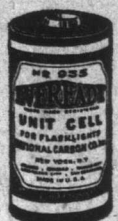


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## The Hindenburg Shock to Europe

A monarchist at heart and professed apostle of revenge, as some describe Field Marshal von Hindenburg, the ex-Kaiser's Commander-in-Chief, has been elected President of the German Republic so unexpectedly that the shock to Europe is evident in the press of Britain, France and Italy. Even the German journals devoted to Republican principles express a certain anxiety, while those not so warmly attached to them are exultant because they see in the election a symbol of the reappearing strong Germany of old. Thus the monarchist Berlin Kreuz-Zeitung avers that the Field Marshal's victory will demonstrate that the German people are regaining self-consciousness, which is the first step to regaining the world's respect. The Berlin Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung declares the election shows the nation tired of taking orders concerning its behavior from foreign countries, and, what is more, it adds, the meaning of it is the awakening not only of old proud memories, but also the determination to lead Germany out of the "condition of helotry."

The danger lies not in the person of von Hindenburg, remarks the Berliner Tageblatt, but in the intrigues of his entourage, and it notes the irony of the fact that "the paladin of Wilhelm II. will now be obliged to take the oath to the Republican Constitution before the Social Democratic President of the Reichstag and under the Republican flag. The Vossische Zeitung, organ of the Right Wing of the Democratic party, also warns against possible machinations on the part of the "general staff camarilla" behind von Hindenburg's back and hopes that the President will listen only to his constitutional advisers. Berlin Associated Press dispatches, which canvass the German press and people in form as the first reaction to the election was not untoward in the popular mind and editorial comment. Organs of various political groups reveal a desire to avoid partisan recrimination, as the President-elect enjoys the benefit of "the law of the defense of the Republic," and this automatically brings a cessation of political hostilities so far as his personality is concerned. An important Socialist newspaper, the Berlin Vorwarts, analyzes the situation as follows:

"The Republic now is passing through its MacMahon period. Just as fifty years ago in France, so now in Germany, a marshal and monarchist appears as President of the Republic after a hard war. The French Republic happily escaped from the danger zone, and it will be the task of German republicans to lead the Republic out of danger as successfully. It is pointed out in Berlin dispatches that the President-elect will probably have more opponents than supporters in the German Parliament, because the Catholics, Democrats, Socialists and Communist command 277 seats only 146 for the Rightists. In Bavaria it is claimed by the Bayerische Kurier that the Field Marshal owes his victory to the Bavarian People's party, although the Muenchener Neueste Nachrichten observes:

"Von Hindenburg never will be the servant of an individual party. Above all, it should not be forgotten that the Bavarian People's party supported him. It was a testimonial of a confession of peace and a renunciation of the confession of intolerance."

In France, however, Hindenburg's election is reported in Paris press dispatches to confirm the impression France has always had, namely, that since 1914, except the surface appearance of the form of Government, nothing has changed. In proof of this we have the observation of the Paris Temps, as follows:

"It is because the German people seek to wipe out the memory and sentiment of their defeat that they have given this honor to the great defeated of 1918. Let nobody deceive himself. The election of Field Marshal von Hindenburg is a defiance of Europe and America. Certainly it is not the political genius of this old man, dragged from his retirement in Hanover, that is disquieting. It is all the forces of reaction and brutal revenge which can be seen behind him and which through him hope to hasten the hour when Germany will be again ready for conflict. Germany herself has thrown off the mask which deceived so many naive or complaisant people into belief in the sincerity of her republican and democratic sentiment."

"Is it the Germany of Hindenburg which we are going to admit to the League? Is it with this Germany that we are going to discuss the means of a general reduction of armaments and clauses of a compact of mutual guaranty for the assurance of the security of Europe? Is it with the Government of the victor of Tannenberg that we will invite Poland to negotiate a rearrangement of the Eastern frontiers of the Reich?"

Nether Mr. Briand nor any Foreign Minister in France, we read in a Paris dispatch, could now undertake such a programme of reconciliation with Germany as the British Foreign Office mapped out four months ago for completion in September next by evacuation of Cologne, the admission of Germany to the League and the signing of an Anglo-Franco-German compact. It is related also that at the

Qual d'Orsay it was frankly stated that the first impression in Foreign Office circles was that the German election had put an end to all the dreams of disarmament which occupied so much time during the last five years. A spokesman of Mr. Briand is quoted as saying:

"We are going to be forced backward by this demonstration of German popular sentiment to the old policy of an armed peace in which we lived before the war. Certainly as far as the French people are concerned it would be too much to expect them to have confidence in the pacific nature and intentions of their neighbors, who have gone almost out of their way to choose as President a man 77 years old just because he was a war figurehead and who ranks as No. 237 in the Allied list of German war criminals who were to be delivered over for trial."

In England the London Morning Post views the results as calamitous, and it remarks sardonically:

"The joy bells Berlin is ringing for the victory of Marshal Hindenburg are also sounding the knell of democratic government in Germany. Hindenburg's installation in President Ebert's chair is virtually the hoisting of the old Imperial colors and the harbinger of a return of the Hohenzollerns."

"It makes the head as well as the rank and file of the Administration machine Prussian and brings a step nearer the bureaucratic efficiency and intellectual bondage which made the Great War possible."

"It is thus a challenge to the rest of the world and particularly to the Allies, who by force of arms freed Germany from the power which enslaved it and was so eager to place under similar chains the rest of Europe."

"What will the Allies do? The return of Hindenburg is as good as twenty army corps to the Fatherland, and whatever may be its material disarmament Germany is now spiritually and intellectually well armed to the teeth."

Much less perturbed is the London Westminster Gazette, which concedes that the election of Hindenburg is "undoubtedly a very untoward event from the point of view of European opinion, but not an unnatural one, and need not be a disaster if other Governments will keep their heads and refrain from playing into the hands of the German monarchists." According to the London Daily News the cautionary note of the election is that Germany's new President is "the chosen symbol of the militarist Germany," and it adds: "It may be unwise to stress the fact unduly: it will be foolish to ignore it." This newspaper then remarks:

"There are good reasons for believing that the majority for Hindenburg does not actually mean a majority against the republican idea or in favor of a policy of revenge or aggression assiduously cultivated under a reactionary Nationalist regime. Certainly it does not mean a majority for the return to power of any member of the ex-Kaiser's family. If the German people earnestly desire peace they can control Hindenburg's office and can ultimately win the battle for democracy. If they do not desire peace, the day of Hindenburg's election may go down in history as Europe's Black Sunday."

While the London Daily Telegraph believes Hindenburg's victory "the greatest of the successes which have been won in Germany by the forces of monarchist reaction," it maintains:

"His election does not, of course, mean the approaching triumph of those forces and restoration of the dynasty of which he is a loyal servant. He repudiated at the outset all desire to change the form of the State and his supporters proclaimed his candidature not only to Germany but to the world as one unconnected with party and uninfluenced by the hope of bringing about the return of the monarchy."

In Italy it seems that considerable apprehension is felt over Hindenburg's victory, but Rome dispatches indicate that no immediate complications are looked for, and we read: "The monarchist and republican forces are so evenly divided that a change from the republican to a monarchist regime is considered impossible without serious internal disturbances and possible civil war."

"In a period of rapid economic and industrial expansion this is just what the present German rulers wish to avoid. If Hindenburg's election, therefore, truly heralds the return of the monarchy, it is expected that the change would be effected neither immediately nor suddenly."

"Complications with France," however, are feared. The Left parties, which now rule France, have shown a willingness to enter into more cordial relations with Germany, but Hindenburg's election, it is believed here, will have as a natural consequence the spreading of distrust of Germany in France, rendering a rapprochement between the two nations more difficult, even if the Field Marshal doesn't stick to his proposal for a revision of the existing treaties and boundaries."

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Leopold Scheppe  
plant nut, for, his  
large bonuses have  
helped make him a  
famous foundation  
encourage boys to  
Scheppe, head of the  
pany, New York  
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