

West German Voter In Dilemma Over National Elections

Coblenz, Germany — (UPI) — "I think Adenauer has grown too high-handed lately, but what are the alternatives? The Socialists want to nationalize everything, and no one knows where the Free Democrats stand."

The Coblenz auto salesman's plight mirrors the dilemma in which most of West Germany's independent voters find themselves, a year before the national elections.

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, 85-years old in January, will be contesting his fourth national election in 11 years, with vigorous, 47-year old West Berlin Lord Mayor Willy Brandt opposing him at the head of the Socialist ticket.

Brandt has been given the top nomination because no other Socialist has been able to even delay a steady increase in the majorities of Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union.

Bitter Campaign Promised

Coblenz is as good a place as any, better than most, to discuss the election in these first weeks of what promises to be a long and bitter campaign.

The city has grown from 93,000 to 97,000 in five years. The French have withdrawn from the great blocks of barracks, which again are full of German soldiers, this time of the 5th Panzer Division and the 3rd Panzer Corps.

In the 1957 election, Adenauer won a slight majority in the city, and an overwhelming one in its hinterland.

The auto salesman, too, is typical of most men of his generation, the one that fought the war. Now 46, he was a tank officer, fought both in the west and east, was captured by the Americans but turned over to the Russians at the end of the war, and spent four years in Soviet prison camps.

Though a Protestant, he married a Catholic, and agreed their daughter — a four year old brunette with startling blue eyes — be raised a Catholic. A quarter of the marriages in West Germany are between persons of different religions, though leaders of both the Catholic and Protestant churches frown on the practice.

'Mein Kampf' in Library

He keeps a copy of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in his library — a corner of one of their three rooms — to remind him, he says, of the false prophet in

which the Germans once had faith.

As a businessman, the salesman's political views tend to be conservative.

By that reckoning, he says, he ought to vote for Adenauer again.

But the manner in which the chancellor has "railroaded" parliament recently, he explains, has caused him some discomfort.

"Also, Adenauer is a Catholic," he explains, "and I know from friends in the capital that only Catholics get good government jobs."

That happens to be quite untrue. Any reporter in the capital knows that the government goes to almost ridiculous lengths to maintain religious parity in all top jobs.

But the salesman's beliefs, rather than the truth, are what count for purposes of the election.

Not Whole Truth

"But look at the Socialists," the salesman continued. "They don't seem to be even trying to win. And if they do win, they will nationalize everything."

Again, this isn't the whole truth. The Socialist party last year scrapped much of its old nationalization dogma, based on the unfortunate experiences of Britain's Labor party. But the salesman doesn't believe a word of it.

"And what do the Free Democrats want?" he asks. "As a Protestant and a businessman, that ought to be my party. But sometimes they are in Adenauer's government, sometimes out of it. In some provinces, they form coalitions with the Socialists. If I vote for the Free Democrats, my vote may be used to form a Socialist government in Bonn. I really have no place to turn."

Satellite Probe

May Affect UN

Disarmament Talk

Washington — (Science Service) — A full-scale debate between East and West on disarmament will be launched at the United Nations General Assembly this week. Russia formally placed this issue on the U. N. agenda the end of last June following the collapse of the Geneva conference of the evenly balanced ten East and West bloc countries.

Soviet delegates walked out of the conference just before new U. S. proposals were to have been presented.

Hangs on Slim Thread

At present, hope of any East-West agreement hangs on the slim thread of the now suspended negotiations on nuclear test suspensions. A test ban agreement could mark the first major step toward disarmament, since it would mean acceptance of a system of inspection. An agreement on inspection is the stumbling block to any effective plan for disarmament.

The U. S. delegation, led by President Eisenhower, will offer a proposal for disarmament. The bugaboo of inspection may not now be as formidable to the Russians, paradoxically, by virtue of spectacular advances in U. S. aerial inspection ability. These include the Air Force's Midas and the Tiro weather and communications satellite of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as the U2.

Not Offensive Weapons

Lt. Gen. Bernard S. Schriever, Commander Air Research and Development Command, noted recently that such surveillance and warning satellites "are not, in any sense of the term, offensive weapons." But they can, by their intelligence benefits, serve as a deterrent to surprise attack. And at the present stage of the art of warfare, surprise attack is necessary to achieve victory.

"An enemy, knowing that he could not achieve surprise, would surely be dissuaded from opening an attack," Gen. Schriever said.

Western observers are hopeful that with surprise now eliminated by technological advances, the coming disarmament talks at the U. N. will find the Russians and their satellite countries ready to negotiate rather than propagandize.

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