

# No Political Dwarf

By C. L. Sulzberger

**B**ONN.—The formation in West Germany of a Socialist-dominated government is likely to prove as important a European watershed as De Gaulle's return to power in France 11 years ago.

For two decades German destinies have been guided by the conservative Catholic policies of Adenauer and his successors—either in full control or as senior coalition partners. This period saw Germany's re-establishment as a major economic force, a strong ally of the United States, a special friend of Gaullist France, and a resurgent military factor.

Nevertheless, as a new generation grew up, it complained that the Federal Republic, although it has restored national honor, self-respect and prosperity, had an inadequate voice in world affairs. The saying went: "West Germany is an economic giant but a political dwarf."

Although Bonn made various tentative efforts to strike out diplomatically in a way comparable to the commercial and banking initiatives of the Ruhr and Rhine barons, it was not notably successful. Its policy toward Eastern Europe was clearly influenced by the desires of Washington and its policy toward Western Europe was clearly influenced by the desires of Paris. And the rigid posture devised by Bonn's own Hallstein doctrine seeking to isolate East Germany gradually became brittle and cracked.

Of Bonn's three previous Christian Democratic chancellors, Adenauer was the only great statesman and his impressive achievement was to lift partitioned Germany from Hitler's moral garbage can and out of the wreckage left by war. Those who succeeded him—Erhard, the colorless economic wizard, and Kiesinger, the suave politician—come from the same lesser breed that has been succeeding charismatic leaders everywhere.

Clearly, the German people felt they needed a change and also clearly, they didn't feel drawn by the right, having rebuffed neo-Fascism. Therefore, the predominantly Socialist regime must move to satisfy some of the voters' implied requirements. And since both economic and social relationships at home are stable, the likelihood is that change must inevitably show itself in policy abroad.

## Brandt Initiatives

Because Chancellor Brandt prepared for his new responsibilities as foreign minister—and his freedom of action was necessarily limited as Kiesinger's political junior—it is logical to expect he will be especially happy to supervise new diplomatic initiatives. Although he was mayor of West Berlin and knows the dangers of Communist aggression, it is reasonable to expect this mildly left-wing liberal will make friendly gestures toward Moscow.

One way of responding to recent Soviet hints that Russia also wants détente would be to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty which Bonn—as well as Paris—had spurned. Another, if more difficult gesture, would be to express interest in a European security pact more or less acknowledging existing frontiers—including that between East Germany and Poland. Such audacity would undoubtedly provoke complaints among many German conservatives.

While these prospects would

please both Washington and Paris, it is probable that a Brandt government will be less pro-French than those of his predecessors (even the distinctly non-Gaullist Erhard) and that it will also be less reluctant to let Britain into the Common Market. The trouble there is likely to be British, not German, opinion.

As the new regime consolidates its position it may show itself less eager to endorse all major U.S. diplomatic attitudes and more subject to pressures for de-emphasizing NATO's military aspects—although Brandt fully realizes his nation's integrity depends on that alliance.

Obviously the crucial factor is East Germany. Whether, after placing the final tombstone on the moribund Hallstein Doctrine, Brandt will eventually dare con-

template some form of recognition is hard to forecast.

Come what may, one can expect change both in the form and substance of Bonn's diplomacy and an attempt to raise the stature of the political dwarf to that of the economic giant.

In the republic of amputated Germany such a shift has not required actual revision of governmental statutes—as in logically more restrictive and less flexible France. But the ultimate impact on international affairs may some day prove to be comparable. De Gaulle sought for his people both independence and grandeur. Brandt is likely to seek only a greater say in the interdependence that grips the world. Fortunately, grandeur is a word still forbidden in the vocabulary of German politics.