

MONARCHY IN MODERN EUROPE

SEVENTY years ago a traveller, making an overland journey from Lisbon to Peking, would have traversed throughout the whole of his route the territories of states whose constitutions, however much they might differ, were all monarchical in form: Portugal, Spain, France, the German states, Russia and China. To-day all these countries are republics, as is Poland, the one additional state whose territory would now be crossed on such a journey.

Has the revolt against monarchy such characters as would point to its effecting a permanent change or will the fallen thrones be re-erected? In Asia republicanism is an exotic growth, but in Europe the system under which Athens and Rome grew to maturity is not so. On the eve of the American Revolution, but an insignificant fraction of mankind was living under republican institutions. These survived only in the old maritime Republics of Venice and Genoa, the Swiss cantons and the little republic of Ragusa in Eastern Europe. To these we may add the autonomous Hanse towns. The Netherlands were technically a republic, though in practice a constitutional monarchy, since the Stadtholdership was hereditary in the House of Orange, which intermarried with the reigning families of Europe. Sixteen years after the American Declaration of Independence the French monarchy fell. Animated by the crusading zeal which characterized the Soviets in the first years of their existence, the French republicans desired to impose their system of government on Europe. At one time it looked as though they might do so. Within a few years French arms had created the satellite Batavian, Helvetian, Cisalpine, Roman and Parthenopean Republics. But after a life of twelve years the First French Republic was destroyed by its Chief Magistrate and monarchy under a new dynasty was restored in France. The Congress of Vienna left but two republics in Europe, Switzerland and Cracow, the tiny remaining vestige of independent Poland. Even the pure republicanism of the Swiss Confederation was compromised by the attach-

ment of the canton of Neuchâtel to the dominions of the Prussian crown. Venice and Genoa were absorbed respectively into the dominions of Austria and those of the House of Savoy.

The French Revolution of 1830 resulted in an attempt at a compromise between the royalist and republican traditions in the shape of a constitutional monarchy somewhat after the English model. Yet the love of compromise is not native to the French as to the English character and constitutional monarchy failed to take root in France.

In 1848 republicanism made its second great onslaught on the monarchical system of Europe. Republics were proclaimed in Paris, Florence and Rome. The second French Republic met with a fate similar to its predecessor's, but more rapid, while in Italy the old order was quickly restored. The action of the House of Savoy in identifying itself with the national movement diverted the *Risorgimento* from a republican channel. In Spain and Portugal monarchy was likewise preserved by the support given by a branch of the dynasty to the liberal movement.

France made her last experiment in constitutional monarchy in 1869 when the Empire assumed a parliamentary form. This step would have prolonged its life, but for the diplomatic blunders which involved it in war in the following year. On the eve of the Franco-Prussian War, Switzerland was, if we exclude Andorra and San Marino, the only republic in Europe. The constitution of the Third Republic, which has lasted longer than any regime in France since 1789, was drafted by a National Assembly which contained a royalist majority.

The plans for a monarchical restoration broke down through the refusal of the Comte de Chambord to accept the tricolour. Unless, however, the king had displayed a degree of political sagacity to which the later Bourbons were strangers a restoration could hardly have lasted long. The Bonapartists reorganized, but never had a chance of success after the death of the Prince Imperial. Outside of France, however, as the nineteenth century was drawing to its close it appeared that constitutional monarchy was the form of

government under which mankind, in the Old World at least, was finally to achieve bliss. In the century in which British prestige was at its zenith it was but natural that a form of government evolved in England should be copied by other nations. It was restored in Spain after the first Spanish Republic had completed its inglorious existence of two years during which no less than four Presidents had held office. In Italy it survived attacks from the Right and from the Left. It was introduced into the Balkan States and also into Japan. In Turkey, Abdul Hamid II at the end of his reign restored the Constitution which he had promulgated and then suspended at the beginning of it. In 1905 embryonic parliamentary institutions were even conceded in Russia.

The years 1910-31, covering the period between the fall of the Portuguese and that of the Spanish monarchy, have witnessed a series of political transformations which in their rapidity have been without parallel in history. Portugal, China, Russia, Austria, Germany, Turkey, Greece and Spain have successively rejected hereditary monarchy, while under the influence of the anti-monarchical movement states which have regained their independence, Bohemia, Poland and Finland have adopted the republican form of government, which now prevails over more than two-thirds of the area of Europe. As a set-off to this Hungary in 1920 restored the monarchy, though owing to the susceptibilities of her neighbours she could not restore the king, and the Albanian Republic was transformed into a monarchy in 1928.

Fascism was republican in its origins, but, by astutely declaring for monarchy on the eve of its accession to power, it brought over to its side a great body of moderate opinion. Yet between Fascist philosophy and a hereditary monarchy there is a fundamental incompatibility since the latter implies the existence of power which does not derive its authority from the Fascist party. The latent republican proclivities of Fascism may yet declare themselves. Moreover we must remember that in Italy republicanism is associated with the heroic age of Rome, and with the glories of the mediæval

city-states, monarchy with the decadence of Rome and later with the periods of Spanish and Austrian domination. Fascism has built up a wholly new system of government consisting of the hierarchy of Fascist organizations, while allowing the older form of government, resting on a hereditary constitutional king, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, to continue a shadowy existence. In this phenomenon we may perceive an analogy similar to the survival of the institutions of republican Rome under the Empire and of those of the Florentine republic, under the personal rule of the Medici.

Will the House of Savoy eventually suffer at the hands of a Fascist duce, a fate similar to that which overtook the Merovingian dynasty at those of the "Mayors of the palace," or will there be a solution similar to that under which in Japan for nearly three centuries the Shogun ruled in the name of the Mikado?

In attempting to estimate the future prospects of monarchy and republicanism in Europe and in the world we cannot forget that it has often been the function of a republic to serve as a transitional regime—be it long or be it short—between two types of monarchy. It was so with the Roman Republic and with the First and Second French Republics. I think that there are indications that the wave of republicanism which has swept across Europe in the last generation may be a prelude to some new type of elective monarchy. "Elective kings," says Hobbes, "are not sovereigns, but ministers of the sovereign." Elective kingship takes us back to the old notion of the sovereignty of the people, which delegates its power to him who is most fitted to exercise it. In their dim origins the old European monarchies were elective in character. The principle of elective monarchy survived in the Holy Roman Empire, while the Polish crown was elective down to the time of the partitions. In other states the monarchy gradually tended in the course of centuries to become hereditary. Even in the history of the Presidency of the United States, the great elective "monarchy" of the New World, using monarchy in the sense of an executive controlled by one man, a faint ten-

gency towards hereditary rule is noticeable. John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, was the son of the second president, John Adams; Benjamin Harrison, the twenty-third president, was the grandson of General William Harrison, the ninth president, while Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States, was the son-in-law of Zachary Taylor, the twelfth president. Yet the hereditary system, in addition to exposing the monarch to the temptation of sacrificing the interests of the nation to those of the dynasty, exposes a people much more obviously than does an elective system to the danger of incompetent rulers, a danger which increases as society grows more complex. "God," lamented Philip II, "who has given me so many kingdoms, has denied me a son capable of ruling them." In the last century most European states attempted to solve this difficulty by limiting the power of the crown and introducing some form of hereditary constitutional monarchy. Despite the advantages of this system it has in practice succeeded in only six countries, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland and the three Scandinavian states. In France parliamentary monarchy broke down during the last century and in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece it has broken down during the present one. It is in the process of breaking down in the remaining Balkan States. Germany and Russia have refused to make experiment with it. The advocates of a restoration of hereditary monarchy in Europe are beset by this dilemma; if the restored monarchy is constitutional then it provides no remedy against the defects of the parliamentary system; if on the other hand the monarch is invested with something approaching absolute power, then the hereditary system can make no provision for a succession of rulers remotely competent to fulfil their task. It seems more likely that the reaction against parliamentary institutions now taking place on the Continent will take the form of a reversion to some type of elective kingship, whether the monarch bear the title of king or not. The political evolution of modern Germany seems to be tending in this direction. Here we see the same phenomenon as followed the revolutions of 1789 and 1848 in France. The fall of the ancient

royal house is followed by a republican interlude which ends in the concentration of power in the hands of one man. In Italy in 1928 a law was proposed under which the heir to the throne should be chosen by the Fascist Grand Council. It is true that it was passed only in a modified form under which the Grand Council must be consulted with regard to the succession, but this compromise can hardly be more than provisional. Even in France, where parliamentary institutions have taken deeper root than in Germany and Italy, the "Moderates" who have no wish to see the Bourbons return now urge a strengthening of the executive. Should personal rule return in Russia it would, as likely as not, be through some Soviet leader more capable and energetic than his colleagues eliminating his rivals in true oriental fashion and then enthroning himself as a sort of red Tzar in the Kremlin. But even here the forms of election would doubtless be preserved.

In England the dislocation of the parliamentary system by the disintegration of the old parties into smaller groups or the return of a parliament containing a large left-wing socialist majority might force the King into the political arena, and should the sovereign once more take an active share in the direction of the state, would there not develop a tendency to modify the strict hereditary principle in the interests of the most capable and popular member of the royal family?

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