been accustomed to speak of a "chancellor democracy", a government primarily supported by powerful pressure groups and an efficient bureaucracy. In contrast to the United States, German bureaucracy - like the country as a whole - can only look back upon very weak democratic traditions. In 1945, reconstruction began with "a semi-totalitarian administrative apparatus" (W. Goerlitz).

All too often elections have turned into acclamations or plebiscites. Governmental decisions are retroactively confirmed with the parties encouraging the public to give a unanimous vote of confidence in the government or to support a pseudo-opposition helplessly facing that government. In such a socio-capitalistic society that is presently rearming the parties become instrumental in integrating all classes into the existing society and culture. The classes, it is true, have not disappeared, but the class struggle is being overshadowed by the reality and ideology of national unity. In the course of the "Cold War" the parties have concluded a permanent "Burgfrieden". Similar to conditions in America and England (and in contrast to those in France) the German political party elite has managed to achieve a relatively stable compromise between big business at the top, the "middle classes", and the rather domesticated masses of workers and petty employees and officials at the bottom.

In West Germany, a radical reconstruction, which, in 1945, was the order of the day, is considered bad taste today. The party system aims at maintaining the existing economic, social and political order. In an unstable and dynamic world, however, the status quo cannot last forever. Hence such a system is bound to take on a restaurative or reactionary function. At the end of this process there looms the slow emergence of an authoritarian "defence state", in which party and parliament will exist in name only and will have lost their original democratic meaning.

This is all the more likely to happen, as, in contrast to America, Germany lacks the tradition of powerful single-purpose movements, acting independently and outside the party framework. Intimidated by his woeful experiences of the last decades the German citizen shrinks from joining such organizations. Still they should not be disregarded. The Easter March against Nuclear Rearmament is getting stronger each year. And it is due to the activities of the "Humanist Union", which has succeeded in mobilizing parts of the intelligentsia, that the emergency legislation requested by the government has so far met with considerable resistance. Moreover this organization has strengthened the Trade Unions' courage to resist this crucial measure. As the old parties grow ever more rigid, it is up to these movements to take over some of their original functions[2].

2) In this connection it would be interesting to learn from our French colleagues more about the prospects of non-party groupings such as the Club Jean Moulin and their chances to check the growth of the Pouvoir Actif in France.