

## The Socialists: They Went Out Heroes 30 Years Ago and Come Back Trimmers

### Germany's New "Great Coalition" A Case of Bi-Partisan Bankruptcy

Germany's new "*Grosse Koalition*" is great in size not conception. It is long on votes and short on policies. When you add a plus and an equal minus, you get nothing at all. The Coalition joins together a Christian Democratic Union which is not Christian and a Social Democratic party which is no longer socialist. The new Chancellor Kiesinger was a Nazi who stayed in the party until the end despite what he now claims were early misgivings; in this he is a typical German figure. The new Vice Chancellor Brandt was an anti-Nazi who fled rather than knuckle under, and it is equally characteristic that this resistance—instead of bringing him honor—was long held against him. The strongest figure in the new government is Strauss, a militant nationalist, who wants a way to give Germany nuclear military power. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, want the Reich to renounce nuclear weapons. It is only because both parties have lost their vitality that a marriage between them is possible.

#### A Vacuum, Not A Crisis

Even so the coalition is not popular with the rank-and-file of either party. It robs both party programs of credibility. How can either be taken seriously if they can so easily get together? To join forces in a crisis would be admirable. To do so in a vacuum is laughable. On foreign policy the Social Democrats were closer to the Free Democrats, and the latter offered the Socialists the "unconditional support" of all 49 Free Democratic deputies (*London Sunday Telegraph*, Nov. 27) just two hours before Kiesinger and Brandt made their agreement. In a coalition with the Free Democrats, Brandt would have been Chancellor, the Socialists the major party and a clear line in foreign policy attainable. The Socialists were afraid—of the narrow 6-vote margin this would have given them—and probably also of taking the leadership. This would have produced a meaningful program on which to face new elections if necessary. But it would also have meant going against Washington's wishes, and the German Socialists aspire to circle loyally in our orbit.

All the best elements in the Social Democratic party were against the big coalition. *Le Monde's* Bonn correspondent reported (Dec. 3) that when Kiesinger took the oath of office, the Christian Democrats were virtually the only ones to applaud. On the 23rd of March, 1933, after Hitler had gained a majority by outlawing the Communists, the Socialists were the only ones to vote against him. Their leaders paid with death and exile. Thirty years later the Social Democrats come back into government under one who was then a Nazi, and

#### Ky's Glorious Free Press Dept.

"A tame Communist committed to ownership of private property was displayed before the press by the Vietnamese government this afternoon and billed as one of the highest ranking Reds ever to desert the enemy camp. He is Le Trung Chuyen, a handsome, well-dressed, neatly groomed Lt. Colonel. . . . Chuyen's views seemed in so many ways to parallel those of Premier Ky and the Military Directorate. . . . There were smiles from the Vietnamese press at part of his reply as to why he had defected. 'I think that we should be free,' he said. 'I read the newspapers from the south because you can talk about what you want, report about what you want.' The Vietnamese newsmen were smiling because their press is heavily censored, and obviously so because each day there are large white patches on the front pages and editorial pages where offending items have literally been chiselled out."

—Ward Just from Saigon in Wash. Post, Nov. 29.

as junior partner with a party which is the lineal descendant of those Catholic Centrists who voted that day to make Hitler dictator. Willy Brandt's own son, Peter, joined 1500 demonstrators, mostly students, in Berlin who marched with banners reading "Black and red—democracy dead" (black for the Catholic clericals, red for the Socialists) while the novelist Gunther Grass, Brandt's friend, also protested.

*France-Soir's* Bonn correspondent reported (Nov. 29) that it took an all-night debate to get 60% of the Socialist deputies to accept the coalition agreement with Kiesinger. The opposition thought the party ought not to associate itself with the CDU just when it had proven bankrupt in economic as well as foreign policy, that it ought not to ally itself with a nationalist like Strauss and that the millions who voted Socialist in the last election did not do so to place an ex-Nazi at the head of the government. Seven of the 11 Social Democratic State organizations disapproved, and in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, the Social Democrats formed a "little coalition" with the Free Democrats. The leader of the Young Socialists even went so far as to propose the organization of an opposition group within the Social Democratic party. The fear was expressed that the Big Coalition would create disillusion with democracy by producing a huge bureaucratic state, with no real policy, leaving the opposition to the Reich's extreme right-wingers, the so-called National Democrats. Only the State Department seems to regard the new government with satisfaction.

### We May Kill A Lot More People But We'll Make the Pimps and Whores Happy

"Saigon, Dec. 2—U.S. combat troops will start moving into the Mekong Delta south of Saigon 'by the end of the year' Premier Nguyen Cao Ky said today. . . . Premier Ky belittled reservations expressed by South Vietnamese politicians and some American diplomats. The reservations centered on possible anti-American reactions by the people in the densely populated delta to heavy civilian casualties that use of U.S. firepower is expected to entail."

—New York Times, Dec. 3.

"Cantho, South Vietnam, Dec. 2—Confident that large

numbers of U.S. troops are coming here soon, South Vietnamese businessmen and women are turning their attention to this central Mekong Delta city.

"In the last three months, construction has doubled. Real estate prices have doubled, tripled and in some cases increased tenfold, sources say. Every day bar girls and prostitutes step off rickety buses from Saigon, 80 miles to the north, scanning through heavily made up eyes their new base of operations."

—Same paper, same day.

## The Mystery of Tran Van Tran's Assassination: He Was for Peace Talks

### Third World Grumbling Over U Thant's Surrender to Big Power Pressure

**EXTRA:** The news at press time of Tran Van Van's assassination in Saigon is puzzling. The UPI ticker reported, "Many of Van's colleagues in the Assembly refused to believe the police version" that he had been killed by Viet Cong agents. Reuters said the Assembly would establish an investigating committee of its own. Tran Van Van was Ky's principal rival for the Presidency. Though a wealthy landowner, a right winger and an opponent of land reform, the astute and urbane Tran Van Van was also an opponent of military rule as he had been of the Diem dictatorship, and advocated a negotiated peace. He was a leader of the Mekong Delta southerners and a critic of Ky's military junta as Northern dominated.

Behind the unanimity with which the Security Council and the General Assembly (with one abstention, probably Albania) greeted U Thant's decision to accept another full term as Secretary General was considerable private disagreement among the non-aligned nations. Though it may seem fantastic to Americans conditioned by the cold war, the fear which obsesses the non-aligned is U.S.-Soviet domination of the world.\*

#### The Bombings Punctuate Their Fears

The continued bombing of North Vietnam, and the lack of Soviet counter-action, they see as a threatening shadow across their own future. They ask whether Vietnam, like Hungary before it, are samples of what the small powers are to expect if they challenge the two big ones. They regard U Thant's statement last September that he would not run again as a salutary protest, and some believe he should have held out for an end to the bombings as the price of staying on. They note that he said his change of mind under pressure from the great powers "is not based on any new element which has developed in recent weeks or any fond hope for the foreseeable future." This clearly means no promises were made him. This background makes it easier to understand

\* It is indicative that Jeune Afrique, the Tunisian publication which is "the third world's" best weekly, runs a comic strip "Seraphina Contre Octagone" which relates the adventures of a secret agent fighting the "Octogon." The Octogon, modelled on the Pentagon, is the HQ of the SAR—the Soviet-American Republic!

#### The Peasant, Not the Guerrilla, Gets Hit

"The Pentagon, aware the Viet Cong fears sudden bombing attacks most, has almost doubled the force of B-52s flying missions to Vietnam . . . they get no warning from the high-flying B-52s and, unless they are near reinforced underground tunnels, they have no way to evade the 500-pound and 750-pound bombs."

—AP in Christian Science Monitor Dec. 3.

"Most of the large Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units which operate in South Vietnam are warned of the imminence of a B-52 raid about two hours before they take place."

—Le Monde, p. 24, Nov. 30, quoting U.S. officers in the high plateau regions who say Soviet trawlers off Guam flash a warning when the B-52s set off. It takes the B-52 four hours to reach Vietnam while the warning can be spread in two hours. A U.S. Colonel Kingston is quoted by the Agence France Presse as saying this is why they never find corpses on the ground after a B-52 raid but only in tunnels or shelters where there has been a direct hit.

the Secretary General's revelation at a diplomatic luncheon given him by the Egyptians Dec. 6 that even some of his "very close colleagues and well-meaning friends" had doubts about the propriety of his changing his mind.

Our own faith in U Thant as a man of the purest devotion gives us faith in his decision. The plea that the organization might be irreparably damaged by a fight over the finding of a successor must have weighed heavily with him, as well as the enhanced authority offered him for his personal initiatives as Secretary General. It was no mean achievement in the den of wolves which is world power politics that this obscure civil servant from one of the world's smallest countries should have won so pivotal a position in this precarious and limited attempt at a world government. He has proven himself worthy of his lonely and frustrating post. When he told the General Assembly, "I shall seize every occasion to recall that this war must be ended," these—from him—were not empty words.

#### Land Reform Rejected by South Vietnam's Landlord Dominated Constituent Assembly

Land reform was supposed to have been given top priority at the Honolulu and Manila conferences. It has just been overwhelmingly rejected by South Vietnam's new Constituent Assembly, but with little attention from the U.S. In the Christian Science Monitor (Dec. 1) Dr. Phan Quang Dan, a Harvard educated physician, was quoted as telling the Assembly, "We must have a clear land reform program. Otherwise the Communists will win." Dr. Dan said that before the war the rice sharecroppers were "oppressed by the landowners" and fear their return. One of his few supporters explained, "Land reform is most needed in the Mekong Delta, but most of the delegates from that region are large landowners. About ten of them own over 1,000 hectares [2500 acres] each."

The proposal was to give every peasant the constitutional right to the land he is now tilling. "Although 'land to the tiller' is the Viet Cong chief rallying cry among the 80 percent landless peasantry of the Mekong Delta," Richard

Critchfield reported in the Washington Star Dec. 1, the only other paper we saw which paid any attention to the story, "the measure got only three votes." This will make the "pacification" of the Delta more difficult. A lot of American boys will die in an effort to restore these landlords. The U.S. Embassy is expert at alerting the press when it wants to, but made no effort to focus attention on this vote.

The same Critchfield dispatch said the Embassy had been "actively encouraging" the Assembly to draft a Constitution like South Korea's where the military rule behind a civilian facade. But the Assembly though reactionary has a civilian majority and voted to bar the military from active politics and to adopt an American-style Constitution. Three days after this vote, the military junta announced (UPI in Washington Post Dec. 4) that it was rejecting the Assembly's demand that the military give up its veto power over any proposed new Constitution. This is how we bring freedom to South Vietnam.