Adenauer's Real Function In Postwar West Germany

How The U.S. Plays Out A Banana Republic Comedy in Greece

A capsule history would say that German capitalism gambled on Hitler and fell back in defeat on Adenauer. It succeeded (with the help of its opposite numbers in U.S. finance and industry) in regaining power behind the facade of a Republic as far to the right as was feasible. To head it West Germany's masters found in Adenauer as authoritarian a figure as ever presided over a parliamentary system. John Foster Dulles, lifelong counsel for German big business interests and an apologist for Nazi expansion turned up to mold U.S. policy in their favor after the war. He and Adenauer became the Siamese twins of the cold war, a continuation in new guise of Hitler's holy war against Communism. Two major decisions set West Germany's course. In 1949 Adenauer turned to the right, including the far right, rather than to the Social Democrats for the votes he needed to become Chancellor. In 1952 he rejected Soviet proposals for a unified but neutral Reich with an army of its own and chose instead the road of division and NATO. Perhaps the best that can be said of Adenauer was that he was slightly less unlovely than his equally rigid and humorless old antagonist, Ulbricht.

Charade in Greece

Greece, the first "frontier of freedom" in the cold war and its starting point, is like West Germany another example of the U.S. tendency to restore the Old Order, or as close a simulacrum as possible, under cover of fighting Communism. There the U.S., the world's oldest republic, has been doing its best to maintain Europe's last *un*constitutional monarchy. U.S. propaganda pictures the Greek monarchy as a unifying force between the politically turbulent Greeks, but its record is one of rightist intrigue. When the monarchy was restored in 1935 after 11 years of republicanism, the King, the present one's Uncle, proceeded within a few months to impose a military-Fascist dictatorship on the country which lasted until the Axis invaded in World War II. The pattern seems now to be repeating itself. The monarchist oligarchy ruled Greece with U.S. help until the elections of 1963-64 gave Papandreou's new middle class liberal Center Union an absolute majority. But the King soon forced him out of office when Papandreou tried to end the system which made the Army officer class the tool of the throne and the preserve of a rightist upper class. Months of intrigue and tension were to have ended with new elections May 28 but the Army has seized power for fear that Papandreou would win them.

One has to be pretty credulous to believe that this coup was pulled off without consulting the King, the U.S. military mission and the CIA. Our guess is that they decided to preserve the appearance of royal detachment. It is reported here that the U.S. Ambassador, in this well-planned charade, even warned the military the U.S. would break off relations if they dethroned the King! There are no reports that we threatened U.S. action unless the Constitution were restored.

Bouquets, Bombs and Brickbats

WE CONGRATULATE the faculty and students of Catholic University for their victory in forcing the retention of Father Charles E. Curran as a professor of theology and in making Cardinal Spellman and the other trustees back down in this opening struggle for more academic freedom in Catholic colleges.

WE CONDEMN the Tito government for its cowardice in imposing four more years of prison on the writer Mihajlo Mihajlov. What moral significance is left in Tito's revolt against Stalin if a Yugoslav writer cannot tell the truth about Stalinism without falling afoul of the Soviet Embassy in Belgrade and his own government? Mihajlov is a martyr in the struggle to restore freedom of opinion in the Soviet bloc.

WE ENDORSE the appeal by Rabbi Abraham L. Feinberg to the West European Communist leaders at the European Communist Conference April 24-27 in Czechoslovakia to save Soviet Jewry from cultural extinction. Rabbi Feinberg was recently in Hanoi with the late A. J. Muste and Pastor Martin Niemoeller. The Soviet Union prides itself on cultural autonomy for its diverse peoples, but denies this to Russian Jewry. It is a black mark on the USSR that a community which was able, under Czarism, to produce so rich a culture in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, is being asphyxiated by prejudice and hostility.

De Gaulle Knuckles Under to the U.S. and Bans the Russell War Crimes Trial

Jean-Paul Sartre, chairman of the Russell war crimes tribunal, wrote General de Gaulle April 13 to protest the refusal of a French visa to Vladimir Dedijer, who was to preside over a session of the tribunal opening on April 26. The General's reply, the text of which was published April 24 in Le Figaro, finally shuts the doors of France to this war crimes trial.

De Gaulle addresses Sartre as "Mon cher Maitre." The letter is written with that distinction for which de Gaulle is famous. Yet it must make his admirers blush. It admits the views held by the organizers are close to the official French position on Vietnam. De Gaulle says he does not question the motives of Lord Russell and his collaborators. But he does not think their moral weight enhanced by assuming the robes of a court. He says he cannot permit an ally like the U.S. to be the object of so extravagant a proceeding on French soil. It is not for me to teach you," de Gaulle writes Sartre, "that all justice, in its principles as in its execution, belongs only to the State." This is not how the men of the Resistance felt.

De Gaulle denies that freedom of expression is involved. But the fact is that under U.S. pressure the doors of one country after another in "the free world" have been closed to the Tribunal. If its pretensions are as ludicrous as the U.S. claims, why is Washington so fearful of allowing it to proceed? The fact is that our conduct in Vietnam, North and South, cries out for examination in the light of the principles we established at Nuremberg. If any other big power were doing to any other small power, what we are doing to Vietnam, the roar of condemnation here would be overwhelming. I wish there were a more august tribunal to try the charges, but this is the only one there is. We're glad Sweden will give the Tribunal a home. Our country which invoked a decent respect for the opinion of mankind in setting forth its declaration of independence, now fears that same opinion. As well it should.

Behind the New Reports of Starvation in the Rural South

How the Surplus Food and Food Stamp Programs Have Been Hobbled

By Robert Sherrill *

For 16 months Congressmen have been going into the Deep South and returning with reports of starvation. First, it was New York's Joe Resnick, in December 1965. He wrote Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman and President Johnson of "terrible" conditions; but nothing happened. This month Sen. Joseph Clark and his anti-poverty subcommittee went to Mississippi and found blacks living on rice and soybeans. So what else is new? Gene Roberts, writing in the *New York Times*, Feb. 6, 1966, told of eating with a family of 11 on the Delta who were surviving on "pork neckbone, water, syrup, and 'flourbread'." Freeman, responding to Clark's report as if this were the first he had heard of such things, now has a study team in the South.

Where the Fault Is Freeman's

More might be expected from Freeman if the starvation conditions had not been created in the first place by him and the Southerners who run the farm committees in Congress.

The federal food stamp program requires impoverished people to pay a part, which is sometimes impossible. Families with no income—and they are common on the Mississippi Delta, where unemployment runs between 60 and 90 percent —must pay $2 a person (maximum $12 a family) to get bonus stamps. It's a good deal: $12 in stamps can be traded for $70 in food. But where does a "broke" Negro get $12? For months, Freeman's own Civil Rights Advisory Committee has been trying to persuade him to drop the minimum to 50 cents a head, but he refuses, just as he has refused to use the emergency provisions of USDA Sect. 32, which for 30 years have given the secretary the authority to give free food to poor people anywhere.

Instead, Freeman has crimped. The distribution of surplus commodities (flour, cheese, oats, whatever the farmers had too much of) is still the system in some areas. When counties shifted to the food stamp program (stamps good for any food on the shelf), sometimes up to 39 percent of the needy had to drop out. (Freeman lobbied against permitting both programs to operate in the same county.) In eight counties that switched from surplus to stamps, 36,000 needy did not have the $2 a head to go along. So they go hungry.

Now there is a new threat. Rep. Poage of Texas, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, is pushing legislation requiring the states to put up 20 percent of the cost of bonus food. Poage's district doesn't have the stamp program, and the same is true of 15 other committeemen's districts. If it gets through Congress, few of the 41 states now in the program are expected to stay in.

The purpose of the forced hunger is obvious: The whites want the Negroes to move out. Field hands are in oversupply everywhere. Mississippi conditions are good, compared to some other states. All Mississippi counties have some food program, but South Carolina allows stamps in only 10 of 32 counties and it gives away no surplus commodities.

You can't keep 'em down on the farm when they are starving. Mississippi lost 40 percent of its tenant farmers between 1959 and 1964, and since then the rate of exodus has not diminished. A Congress that won't overrule Freeman and the Dixiecrats will get its payoff in the slums next summer and for many summers.

*Author of that newly published acid and ribald portrait of Lyndon Johnson, "The Accidental President."

Just Soul Brothers on Surplus Food

"You know, I have a colored friend down home who gets commodities. He does not care anything about that powdered milk they give him. He does not like it. So, you know who he gives it to? He gives it to me. We like it. He gets some dried beans every now and then—the same kind that goes into the bean soup in the House Restaurant. He says he does not eat those beans. You know who he gives them to? He brings them to my house. He says, 'Would you like to have these because if you don't want them I am going to throw them away anyhow.' Well, he gets so much cheese . . . every now and then he brings that to me."

—Rep. John Bell Williams (Miss) on the surplus food program, House speech, Feb. 9, 1966.

The Agriculture Dept. More Concerned With Farm Profits Than Hungry People

"Where there is no existing food program, we urge that one be inaugurated immediately with USDA Section 32, OEO or funds from the President's emergency budget or other source. . . . As the stamp law was written, a county could not have both a commodity and a stamp program except in an emergency. In areas where income levels are so low as to preclude the purchase of stamps, an emergency should be declared, under Section 4 (b) of Public Law 88-525 and direct distribution of surplus commodities be re-established alongside the food stamp program until corrective action has been taken.

"USDA charges a minimum of $2 per month for stamps for one person up to a maximum of $12 a month for a family of six or more. In Congressional consideration of the bill it was made clear, explicitly, that food stamps could and would be given free where there was lack of income. The USDA has disregarded this legislative history and banned all free stamps. . . .

"We urge that the administration of the direct food and food stamp and school lunch programs be transferred to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare . . . the basic orientation of the program should be in the direction of nutrition and not for subsidizing agricultural producers. The Department of Agriculture, bound as it is and has been by its primary responsibility to commercial agricultural producers, restricted by laws aimed at prices rather than nutrition, and strongly influenced by the geographical makeup of the Congressional committees which control its authorizations and appropriations has piled up a record which leaves a great deal to be desired. . . .

"It is an immense irony that while most of us eat so well and so cheaply, several million of our fellow citizens suffer not just from inadequate diets but even from actual hunger."

—Internal report on which Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty based its recommendations of April 4, 1967.