

The Improbable Demagogue Of Little Rock, Ark.

COLBERT S. CARTWRIGHT

SINCE September 2, 1957, when Governor Orval E. Faubus of Arkansas called out the National Guard to prevent integration of the races in Little Rock's Central High School, few persons inside or outside Arkansas have been willing to accept the governor's words at their face value. What were his hidden motives for taking an action that shook the nation and even brought President Eisenhower back to Washington from his Newport vacation? Was Faubus deliberately trying to further his personal political ambitions? Was he seeking to make a test case for the Southern states on the legal possibility of interposing the power of a state against the decrees of a Federal court?

Startling as it may sound, it seems entirely possible that the governor, whose position has become more and more untenable, had no hidden motives at all.

IT IS UNLIKELY, at least at the beginning, that Faubus's primary motive was to capitalize upon the racial issue in Arkansas for political gain. Throughout his career Faubus has been careful to cultivate the steadily increasing Negro vote. He is the first Arkansas governor to appoint Negroes to the state Democratic Central Committee. In last year's campaign for election to a second term as governor, he successfully courted the large majority of the Negro vote.

Whatever else he may have achieved, he has certainly lost any support from that direction.

Nor could the governor have counted on improving his political position among segregationists by his actions on September 2—although the way events have turned out, he

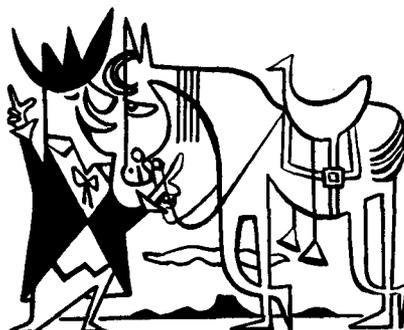
has now become their hero. At the very time he mobilized the militia, he pointed out that he was not opposed to the integration of other school districts in his state. He referred with pride to the peaceful integration of state colleges during his administration. Those who have previously criticized his moderate stand still don't entirely trust the man, however much they may support him publicly.

No substantial evidence has been presented that Governor Faubus operated in concert with other Southern politicians to test the validity of the doctrine of "interposition." In the past Faubus has generally been regarded by governors and senators of the Deep South as a moderate on the question of integration, and his recent actions are not enough to convince them that he has made an about-face. He has tolerated and encouraged some integration, and it is doubtful whether extreme segregationists in the Deep South, or even in his own state, can ever really forgive him for that.

A Specialist in Blind Alleys

To understand why Governor Faubus took steps to defy Federal authority at Little Rock, it is necessary to know the man himself.

Despite a fairly commendable



public record, on more than one occasion the governor has landed himself in untenable positions concerning internal problems. In the recent past he has gone down a series of blind alleys in attacking with little apparent foundation the administration of the girls' training school, the state highway department, and the state mental hospital.

On the day before the governor called out the state militia, a Little Rock reporter, George Douthit, raised the question why the governor so often placed himself in these positions. Douthit reported the explanation he had been given by one of Faubus's closest associates: "Faubus will fall for any story, however fantastic, if it is told with sufficient conviction."

This quirk in the governor's character goes a long way in explaining why Faubus pitted the weight of his office against the Federal government. White Citizens' Council members knew his weakness and played upon it for all it was worth. Tales of threatened violence flooded into the governor's office.

The press got a glimpse of Faubus's weakness for fantastic stories at his press conference a few hours after the armed militia turned nine Negro students away from Central High School.

In defending his order to the commander of the National Guard "to place off limits to colored students the schools heretofore operated or recently set up for white students," Faubus commented: "Now this report came to me this morning that when the Negro students, accompanied by parents, were attempting to enter, white students at the door shouted out to them, 'Let them come on in and we'll take care of them.'" The reporters he was talking to knew perfectly well that nothing of the kind had happened. The Negro children had approached school unattended by their parents, and the Guard stopped them a block away from the door, without commotion.

What of the governor's court testimony concerning the "sale of unusually large numbers of weapons in the Little Rock area"? Of revolvers taken from students in high school? Of caravans converging upon Little Rock from many points of the state? Neither city officials nor enterprising



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reporters were ever able to discover any foundation for these serious allegations.

The governor himself revealed the source of his information when he reported in his state-wide broadcast on the eve of the opening of school: "Telephone calls have come to me at the Mansion in a constant stream and the expression of all are the fear of disorder and violence and of the harm that may occur on the morrow in this attempt at forcible integration of Central High School." Here at least it was clear that the phone calls were no fabrication of the governor's mind. Citizens' Council members who had studied the governor knew how to influence him. They succeeded.

THERE IS a second personality trait that often gets Faubus into trouble: He is strangely reluctant about asking for competent advice.

I asked one of Faubus's closest associates how the governor usually makes his decisions. He replied: "Faubus just does not seek advice. He is possibly the most accessible governor in the Union to those who wish to catch his ear. He will listen to all who come to him. He will weigh their views to the best of his ability. The trouble with him is that often he does not hear all sides—or even the most important sides—to a problem."

I reminded him that when Faubus called out the militia he told his fellow Arkansans: "This is a decision I have reached prayerfully. It has been made after conferences with dozens of people and after the checking and the verification of as many of the reports as possible."

My informant, who is regarded by many to have the greatest single influence upon Faubus, replied that he had not been consulted by the governor in this matter. "Although I have been influential with the



governor at many points, I have always had to go to him. Only twice has he called me for advice."

It would have been reasonable to expect that the governor in his "conferences with dozens of people" would have sought the advice of his five-man committee appointed for the purpose of studying the school problem as it relates to integration. None of these men was consulted by Faubus before he called the militia into action.

Nor did Governor Faubus consult the political leaders in eastern Arkansas, where the Negro population is proportionately largest and where the strongest demands have been made for state action against enforced integration.

It is important to note that eastern Arkansas' political leaders have not been happy about Faubus's handling of the Little Rock problem. They have been firm in approv-

ing his earlier and oft-repeated stand against "forcible integration." They have also agreed with the governor that "These matters must be left to the will of the people in the various districts. The people must decide on the basis of what is best as a whole for each particular area."

The foremost legal mind of the eastern Arkansas segregationists, R. B. McCulloch, Sr., of Forrest City, has designed all segregationist legislation upon this basis. But he has publicly stated more than once that a school-assignment law will be upheld by the courts only if there is some at least minimal racial mixing in the schools.

The Little Rock school board's use of the school-assignment law to whittle down a possible integration of 250 Negro pupils to nine—and with Federal court approval—was exactly what eastern Arkansas political leaders wanted. It proved that generally their strategy of keeping racial mixing to the barest minimum would be successful. But they were not consulted.

Predicament of a 'Preservator'

The simple fact is that a small group of extreme segregationists at Little Rock sized up the governor and sold him a bill of goods based on fabrications. It never crossed the minds of the moderate segregationists that the governor would alter his past strategy in dealing with the Little Rock situation. Everyone but Citizens' Council members assumed he would keep hands off.

In a steady procession the extreme segregationists pressed their case. Using agitator John Kasper's techniques of psychological warfare, they built up their case to the governor. They not only convinced him of imminent threat of danger but carefully provided him with a rationale for the actions he should take. They introduced to him the idea that he was, as he put it, the "preservator of the peace," a term strange to the governor until the Citizens' Council members began their work. Acting solely upon the advice of those who had come to him, Governor Faubus went down the darkest blind alley of his career.

According to responsible sources, it was not until Representative Brooks Hays, a fellow Southern

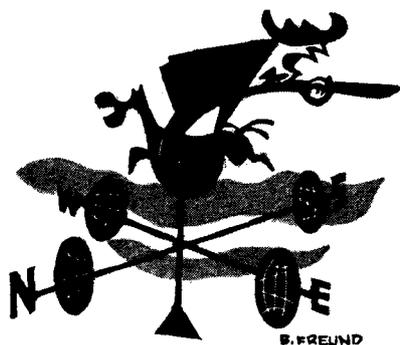
Baptist, went to see Faubus that the governor was made to see the impossible position he was in. Hays, a close friend of Presidential Assistant Sherman Adams, knew at first hand that the Federal government in no way could or would back down. He knew there was a stern commitment to use whatever force was necessary to uphold the Federal court's ruling that the process of integration should begin immediately at Little Rock.

Up to the time that Hays got in touch with Faubus, the governor had heard nothing from political advisers except the Citizens' Council line. "Until Hays went to Faubus," a person close to both men told me, "it had not crossed the governor's mind that he might not win his battle against the Federal court."

It now appears that Faubus had gone too far before Hays began his efforts to help the governor find a way to retreat gracefully. It might have been a different story if Hays had gotten there sooner, or if Faubus had less of the curious mixture of timidity and rashness that keeps him from seeking advice.

ORVAL FAUBUS, stumbling into one of the greatest constitutional crises the United States has faced since the Civil War, has now come to believe that his only salvation lies in gaining whatever political advantage he can from his predicament. And when the state militia was federalized and the troops of the 101st Airborne Division began patrolling Central High School with bayonets, Faubus found it fairly simple to raise himself to his highest crest of popularity, at least among a certain segment of the population.

Whether he planned it that way or not, the role of a segregationist leader was automatically thrust upon him from the moment Federal troops marched into Little Rock.



The Eisenhower Doctrine Fails in Syria

CHALMERS M. ROBERTS

ON THURSDAY, August 15, the House of Representatives voted 252 to 130 to keep a twenty-five per cent cut in the foreign-aid bill despite last minute pleas by President Eisenhower. Most of the capital was more interested in the political maneuvering that day over the civil-rights bill, already passed by the Senate, and many members of Congress reported that they were under pressure from home to cut foreign aid as the easiest way to trim the budget.

It was in this atmosphere that word reached Washington from Damascus that General Tewfik Nizamuddin had been fired as the Syrian Army's commander in chief. The next day Colonel Affif Bizri, the Army's G-1, or personnel chief, was named the new commander and quickly promoted to general. This was how the Syrian crisis came to a head, a crisis that opened a new chapter in the Soviet-American conflict whose end is still well over the horizon.

From Where We Stand

The earlier Middle Eastern foreign-policy crises had come with far more dramatic suddenness to the general public—for instance, when Nasser seized the Suez Canal and when the Israelis invaded the Sinai. Of course Syria is not unrelated to Suez, and thus far it has proved just as hard for Washington to grapple with, harder even than it was to block Nasser's efforts last April to take over Jordan. Syria's importance lies in the possibility, even the probability, that it demonstrates a pattern ahead for crisis after crisis in other Arab and Middle Eastern nations.

American policy in the Syrian affair has largely been one of response to Soviet challenge. And American policy has been responsive to the will of Saudi Arabia's King Saud much as American policy in Europe has so often been responsive to the

will of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. One of the unhappy differences, however, is Saud's utter lack of demonstrated support by his own people.

To understand why the United States appears to have run first hot and then cold in the Syrian affair, it is necessary to go back to April, 1955, when a historic announcement of the Foreign Ministry of the Soviet Union launched the current Soviet effort to invade the Middle East with all means short of war.

IT IS DOUBTLESS true that most Arabs do not see today's ferment in their part of the world in terms of a Soviet-American or East-West conflict. But today there is no doubt at all that Syria as a problem is viewed by Washington in just such a context. Secretary Dulles deeply believes what he told the United Nations General Assembly on September 19: that the Kremlin is attempting to use "the technique that Stalin and Lenin had prescribed for bringing about the 'amalgamation' . . . of the so-called 'colonial and dependent peoples' into the Soviet orbit. This technique, as Lenin specified, involves inciting nationalism to break all ties with the West and thus create so total a dependence upon the Soviet Union that it can take full control."

As President Eisenhower, Dulles, his brother Allen of the Central Intelligence Agency, and the handful of others who make American policy all see it, the Soviets have been probing for soft spots with special emphasis on three strategically placed Arab nations: first Egypt, which controls the Suez Canal; now Syria, which controls all the Middle Eastern oil pipelines to the Mediterranean; and concurrently Yemen, adjoining British Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea.

After the April, 1955, Foreign Ministry announcement came the arms deal with Egypt. The world's atten-