

ing the chance of electing a Socialist or other left-wing president, they would refrain from imposing any conditions that might make him their hostage in the Elysée. Conceivable but unlikely.

The situation would look even grimmer but for one thing. The Socialists have only one potential candidate who might be taken seriously by the country: Gaston Defferre. In fact, Defferre is probably the only candidate the whole French Left could put up who would have a serious chance. And Defferre, though he has disappointed a number of his former admirers by his failure to put up an honest fight for his anti-Communist convictions, is a man of some character. Moreover, he has a basically modern outlook that contrasts with the anachronistic political attitudes of many Socialist bosses. He has campaigned discreetly to convert the Socialist Party from the French Section of a mythical Workers' International into a mass party like Labour in Britain, and he is known to favor—with some reforms—the presidential form of government introduced by de Gaulle. (Mollet and most of the other Socialist bosses would seemingly like to turn the clock back to parliamentary chaos.) Mollet made it clear to his audience in the southwest that he personally had little enthusiasm for Defferre's candidacy but announced that the directing committee of the party would rule on the general issue of the Socialist attitude toward the campaign at a meeting on December 18.

Coming out of that meeting, Defferre announced his candidacy. The executive committee put off the question of supporting him until February. Since Defferre is the man he is, there is at least an equal chance that he will finally decide—if necessary in defiance of his own party—to run without seeking Communist support. As sometimes happens, courage might turn out to be more rewarding than expediency. It was precisely the hope that French politicians would thus be forced to transcend their weaknesses and rise above their limitations that led de Gaulle to stake his own political career on the constitutional referendum that established election of the president by direct universal suffrage.

Gambit with Pawns

GEORGE BAILEY

BERLIN
THERE ARE two tenets of West German foreign policy that will remain impervious to any change of administration. One is the determination to keep the Western Alliance alive and functioning. The other is the *Drang nach Berlin*. A striking example of the second tenet was the sudden burst of West German economic activity in the satellites during 1963. In less than a year the Federal Republic signed significant agreements establishing trade missions in Poland, Romania, and Hungary. (A similar agreement with Czechoslovakia is imminent.) Each agreement contained a proviso recognizing West Germany's connection with West Berlin. Using its own economic weapons, the Federal Republic thus took a long stride toward outflanking and isolating the East German Communist régime. The success of the operation was a tribute to Adenauer's foresight. Using Krupp's plenipotentiary, Berthold Beitz, to make soundings as early as two years ago, Adenauer timed the initiatives to coincide with the breakdown of the satellite economies.

Another West German initiative in this direction was more symbolic. As parties of the old four-power agreements, the allied commandants have tried assiduously to reduce West German influence in Berlin. Ever since Khrushchev's ultimatum in November, 1958, and particularly since the construction of the Wall, their efforts have centered on restraining the Federal Republic from making public demonstrations or holding official meetings in support of its claims. Until the 1958 ultimatum, the West German parliament (Bundestag) held periodic plenary "show" sessions in Berlin. Since the ultimatum, the allies have managed to discourage such sessions, advising the West Germans that they would constitute unnecessary provocations to the Communists.

To counter this policy, the Federal Republic has relied on a gradual, almost stealthy restoration of the old Reichstag building. For some

ten years a small number of artisans have been at work repairing the burnt-out hulk that abuts the Wall in West Berlin. Work was originally permitted by the commandants on the assumption that the building came under the heading of "cultural ruins worthy of restoration." Still, repair work was so desultory that "the restoration of the Reichstag" became a standing joke in Berlin. One day last November, however, the commandants awoke to discover that the south wing of the Reichstag was ready for use. In a solemn dedication ceremony on November 11, the president of the Bundestag, Eugen Gerstenmaier, received the keys to seven conference halls and forty-five office rooms from the Federal minister of finance—a symbolic sidelight on the fact that the Federal Republic budgets a billion marks annually to the Berlin economy by way of grants-in-aid. Of the total Federal aid to date, thirty million marks have been spent on the restoration of the Reichstag.

IN HIS dedication speech, Gerstenmaier quietly emphasized the Bundestag's right to hold plenary sessions in Berlin. But more important, Gerstenmaier's dedication of the Reichstag was an act of defiance: the allied commandants pointedly refrained even from sending their representatives to the function. To compound the commandants' disgruntlement, the West Berlin senate innocently informed them that "the reopening of the Reichstag" had necessitated a change in the restricted area near the Wall. Two weeks later, four Federal parliamentary committees convened in the south wing. The following week, ten committees from Bonn were in session there. Thus for once, salami tactics had been applied quietly in Berlin by the West Germans. In effect the Federal Republic had served notice that the Bundestag is in the Reichstag. The decision has been taken to hold the presidential election next spring, which involves the Bundestag plus delegates from twelve West

German states, in the Reichstag.

Alarmed by the success of both of these West German initiatives, the East German Communists decided to strike back in the only way open to them—by making pawns of the hostage population of East Berlin. The offer to issue passes for West Berliners to visit their relatives in East Berlin over the Christmas holidays was irresistible. Neither the West Berlin senate nor the Federal Republic nor, for that matter, the allied commandants could afford to refuse or even to discourage the gambit, although it entailed negotiations with the East German puppet régime. The issue affected four hundred thousand West Berliners who had not seen their close kin in the two and a half years since the Wall. And it was Christmas, the zenith of German sentimentality.

The offer had a triple purpose: to force negotiations; to force them exclusively with the West Berlin senate, thus stressing the separation of West Berlin from West Germany in accordance with the Communist contention that West Berlin is a third German state—a contention not challenged by the allied tendency to play down the presence of the Federal Republic in Berlin; and finally, as a “humanitarian” act, to provide evidence of Communist good faith in a policy of relaxation.

Thus the decision by the East German Communists to offer and finally to grant Christmas passes to eligible West Berliners represented another legal maneuver to build up a body of precedent to strengthen their claim to recognition. Despite its qualifying language, the protocol signed by an accredited representative of the West Berlin senate and a representative of the German Democratic Republic on December 17 establishes at least a minor precedent; it is a point gained by the Communists. In the chess game over Berlin, the protocol is a form of backdoor recognition. The agreement also strikingly reaffirmed two more objective realities about the Berlin Wall: first, that it is there and there to stay; second, that it was built not to keep the West Berliners out but to keep the East Berliners in. There was never any discussion about East Berliners being permitted to visit the West.



‘Honest Brokers’ In the Nuclear Muddle

LAURENCE W. MARTIN

THE preliminary campaigning for the 1964 general election in Britain is now well under way and the major parties are both eager to make defense policy a major issue. Postwar British defense policy has been bedeviled by a variety of vacillating policies, service rivalries, political expedients, and technological failures to such an extent that the Army Director of Ammunition described a recent major operation, in a sour paraphrase of the RAF’s once proud motto, as “Per Ardua Ad Hoc.” Battle is now joined between Conservatives and Labour over all these shortcomings, but the dramatic center of the British debate, as in all the great and would-be great powers, is nuclear. And in this, as in other matters, each of the parties argues that it offers not only what is best for Britain but best for the world. Indeed, there is keen competition in Britain these days over who would make the best “honest broker” in resolving the problems of Europe.

The new prime minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, has boldly thrown down a direct electoral challenge on nuclear policy. Opening the current session of Parliament in November, he declared, “I must make the posi-

tion of the government crystal clear on this matter. The government mean to retain our long-range nuclear forces—our V-bombers and our Polaris submarines—under our own control. They are . . . prescribed to the NATO Alliance, but they will all remain ultimately under the control of the British government. . . . France, the United States, and Russia have all got their own, or will have their own, independent nuclear deterrent. I intend in due course to put this question of Britain’s independent deterrent to the electors . . . before this goes to the electors, I think that the House and the country would be interested in the policy of the Opposition.” To this Labour’s new leader, Harold Wilson, immediately retorted that if the prime minister “would like to discuss this or any other aspects of Labour Party policy, I shall be delighted to discuss them, either in this House or in public on television, with him.”

THUS the Conservative government has nailed the colors of national nuclear forces to its mast. It promises to prolong the life of the subsonic V-bombers with guided bombs, to press on with the low-level, medium-range TSR 2 aircraft, to pro-