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'God Cares For Drunkards, Children & The U.S.'

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WASHINGTON

The scene was the embassy of a neutral country with exceptional experience of the Kremlin's ways, in one of the capitals behind the Iron Curtain where the mood in the Kremlin makes the daily political weather. The topic of conversation was the Berlin crisis.

The remarkably shrewd ambassador had asked, with ostentatious casualness, what American intentions really were. He was reminded of the President's declaration that he "would not give an inch." At this he laughed lightly, and remarked that he was not asking about the announced American policy, but about the real American policy. The President certainly meant what he said, was the reply. Whereupon the ambassador genuinely blanched with alarm, and burst out:

WORDS AND ACTS

"But if your President really means what he says, in God's name why does he not act as though he meant it? In the Kremlin, they judge by acts, not words. They may misunderstand. They may go too far. And then there will be a real danger of war that can destroy us all."

The foregoing is this reporter's single most vivid memory of a European journey not lacking in vivid experiences. What was implied by the ambassador's sharp reaction to a seeming statement of the obvious was in turn confirmed by many other observations. From Poland's Foreign Minister Rapacki and Hungary's Communist boss, Janos Kadar, on down, the Hungarian and Polish leaders and officials I was permitted to see made it plain that they did not believe for one instant that President Eisenhower was in earnest about "not giving an inch" at Berlin. The smug, superior, incredulous smiles of the two or three Soviet diplomats I was able to talk to, said the same thing in a rather more infuriating manner.

WRONG DIRECTION

Maybe all these indicators point in the wrong direction. All the same, they seem to be confirmed by Nikita Krushchev's disturbing recent speech in Riga. Speaking specifically of Secretary of State Christian A. Herter's refusal to give away the Western position at Berlin on Andrei Gromyko's word of command, Krushchev said angrily:

"Even if the policy of positions of strength is irrevocably suffering defeat after defeat, the Western powers continue to stick to this policy. They wish to shun decisions on urgent questions aimed at relaxing international tensions and strengthening peace. But however these gentlemen may try, they are not able to blow a brave spirit into this bankrupt policy of positions of strength."

NOT FAKING

That was simply another way of saying that President Eisenhower was faking about "not giving an inch"—which of course means, if it means anything, that the President will risk war rather than surrender Berlin's freedom. By the same token, it is fairly obvious that Khrushchev thinks the President is faking for two reasons. The first and major reason is the great, unfavorable change in the world balance of military power which has been flaccidly accepted by the President and his administration. The second and more immediate reason is the President's total failure, to date, to take any of the precautionary measures, either military or political, which the Berlin crisis logically demands.

All this does not mean that the Berlin crisis itself, or even the melancholy meeting at Geneva, will necessarily end in disaster. By seeming not to be serious about Berlin, by encouraging a mood of unconcerted complacency in the United States, by taking no military precautions of any kind, by going on with business-as-usual and budget-as-usual, the American government is certainly multiplying the risks very greatly. If you seem not to be in a situation like the Berlin crisis, you really invite your enemy to occupy positions which you cannot tolerate, and from which he cannot easily retreat.

ELBOW FEELING

Yet this reporter still has a feeling in his elbow, for the very little this may be worth, that the Western allies will somehow get round the immediate Berlin corner. At the moment, the feeling is not based on much more than the old rule, "God takes care of drunkards and children, and the United States." Nonetheless, one man can still hope and believe that the fact that the President really does mean what he says about Berlin will dawn on the Soviets before it it too late. Maybe, indeed, they have been changing their minds over the weekend at Geneva. If they begin to take the President seriously, one can also hope an accommodation will be found this time.

That makes the question of the next time, and the time after that, however. The balance of power is still shifting in the Kremlin's favor. It will continue to do so until some years have passed and the missile gap is closed. If we go on through all this period not seeming to be serious, the old rule about drunkards, children, and the United States will hardly hold good forever.



The Brandenburg Gate: Berlin Was On Every Mind

Dixie In The Court Of Public Opinion

The South, we are assured, was on trial in Tallahassee.

Several newspapers safely removed from the scene were quite firm on this point.

In their opinion, there was but one way for Dixie to be "exonerated" in the court of public opinion. That was for four white youths accused of raping a Negro teenager to be sentenced to die in the electric chair. "Social justice" demanded it.

It was the same throughout the trial. The synthetic John Browns shed their ink valiantly. Contemplating no Harpers Ferry, they could afford to deal in bold assumptions.

Seldom has the nation been treated to a more chilling example of pious oversimplification. Virtually every news story out of Tallahassee trumpeted the incidental information that no white man had ever been executed for rape in Florida. Some southern newspapers joined the act, urging the jury to deliberate in the light of what "outsiders" would think. The South's honor, it was suggested, simply had to be defended.

The South's honor was not at stake at Tallahassee. Nor was the South on trial there. But four youths stood before the bar of justice. They were involved in an ugly case but one that should have been decided on its merits. It wasn't a question of white justice, Negro justice or social justice. It was a question of how a jury of the defendants' peers would decide and how a judge would rule and whether men would be punished for their own crimes.

The jury convicted the men—as some confidently predicted it would not—and recommended mercy. Sentences will be pronounced later.

But the post-mortems of the trial continue to stress some mystical form of regional guilt. The court, one is led to believe, had a remarkable opportunity to "prove" something. Prove what? That the South's "honor" can be bought with the lives of four rapists regardless of the merits of their cases or the degrees of their guilt? That the railroading of Negro defendants to the electric chair can be justified by the railroading of white defendants? Hardly.

Poplarville provided another case in point. There, also, the cry was raised, "The South is on trial!" It is like saying, "Society is on trial," when a child misbehaves or that actors are no good because Booth shot Lincoln.

The South is a big region and it contains many different kinds of people. It is not all Tobacco Road, turnip patches and magnolias dripping with molasses. It speaks with many voices—some strident, some calm. But there are southerners who abhor racial injustice and who are trying to do something about it. They are succeeding, too, for the Poplarvilles are becoming fewer. There were 52 lynchings in 1915. There were only 11 between 1948 and 1955 and there has been just one since. They will continue to speak out against evil and somehow manage to correct it.

It is easy enough for the synthetic John Browns to nurture arrogant assumptions of superiority from a safe distance. It is easy for them to say, "You are all guilty!" It is easy—but it is also wrong.

Democrats: Trumpet, Thorn & Whoosh

Sen. Thruston Morton (R-Ky), GOP national chairman, sliced the air with a whoosh when he took a swing last weekend at the Democratic Advisory Council.

The greatest service the Council could render at its current meeting is, he said, to disband—and he was sure Sen. Lyndon Johnson, congressional lead horse of the Democratic Party, would agree.

Yet there was no knockout. The Advisory Council, which numbers party moguls like Adlai Stevenson, Dean Acheson, Harry Truman, and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt in its company, has indeed suffered its adversities. No one could claim that it speaks truly for all Democrats in the nation, nor even for a majority of Democrats in the South. The congressional party leadership can only view its periodic statements on party goals and issues as a thorn, and at best as a trumpeting in the distance which is irrelevant to their problems. As power is currently parceled out in American parties, with a rather clear division between the "legislative" parties and the "White House" and governor's mansion parties, a single mouthpiece seems a bit quixotic.

Yet, could there be a place for such mouthpieces? Mr. Morton's own GOP has recently announced the formation of a "Committee on Program and Progress," looking suspiciously like a cousin of the Democratic Advisory Council. Republicans claim it is not, but it does have the aim of clarifying public debate in its small way.

Americans are keenly aware of the way their national parties seem to vaporize, even vanish, between elections, and have always wanted to stop this seasonal disappearance. The desire is not esthetic alone. The power of a party dissipates, even in office, when it ceases to have at least one strong "voice" and becomes a Babel.

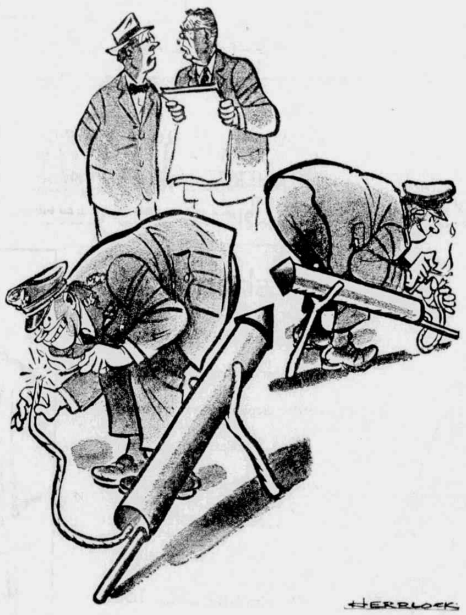
The Democratic Advisory Council falls a long way short of being a clarion voice, satisfactorily reflective of all elements in the party. It has not vanquished congressional leaders like Johnson and Rayburn. But the abundance of its critics may indicate it is having an effect—even that it may be riding the trend of the future.

A distinguished political scientist, Stephen K. Bailey of Princeton, endorses the advisory council idea as one pillar that would strengthen the American party system. He does so in "The Condition Of Our National Political Parties," an important study just issued by the Fund for The Republic. Mr. Bailey writes:

> The Democratic Advisory Council has already shown what can be done to give greater substance to the Democratic image. It has not yet demonstrated its full power to stimulate robust social criticism and widespread public debate on issues of national consequence. But there is no reason why it or its Republican counterpart, if formed, cannot eventually accomplish these ends. If this should come about in tandem with the development of more responsible party power in the Congress, we will have taken giant strides towards a desired goal: harnessing creative thinkers to judicious action.

Without other reforms, advisory councils will never become powerful clearing houses for party ideas — nor should they, if that means stifling dissent. But they will serve a function, if and as they grow stronger, by flushing public issues from pigeonholes in the federal system into which they sometimes wander.

'What's The Master Plan On Short-Range Interservice Ballistic Missiles?'



The Razor's Edge

Task Of Youth

By VERMONT ROYSTER
In The Wall Street Journal

This is the season of commencement speeches, and if the speakers follow the usual pattern many of them will be deploring the mess the older generations have made of the world and exhorting the new generation to come forth and set things right.

Well, we would be the last to suggest that all is well with the world. It is torn in two, and sometimes it seems, that the forces of barbarism threaten to engulf the whole of it. There is even the danger that the great allegory of Adam will come true—that being too poor in wisdom we will destroy ourselves in an atomic holocaust by the very increase in our knowledge.

Nor has our generation been immune to decay. In the realm of the spirit we have let many of the old values—the faith in the dignity and power of the individual man—wither under the preachment that Society is all and we must put our trust only in the State. We have often succumbed to the temptation to spend the nation's substance now for our own enjoyment and let the next generation worry about the long run. After all, in Lord Keynes' phrase, "In the long run we are all dead."

NO TRANQUIL LIFE

So we would not ourselves prophesy for the next generation a tranquil life. They may have before them great economic trials. They may be called upon to die for other men's mistakes, or crimes. For all we know they may, as the prophets of doom are always saying, stand on the edge of an atomic Dark Age.

And yet, if we may intrude upon the occasion, we would like to suggest somewhat different thoughts.

The truth is, it was ever thus. In Alfred North Whitehead's words, all good things stand always upon the "razor's edge" between preservation and destruction. Western civilization, the idea of individual liberty, the concept of economic freedom that made this country rich and great, these things did not come to their present development by the road of tranquility.

It was no easy task to start this country, or to keep it whole. However romantic it may seem now on TV, it was no easy task to carve out this continent; and it is not necessary to be sentimental about the people who did it in order to recognize that they too had their moments of despair and their prophets of doom. Even recently, the fathers and grandfathers of the new generation interrupted their lives to fight two world wars against barbarism. They somehow dug their way through a depression more cruel than any of these younger people can imagine.

FAITH

And these generations did all this with courage and with a faith that what they were suffering to preserve was something worth preserving for posterity.

It is true enough that these new graduates, as the young always like to impatiently remind us, go forth into a world they never made. But so also did they come to homes and schools and an ordered way of living in freedom, and in dignity and in peace—which also they never made. And though it is assuredly not the best of all possible worlds, it will serve. Their country, thanks to others, has not fallen to barbarism, even if it still threatens. It has not, at least so far, succumbed to the decay, even if it suffers from it.

Like any commencement speaker, we will hope the new generation will do better. But if they are to do better, we suggest they will need a regard for their own posterity and the wisdom to preserve for the future what is good in their own heritage. And to tell the truth, we will be grateful if they do as well.



The Long Run

Isn't This About Where We Came In?

Every era has its lessons. But nobody is ever paying close attention.

Take, for instance, the problems mirrored in this clutch of headlines collected by Rep. Peter Frelinghuysen Jr. (R-NJ):

"LABOR BILL LIKELY TO HOLD CONGRESS"

"EARLY ADJOURNMENT NOT PROBABLE"

"SENATE INQUIRY TERMED 'POLITICAL RACKET, A PUBLIC CIRCUS'"

"BALANCED BUDGET URGED FOR SOUND CREDIT"

"GENEVA CONFERENCE QUITS UNTIL OCTOBER"

Do they all have a fresh, contemporary aura about them? They shouldn't. Rep. Frelinghuysen clipped them all from a newspaper dated June 12, 1934—a quarter of a century ago.

If there is a moral here it is probably the one jotted down nearly 150 years ago by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the German philosopher. It went something like this: We learn from history that we learn nothing from history.

Bob Fain In The Lexington Herald-Leader

LOST PLEASURES

Pity the poor youngsters of today, growing up in a world devoid of the old-fashioned rural party line. There still are party lines, but eavesdropping has become a matter of luck; a huge, empty nothing. You can pick up the receiver about any time and find someone talking, but there is no selection. You have to take potluck, the mark of a rank amateur.

Back when the phone was on the wall and everyone had a certain number of rings, life was exciting and full of promise. You didn't waste time when two long rings and a short called Mrs. Dull to the phone. But let three rings go out for the home of Mrs. Tellitall, and every dish rag and broom in the community was laid aside in the rush to the receiver.

There was a high point and a semi-high point on the line. The semi-high point was the long ring used to rouse "central" ("I'll just see who that is."). The true high point was the long-distance call. The rings were short and impatient, and long-distance calls were no trouble for an experienced eavesdropper to spot. They often got out of bed for them.

Things on the party line were highly informal. If you felt like butting in and saying, "Who's sick?", you were told. You could ask questions of the two people talking, tell the story the way you heard it, or, in extreme cases, change the subject if you grew tired of the conversation.

And there were no secrets. If Bill's wife called down to the store to leave word for Bill to bring home a gallon of coal oil as he came by from work, chances are Bill would be told by two or three different phone owners before he even reached the store.

Ah, those days are gone forever. Thank goodness.

Surest and fastest way to spread a rumor around town: Button somebody on a street corner and start out by saying, "Now, for gosh sake, don't tell this to a soul, but . . ."—Walker County (Ga.) Messenger.

People's Platform

Why Import Talent From Other Cities?

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

Why is it that our city officials always have to import men from other cities to fill the most important offices? Charlotte is the largest city in the state and we have just as many intelligent leaders as can be found in any other city in America.

We had to import our last city manager from a small town and more than double his salary. Then we imported a smoke engineer from somewhere up north to fill the office of smoke engineer, which we don't need, and now they have imported from a smaller town than Charlotte a man to be chief of police.

I suppose it sounds big for Charlotte to select men from other places to run Charlotte, but it is a reflection on every citizen of Charlotte that we cannot manage our own affairs without importing men from out of town and then doubling their salaries.

—PARKS A. YANDLE

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

Strauss Gives It The College Try

WASHINGTON

A significant secret meeting with Adm. Lewis Strauss and Chairman John McCone of the Atomic Energy Commission took place recently to discuss whether Strauss could be confirmed as secretary of commerce. Members of the White House staff were also present.

Dim Hopes

Strauss confessed that his hopes of confirmation looked dim. Since he wasn't going to tolerate the humility of defeat, he considered the possibility of having his name withdrawn.

This brought vigorous opposition from other conferees. They pointed out that the President had stuck out his neck by saying he would not withdraw Strauss's name.

"How are we going to break this news to the President?" one of them asked.

Final decision was that a superhuman effort would be made to swing wavering senators into line and apply lobbying pressure on others to change their minds.

This meeting was what preceded one of the most intensive personal lobbying campaigns ever seen on Capitol Hill. It has been so intense that Sen. Howard Cannon of Nevada suggested a Senate probe.

Backstage Pressure

"I have heard of the most severe and coarse pressures being applied on individual senators," he said.

Here is part of the lobbying pressure to which Sen. Cannon referred.

Out of the clear blue, much-revered Baron Robert Silvercruys, ambassador of Belgium, got a phone call from Adm. Strauss. Silvercruys has nothing to do with American politics, but happens to be married to the lovely widow of the late Sen. Brien McMahon of Connecticut who played a key role in developing the hydrogen bomb.

Long Letter

McMahon had written a 5,000-word letter to President Truman urging development of the bomb, but when Baroness Silvercruys asked permission to publish the letter, Strauss refused. He has claimed credit for the H-bomb himself, and some critics have pointed out that publication of the McMahon letter would have refuted this.

Naturally Baroness Silvercruys has not hesitated about giving senators her views on Strauss when asked.

"Rosemary has been very aloof toward me lately," Adm. Strauss told the Belgian ambassador in his surprise phone call. "But I understand you are retiring soon, and I just wanted to know if you'd like to be president of Studebaker Motors. They need a man like you and I wondered whether you might be interested."

It was true that Ambassador Silvercruys is retiring after a long and distinguished career but he did not feel like trading his wife's feeling toward Strauss off for a job.

Lobbyist Lewis

At John L. Lewis's United Mine Workers headquarters, Adm. Strauss called in person on the bushy-eyebrowed miner boss, urged him to swing the two West Virginia senators into line. Strauss argued that he was the man who put an embargo on residual oil imports into the USA which were hurting West Virginia coal.

Lewis promptly got busy, sent word to Sens. Bob Byrd and Jennings Randolph, two good West Virginia Democrats, to change their votes. They had been against Strauss. Now Randolph is for him and Byrd is wavering.