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Berlin on the Brink?

IN his "crisis" speech—before leaving Moscow for a few weeks holiday by the sea—Mr. Krushchev declared that

when a situation like this [the Berlin crisis] arose, it would be impermissible for them to sit with folded hands. History taught them that when an aggressor saw that he was not rebuffed he became brazen, and when, on the contrary, he was rebuffed he calmed down.

To judge by recent utterances, it seems clear enough that America's Mr. K. and Britain's Lord Home share the Russian's reading of history, for all their speeches have been stern warnings to the would-be aggressor that any threats would be resisted even if it meant war. It all sounds very impressive, and whatever the politicians themselves may think of their respective public performances, there can be no doubt that many people in the danger area take these crises seriously, as is evidenced by the large number of Germans from East Berlin who have been coming into the Western half of the city in the past week. (Incidentally it would be interesting to know how many West Berliners have been leaving their "island" city for W. Germany proper in the corresponding period).

So far as we are concerned, we feel that the "Crisis" would be more impressive if after all the threats and warnings, most of the political leaders didn't slink off on hunting, fishing or swimming holidays miles away from their seats of government! And certainly even the Press is a little surprised that the West can postpone further action for more than a month, so as to allow Dr. Adenauer to get on with his elections unhampered by controversial political issues such as the future of Germany and Berlin.

The *Guardian* which takes the "crisis" seriously sees the world situation as "more dangerous than at

any time for the last ten years".

In one sense, indeed, it is more dangerous than ever before—for ten years ago the Soviet Union had no thermo-nuclear weapons

and laments the fact that the West will probably take no steps to open negotiations until after the German elections on September 17, in six weeks' time.

And in six weeks the crisis may become worse. In such a crisis calm is essential—the more because Mr. Krushchev is deliberately trying to play on our nerves. But the greater the delay now, the harder it will be for both sides to keep calm when the time for negotiations arrive. Sooner or later the West must be prepared to talk if it wants to be sure of avoiding a war.

If indeed it is Mr. Krushchev only who is trying "to play on our nerves" then there would be one simple way of scotching his plans by giving his speeches fewer headlines and less importance in reporting. But, in our opinion, the different governments of the West each have an interest in wanting to use the tough line in Mr. K's speeches for their own political ends. It is obvious for instance that the American government can more easily justify its astronomical war budget and the extra expenditure Kennedy recently asked for, by underlining, magnifying and if necessary distorting Russian speeches. The Russians do likewise for their home consumption. And the British government which is in the process of dealing with yet another of its financial crises, is not averse to distracting public attention from this "crisis" in which the political opposition can derive some benefit, to

one on "defence" on which both they and the opposition are "united".

★
SO long as the world is governed by power politics and divided roughly behind two power blocks, represented by the United States and Russia, every political move by one side can be viewed by the other as a threat to the balance of power, with the need for counter-measures to restore the balance. Germany is an ideal "trouble spot" in the political game, especially since the original agreements between the victors in the last war to keep Germany demilitarised and neutral for all time, have been broken both by the Americans and the Russians. Krush-

chev is quite right when he accuses the Western Powers of destroying the Yalta and Potsdam agreements on Germany when they signed the Paris agreement with Western Germany and admitted that country into NATO.

He accused them of "piling up more combustible material than anywhere else on the globe". (He didn't say, however, that Russia had also made her contribution to the pile!). And it was therefore ridiculous for Lord Home to oppose the Russian demand for a peace treaty for Germany with his statement, full of hurt-innocence, that "all we are trying to do is to continue a system which has worked perfectly well for the last ten years. If that system can be improved, well and good. We are always ready to meet and discuss how it can be improved". There is nothing static about power politics; crises are the life-blood of politics, and if one cannot provoke them then it's the politicians' job to invent one. In which country is the situation stable from one year to the next? No sooner is one crisis overcome than another is born. And Germany—both West and East—of today just isn't the same country as the Germany of ten years ago. Then, for instance, France and the Benelux countries were doing their best to oppose any measure the West German parliament might want to take to build up the war-shattered economy. Today Germany is not only the most powerful member of the Common

Market and the largest exporting country in Europe but it is only a matter of time before she will be the leading military power in NATO. As we were saying, nothing in static in the game of power politics, and a mere peace treaty is certainly not going to keep an enterprising nation from finding its "rightful place" in the struggle!

The meteoric rise of Western Germany in these last five years not only in the economic and financial sense but as a political power has not been matched by a corresponding development in East Germany. For all kinds of reasons, outside purely political considerations, this was not possible. But in terms of the balance of power it is possible to see that from the Russian point of view Western Germany is a "threat" to Russia in a way that E. Germany is not to the Western bloc. Russia's interest in a German peace treaty which would eventually result in the unification of Germany, and the Western Powers' interest to let matters drift along as they are, are therefore understandable. Russia is prepared to gamble on a unified Germany because she has little to lose. The West (or rather, America), on the other hand probably fears what Russia hopes, that a unified Germany will have ambitions which would be hampered by an American-dominated Western alliance, and that in due course she will break away from—and thus weaken the Western bloc.

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US Pacifist's PRISON HUNGER STRIKE

NEW LONDON, CONN., JULY 26.

Bill Henry, 28-year-old pacifist from Lodi, Wisconsin today went into his 25th day of fasting at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut. This was reported by his fiancée, Beverly Kanegson of Norwich, Connecticut, after her visit with Henry, Tuesday afternoon. His first 21 days of non-eating was in the form of a fast as a means of expressing his strong protest against "the tendency of the U.S. and Russia toward the resumption of nuclear testing". Henry was sentenced by Federal Judge Robert Anderson to two 1-year terms, to be served concurrently, for boarding the "Ethan Allen" and "George Washington" Polaris submarines as a protest against nuclear weapons and the arms race.

Twice fed intravenously, the latter time Henry resisted and engaged in a "friendly and non-violent wrestling match with three guards and the captain". The past few days he has co-operated with a force feeding through a tube in the nose. He will continue his refusal to eat in the form of a hunger strike against the refusal of the prison officials to give him a job transfer, which he had requested at the start of his imprisonment. He was working in the warehouse and requested a transfer to the hospital or the education dept. where he felt his abilities could be better utilized to serve the other inmates. He stated: "The power this prison has over the men is so great that it has become irresponsible. In my case, it is irresponsible because they have refused to give me a job which is suited to my needs as an individual."

After three days of his fast against testing he became too weak to work and was put in "the hole" for four days. He was then removed to the hospital "strip cell". He plans to continue his hunger strike until he is given a job change.

Second Pacifist Drugged for Fingerprinting

Victor Richman, 20-year-old student of Columbia University, New York, who was imprisoned for trespassing during the launching of the "Ethan Allen" last November 22 in order to protest the arms race, refused to co-operate with fingerprinting at the Danbury Institution, feeling that it was degrading. He was placed in solitary confinement for four days, at which time he began fasting. After refusing to co-operate, he was drugged and fingerprinted, but continued to resist as much as possible. His fast lasted fourteen days.

R.J.W.

N. Rhodesia Disturbances

Interesting news comes from the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Recent disturbances there have led to the following significant news, as reported in the "Daily Telegraph" (10/8/61): "The Northern Rhodesian Government seems satisfied that Mr. Kaunda and his central organisation are not responsible for the disturbances. It has, however, complete evidence that many of the local party officials are playing a leading part."

In areas of the Northern Province sabotage and other direct action has been taken by the local party officials of the United National Independence Party, which is now laughingly "banned" in this province. It is this local initiative which is interesting because it shows definite decentralist tendencies in the Party. If Kenneth Kaunda were not a Bemba by tribe it might be put down as a local revolt due to tribalistic antagonism as is often the case in African politics, but the areas concerned are nearly all Bemba areas.

Already the police have murdered several Africans in the Northern Province and more troops and aircraft are moving to the north, 90 arrests have been made and in the district of Luwingu a "large mob" has been dispersed by Government officials.

If the local initiative can be continued by agitating among the wavering Chiefs and by spreading the direct action towards the economic heart of not only Northern Rhodesia but of the whole Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the Copperbelt, a non-violent strike would be an effective weapon to use.

Postscript:—

The "Observer" (13/8/61) in a report from Andrew Wilson carries important news from Northern Rhodesia. "The wave of violence which has struck Northern Rhodesia this week," he writes, "has been far more widespread than the official communiques suggest." The activities of saboteurs throughout a large area of the North of Northern Rhodesia are spreading towards the Copperbelt. Yet Wilson reports that "the root of the trouble remains unknown. It is definitely not the work of Mr. Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party—at least, not of its official leadership. Everything points to malcontents—in or outside the party—bent on usurping Mr. Kaunda's leadership."

However, elsewhere Wilson reports of "massive discontent springing from poverty, the warlike inclinations of the Bemba people and the modifications imposed by Sir Roy Welensky's Federal Government on the proposed new Northern Rhodesia Constitution", which sounds reason enough for discontent to me, and points to the reasons for the initiative of the local men within the U.N.I.P.

I have spent over a year in the areas where the major disturbances are occurring in the Northern Province, during which time I met several Zambia Congress local officials (the old name for the U.N.I.P.) in private. Everything I have heard and read concerning the rebellion in the Northern Province leads me to the conclusion that Northern Rhodesia is on the brink of revolution.

AIR DISASTERS AND THE CULT OF 'PROGRESS'

BOTH the *Herald* and the *Guardian* lament the "tragic" air disaster in which thirty-four schoolboys were among the victims, but are unanimous in their disagreement with the unhappy headmaster who has declared "I don't think I could ever agree to another party flying". The *Herald* thinks it would be wrong if the tragedy led to a "demand that young people should be earthbound" and the *Guardian* that

Journeys overseas have come to play a substantial and a fruitful part in school life; and air transport has at once extended their range and relieved them of the exhausting travel by surface transport which must sometimes have cut seriously into the benefit of the expedition. The number of air accidents is, alas, growing along with the bulk of air travel, but its rate remains low—last year about 1.27 deaths for every 100 million passenger miles flown.

To argue against air travel is to invite the accusation that "you are trying to put back the clock" and that "you can't stop progress". Today you can only believe in "progress" if you accept the latest in—well everything, from fashion, pre-packed energised bread, built-in this that or the other, portable transistor sets which you hang from your neck so that Radio Luxemburg can follow you (and plague others) wherever you go, to the fastest form of travel whether on land or the air. You are progressive if you appear to "understand" modern music and appreciate *avantgard* art (which means the last word in the application of paint to canvas—currently it is with the feet, we believe).

In politics you are progressive if you can show that your ideas will fit into the social, economic and financial pattern of life as it is: "Socialism in the

60's", indicates to everybody that your socialism is up-to-date and isn't suffering from any 19th century hangover.

We believe that other values are involved in a definition of what constitutes progress. And because we do not believe that speed is *per se* "progressive", and because it is, so far as we can judge, the only advantage that air travel has over other forms of travel we are unwilling to say, without first considering the disadvantages, that air travel is beneficial to mankind. Certainly the *Guardian* argument seems pretty thin. "Exhausting travel by surface transport" is only exhausting when it lacks comfort. After all, tired business men cross the Atlantic by ship in order to enjoy a few days rest; on the other hand more and more people are travelling long distances by private car which is a much more exhausting way of travelling than by train!

One can rationalise as much as one likes, but the fact remains that air travel will always be a more dangerous way of travelling than other forms of public transport. The *Guardian* admits that the number of air accidents is growing, and there is every reason to believe that with larger capacity planes and a growing air congestion they will go on increasing in spite of greater precautions and mechanical improvements. No machine is 100 per cent, perfect and no human being can even reach the mechanical perfection of a machine! It can be bad enough when either break down when the wheels of transport are on the ground. But it is almost always fatal for all concerned when this happens in the air.

But apart from these, to our minds, weighty considerations, why this almost pathological hurry to get from A to B?

