

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Alien Giveaway Is Maneuvered

By Drew Pearson

Some of the cleverest back-stage lobbying in this session of Congress has maneuvered a bill for the return of German property out of the Senate Judiciary Committee onto the Senate consent calendar where it may sneak by the entire Senate.



Pearson

It means a giveaway of half a billion dollars, with the big German cartels who manufactured arms for Hitler being the chief beneficiaries. United States taxpayers will have to make up the half billion.

In order to camouflage the German giveaway, the bill is dressed up in some high-flown language about compensating nationals of the United States who have war-damage claims. And while former POWs do get some benefit, the chief benefit goes to I. G. Farben, the giant Nazi cartel, and the former owners of American Bosch, Schering, North American Rayon, and so forth.

Polish Revolt

Here is some unwritten history regarding a previous revolt behind the Iron Curtain which may point to ways of helping the people of Poland today.

In June, 1953, immediately after East Berlin workers tackled Red tanks with bottles and bare hands, crying for food, I suggested to Jimmie Riddleberger, then in charge of the State Department's German desk now, Ambassador to Yugoslavia, and to Gen. Beetle Smith, then Under Secretary of State, that United States food surpluses be given the hungry rioters by private American service groups.

The Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs, I suggested, together with the American Legion, VFW, AMVETS, Junior Chambers of Commerce, would probably be delighted to help finance the purchase and distribution of surplus food. If the offer was turned down, then East Berliners, with no boundary to worry about, could come across to West Berlin and pick up the food themselves.

I also figured this proposal would be right down the Eisenhower Administration alley because it had been talking so much about private enterprise and keeping the Government out of private enterprise.

Lions Clubs Ready

It so happened that the International Lions Clubs were holding their annual convention in Chicago at that time and they authorized me to make a concrete proposal for the purchase of surplus wheat and butter which Secretary Benson had running out of his ears.

So I went down to see Secretary Benson. He brought in five of his top executives. They were polite, cordial, noncommittal.

"The executives of the Lions

International," I explained, "are ready to buy your wheat at the same support price you paid for it—\$2.60 a bushel—and butter for the support price you paid—60 cents a pound. They would like to take delivery immediately—this week in West Berlin. The State Department informs me that you already have a large supply there so that all you need do is to send a cable to release it there."

I stressed the need for speed, the fact that now was the psychological time to show that individual Americans were eager to help individual rebels against communism. I suggested that it was much better to have groups of Americans operate than the Government, because East Germans distrusted governments. They did not distrust people.

"Will you write me a letter about this?" requested Secretary Benson.

"I have already written one," I said, and pulled it out of my pocket.

Days passed—a total of three weeks. No word from Benson. Finally, Riddleberger phoned to say that he had taken \$15 million out of the State Department budget to offer food to the East Berliners.

The State Department drafted an official announcement and President Eisenhower signed it. It was a fine gesture, and good politics here at home. But part of the bloom was off the rose. By that time it was July. The riots were over. And the official announcement by the United States Government was interpreted abroad as a pure propaganda gesture. It won us no friends.

Balloons to Poland

This unwritten history is told now for one reason only—the recent revolt in Poznan, Poland.

This time the State Department, acting more wisely, had the American Red Cross offer to send food to the Poles. The Red Cross, though organized under the wing of the United States Government, is not the Government. The offer was turned down.

However, it is still not too late for groups of patriotic Americans to offer food to the Poles. If the offer is turned down, it is still not too late to send the food in small packages by balloon. The Crusade for Freedom has been sending balloon messages into Poland ever since we inaugurated the idea from West Berlin in the summer of 1951.

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