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RFE Critic Has Visa Trouble

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

CAPITAL REPORT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27.—The tentacles of Radio Free Europe are long and powerful, as witness the case of Dr. Walter Becher and his fighting young administrative assistant, George Brada.

Dr. Becher is a leading member of the Bavarian Landtag, roughly comparable to one of our State legislatures, though considerably more powerful. In addition, he is the recognized leader of the Sudeten Germans in exile, of whom there are millions. He is a scholar, a gentleman, a man of great brilliance.

Brada is in his thirties. His intellectual position and philosophy are vaguely suggestive of a William F. Buckley, Jr. He is an able writer and, like his principal, a dedicated anti-Communist. He wrote a series of articles for the now defunct Facts Forum magazine, exposing Radio Free Europe and the people who man it, and debunking the operation generally.

Becher and Brada had planned a trip to the United States in January for a series of conferences looking to the organization of an international anti-Communist movement with some real teeth and a forthright policy of liberation for the Iron Curtain peoples.

Both have been fed, chin-high, with the namby-pamby Titoist compromising of the Free Europe operations and the caponized, ineffective, unmilitant line of Voice of America.

IF THE TRUTH were known, Chancellor Adenauer would relish the opportunity to throw Radio Free Europe out of Germany altogether, and relieve himself of an embarrassing diplomatic situation. Because most of the RFE broadcasting is done from West German soil, the

Bonn government is the target for angry criticism by exile groups and individuals who disapprove of RFE policy.

The U.S. Consul General in Munich, where Dr. Becher and Mr. Brada must get their visas for entry into the United States, is Edward Page, Jr., who nurses a something more than ordinary rapport with the Munich topline of Free Europe.

When Dr. Becher and George Brada made application to Edward Page, Jr., for visas to visit the United States, there was a peculiar twist of developments.

Dr. Becher was given his visa without delay. His position in the Landtag was such that no one dared to challenge him.

But not so with Brada. Page took his case under advisement, and Brada came back and back, unable to get any explanation for the delay. Finally, word

reached Washington that the Brada visa had been turned down.

CHAIRMAN Francis Walter of the House Un-American Activities Committee, former Rep. Kit Clardy of Michigan, Earle Cooke, former National Commander of the American Legion, all of whom were interested, went to the State Department and demanded how come:

The Department cabled Page once, without satisfaction. It cabled a second time without satisfaction. Finally, at the end of several weeks, it sent a third cable, this one very sharp in its tenor. The reluctant word finally came back that Brada's visa had been approved and he now is on his way to the United States.

Without the big guns, however, it never would have happened. Edward Page, Jr. would seem to bear watching.

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