

24 Senators Go Back to School

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

By Chalmers M. Roberts

TWENTY-FOUR Democratic Senators gathered for dinner one night last week in the old Supreme Court chamber at the Capitol. Senatorial dinners are nothing new but this one was new: the Senators were going back to school.



Roberts

They met to listen to and question Henry M. Kissinger on some of the fundamentals in the East-West conflict centered on the Berlin crisis. Conservatives, moderates, liberals—

all agreed it was stimulating for men who all too often don't even have the time to read a book. Of the presidential possibilities, only Kennedy was out of the city. Humphrey, Symington, Johnson were there.

The "school," though he is wary of that word, is the brainchild of one of the Senate's bright young men, Albert Gore of Tennessee. This week's dinner guest will be Raymond L. Garthoff, youthful author of "Soviet Strategy in the Nuclear Age."

Gore is delighted at the response. He hopes to keep school going for several more weeks. After the two foreign policy experts he is turning to economics with Gardner Means the next faculty member.

THIS SORT of senatorial craving to know and to understand today's critical problems is one of the heartening signs of the times. The new crop of Senators includes a lot of eggheads and there are a goodly number, too, among the new House members. A new day for the intellectual in America began with Sputnik I and the Gore school is a reflection of just that.

The need to know is not confined to those who work behind security wraps. It is as wide as America, for democracy can operate effectively only when Government has a popular base of consent. And consent requires familiarity and understanding of what is involved even though details may be obscure.

The Overstreets' *What We Need to Know About Communism* is a good example of the kind of book which can fill gaps in the background of millions of Americans. It is not easy to explain Communist dogma and to relate it to Soviet policy. But the Overstreets have done a first-rate writing job which

should satisfy the craving to understand of many who are puzzled by the blow-hot-blow-cold of Soviet policy.

Speeches by Government officials, as a general rule, do not help much in conveying hard information to the public on which to base judgments. But an exception was Allen Dulles' talk in New Orleans last Wednesday. Some people think he should stick to his job as head of the Central Intelligence Agency and leave the speech-making to others. But this speech proves otherwise.

The CIA is often thought of as a cloak and dagger outfit and it is not unbusy in that respect. But it has some more prosaic functions, as this speech showed. One of them is to gather and sift facts and figures about the Soviet economy and to compare them with the American economy.

THIS IS a subject of much speculation and misinformation—and plenty of wishful thinking. But Dulles made some points that need repeating. And Senator Gore would do well to add to his faculty someone who can present the evidence and the trends. For Senators, and all other Americans, had better be aware of the facts and the likely consequences.

The basic, uncontested fact is that the Soviet economy in general and Soviet industry in particular is growing faster than is the case in the United States. Dulles compared industrial growth in Russia, 1952-58 inclusive, with growth here in 1951-57 inclusive. The annual Soviet rate, he found, was 9 1/2 per cent compared to 3.6 per cent for the U. S. And as he noted, he avoided recession 1958 in the U. S. on the comparison would have been "even less favorable."

Relative growth alone is important. But more important is an understanding of what each nation does with that growth. Doubtless because he is a member of the Eisenhower team, Dulles was restrained in his comments on the "secret of Soviet success." He said only that it "lies in the fact that the Kremlin leaders direct a far higher proportion of total resources to national policy purposes than does the United States."

Subject for a Gore School dinner: can democracy find a way, without altering the nature of democracy, to direct a necessarily higher proportion of its resources to national policy purposes?

