

Adenauer Considered Possibly Loneliest Man in West Germany

Bonn — (UPI) — When Socialist Deputy Fritz Erler stood up in Parliament recently and charged West Germany is being run by a one-man government, there may have been a few "boos" but there were very few true dissenters.

Many people share the view that Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and Adenauer alone, is the government. And they can point to fairly concrete facts to back them up.

At 84, and despite his seven children and 20 grandchildren, Adenauer could be considered the loneliest man in Germany.

Playing one politician off against the other, trusting few men, worrying what will happen to Germany once he is gone — it is more than enough to make a man lonely.

Many Lonely Decisions

Firm in the belief — although without a trace of arrogance — that he is Germany's destiny, Adenauer has many

times made lonely decisions. It has always been these decisions that have caused the charges Germany has a one-man government. These charges are not new. But they have recently received impetus by talk of the Chancellor's "secret cabinet."

This cabinet, which should perhaps better be called a "behind-the-scenes" cabinet, is formed from a group of men in the Chancellery. They are Adenauer's foreign policy, economic, financial, judicial and other aides.

These men, it is said, have as much and in some cases more power than a minister. On their advice, it is said, the Chancellor often makes his lonely decisions without bothering to consult the real cabinet or Parliament.

These men also have direct access to the Chancellor's office. This is not so in the case of many ministers.

Written Reports

They submit written reports to the Chancellor on current questions. The reports must be either one or two pages long, three at the most. Adenauer never reads more than three pages.

Adenauer then takes up his famed green pencil and notes in the margin — "minister X should see that this is done," or "minister should report," or "see me" if he is displeased.

And this is the secret behind the "secret" cabinet's power. These reports need not be countersigned by superiors before landing on Adenauer's desk. They go straight to him, and on their content he often makes decisions over a minister's head.

And yet, even these men are limited in power. The Chancellor rarely discusses such reports directly with their authors. He is accustomed to bring in a middleman, usually his secretary of state Hans Globke.

Globke, the man between Adenauer and Reinhard Gehlen's secret service, is generally accepted as Germany's most powerful man after Adenauer. Known as "the grey eminence," Globke's power is also borrowed, however, depending on Adenauer's whim or perhaps his longevity. And Globke has of late been a sick man, at times away for weeks because of circulatory ailments.

When Globke is there, however, it is said he has more power than all of Germany's 17 ministers put together. Rarely does a written document go to Adenauer — except from his closest aides — without first landing of Globke's desk.

Who are the top men in Adenauer's "secret cabinet"? Who are these men who have more influence than ministers?

Two Men Closest

Apart from Globke, there are two men closer to Adenauer than most others. There are actually three, if one includes retired banker Robert Pferdemenges, a long-time friend of Adenauer and a close adviser.

Franz Josef Bach is one of the strong men. Bach heads the Chancellery's foreign policy section. He sits in Adenauer's front room; a sentry, some call him. Anyone calling on Adenauer must first pass through the "front room."

As foreign policy adviser, Bach often discusses with Adenauer the Chancellor's plans about which even Foreign Minister Heinrich Von Brentano has no inkling.

The up and coming man among the backroom team is supposed to be Karl Vialon. Extremely clever — and very ambitious — Vialon at 54 is said to be the most likely successor to Globke when the secretary of state has to retire through ill-health.

Vialon is head of the economic and finance section in the Chancellery. Together with his deputy, Hans Prass, he is said to oppose popular economics minister Ludwig Erhard, a campaign with which Adenauer is said not to disagree, his own opposition to Erhard being well known. "Ministerial Directors"

There are several others in the secret cabinet. The most important, apart from Bach, Globke and Vialon, is Fritz Merker, who heads the defense, all-German affairs, justice and interior section.

These men, except Globke, are "ministerial directors," one position below that of a

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Bachman, the justice section deputy, and Hans Abicht, deputy defense head. In the hands of these men is often the power over Adenauer's decisions. But, trusting few, close friends with none, the only man with the last word is Adenauer himself.



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LONLIEST MAN—Many people share the view that Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, above, is the government of West Germany. At 84, and despite his large family, Adenauer could be considered the loneliest man in the country. He must play one politician against another, trust few men, and worry what will happen to Germany once he is gone. —(UPI Telephoto)

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