

Adenauer Fails in Stubborn Fight to Name Successor

By WELLINGTON LONG
United Press International
Bonn — (UPI) — Alone as always, proudly erect as ever, the old man walked stiffly from the caucus room.

But the usual barbed wisecracks for the press were missing, and even the brashest reporters fell back from the stern countenance.

It is embarrassing to look too closely at a champion just defeated, and this man was West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, finally and forever whipped — at age 87 — in his fight of many years to name his own successor.

Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, the architect of West Germany's post-war prosperity, the man whose name Adenauer personally painted on his party's banners, would no longer be denied his political inheritance.

The day was April 23, 1963, the time of defeat 5:20 in the afternoon.

Travel Long Way

The two had come a long way since the afternoon of Feb. 21, 1949, when Adenauer rammed Erhard's new-fangled economic theories down his party's throat.

On that afternoon 14 years earlier, Adenauer introduced Erhard to a meeting in Koenigswinter of the top leaders of the Christian Democratic union.

Erhard was then advisor to the economic council for the British and American zones of occupation. He was preaching something called "social market economy," saying that if controls were ended, production would rise and prices find a reasonable level.

The state, Erhard argued, could prevent inflation through proper tariff, finance and tax policies.

His policies had been followed in part by the economic council and were being successful. The British and American zones, at least, already were rising out of the ashes of the devastating second world war.

Teacher in 1949

Erhard in 1949 was a little-known Bavarian teacher of economics who so far had shown no interest in any political party.

Adenauer set out to get him into national politics, and on his side, by silencing those at Koenigswinter who complained that Erhard's ideas ran counter to the party's official platform, and he said if the party adopted Erhard's ideas, it was bound to reap millions of votes from a people sick of years of rationing.

Most Christian Democratic party workers approved with enthusiasm. Adenauer won the day — and won Erhard, who became a member of the party which had adopted him and went to work for it in the election campaign, first since the war.

Preaching Erhard's economic ideas at every crossroads, the Christian Democrats baffled all the experts and, in that first election since Hitler, on Aug. 15, 1949, defeated the Socialists.

Set Records

Together, Adenauer and Erhard won three more elections for their party. In 1953, the Christian Democrats became the first political party

Handicapped Compete in National Games

New York — (UPI) — More than 200 handicapped men and women athletes will compete in the seventh annual National Wheelchair Games scheduled here June 14-16.

The meet will be sponsored by the Joseph Bulova School of Watchmaking, in cooperation with the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the National Paraplegia foundation. The University of Illinois student rehabilitation team will be defending the team title it has won the last three years. Individual athletes will compete for places on the U.S. team in England's annual International Stoke Mandeville games in July.

'Clickety-Clack' of Trains Soon May Go

New York — (UPI) — You'll have to walk a quarter-mile along some railroad track before finding the first bolted joint, reports Chemtron corporation's NCG division, which has welded standard 39-foot rail sections into continuous quarter-mile "strings" for more than 2,000 miles of track.

Welded rail saves about \$1,000 per mile per year due to longer wear and reduced damage to cars and freight, the company claims, and eliminates the old "clickety-clack," too.

LASTING WORK

New York — (UPI) — Workmen building the Egyptian pyramids looped wire through the back of ceramic tiles to fasten them to the walls.

in German history to win more than one-half the votes in a free election.

The two made a good team. Adenauer's one aim was to unite Germany with the Western powers, and in return regain Germany's sovereignty. He handled all the difficult political problems — ending the foreign occupation, reaching a settlement with world Jewry, starting rearmament, gaining partnership in NATO, and so on — while Erhard watched over the economy.

Neither man could have achieved the success he did without the other.

Their fame spread abroad as West Germany boomed economically and regained an ever stronger position in the Western world.

By 1960, their policies had made the nation so wealthy that the United States was asking Bonn for help. The German mark was revalued — a move Adenauer said, and other experts agreed, actually was German devaluation of the dollar.

Relations Strained

Even before they reached that high-water mark, relations between the two men were showing strain.

Erhard, 20 years Adenauer's junior, was not willing always to remain in the shadows. He made it plain that as long as Adenauer wanted to be chancellor, he would make no effort to unsettle him. But he also made it clear he intended to succeed Adenauer when the old gentleman finally did step down. A majority

Device Gives Assist in Throat Treatment

New York — (UPI) — An x-ray and sound-recording device that enables surgeons to "see" and "hear" the inner functioning of the human mouth and throat has been installed at New York University's college of dentistry as a guide in treatment of cleft-palate victims.

The system makes fluoroscopic "movies" of the throat and mouth while the patient talks, chews and swallows — and at the same time records the patient's speech on tape. More than 5,000 babies with cleft lips or palates are born in the United States each year and the new system developed by the Picker X-ray Corporation of White Plains, N.Y., will be part of the lengthy program of plastic surgery, dental care and speech training needed to help such children.

of Christian Democrats agreed that then it was Erhard's turn. But Adenauer always enigmatically Erhard as chancellor material. He felt — and still does — that Erhard was a specialist, a fine economist but lacking in the all-around talents, toughness and finesse needed to lead the government.

Move Recognized

In February, 1959, Adenauer moved suddenly to eliminate Erhard from the succession by having the economic minister nominated for the figurehead office of the federal president.

Erhard saw through the move, and declined.

His friends then urged Adenauer to accept the presidency — a post more honorary than effective in the West German scheme of things — and let Erhard move up to the chancellorship. Thus, it was contended, Adenauer could supervise an orderly transition.

Surprisingly, the chancellor agreed and in April, 1959, accepted the nomination for president. But it turned out to be only an Adenauer maneuver. He intended to use the situation to bring Finance Minister Franz Eitel into the chancellorship. Eitel would do just what Adenauer told him.

But Eitel was unknown beyond Bonn's city limits and Christian Democratic backbenchers wanted a chancellor who would get them reelected. The man, they said, had to be Erhard.

Adenauer Acts

On June 5 that year, while Erhard was in Washington and so unable to mobilize his forces rapidly, Adenauer withdrew from the presidential race, and announced he intended to remain chancellor.

Erhard was furious. But, whether for reasons of loyalty or caution, he refused to make a fight except to demand, and get, an Adenauer declaration that he was not disqualified to be chancellor some day.

So the feud simmered, and came to a head again after the 1961 election. The Christian Democrats, skidding at the polls, won just less than a majority, and so needed the few votes of the liberal Free Democrats to form a government.

Several young ministers attempted to use this situation to get Adenauer out. But at the critical moment Erhard again refused to help. Under the party pressures Adenauer gave a vague promise to retire in time to give his suc-

cessor opportunity to prepare for the 1965 election.

Oldest Chief

The grumbling within Adenauer's party ranks continued, grew louder. He was now the oldest chief of government in the world. His annual bouts with grippe were lasting longer. His leadership was under question, his firm hold of national affairs loosening. Washington seemed more and more to be marking time on matters involving Germany or western European unity, appearing to be awaiting the inevitable transfer of power.

In late 1962, Adenauer's gradual yielding of power was given a shove by a political storm that ensued when Defense Minister Franz Josef Strauss sparked a government charge of treason against the "Spiegel," the magazine's most popular news magazine, for an attack it made on the country's military leadership. Several of the magazine's editors were arrested for alleged treason. As the weeks went by, the case appeared flimsier and flimsier. The Free Democrats walked out of the government until Strauss himself was forced to quit.

Throne Shaken

Now Adenauer, his throne still more rudely shaken, seemed almost possessed of the need to deny the ever more popular Erhard the chancellorship. During the "Spiegel" crisis he even authorized a negotiation with the Socialists, though he had argued for years they were little better than Communists.

The attempt failed. But it did give new fuel to those Christian Democrats who thought the time had now come to settle the matter of the succession.

All this past winter the pressure grew. Adenauer gave ground only slowly. He told a foreign press association dinner he would definitely step down this autumn, but gave no date.

To all visitors, Adenauer gave the same assurance — his successor would be named in the Fall, and under no circumstances would it be Erhard.

But now the forces in the party who refused to give Adenauer the last say would wait no longer. On April 22 last the fight was joined for the final time.

Asks for Delay

The Christian Democratic party executives met. Adenauer proposed it discuss the French-German friendship treaty that he regards as one

of his crowning achievements. The executive decided instead to consider the succession. Adenauer proposed the designation of a successor be formally postponed till the fall. The executive insisted on immediate consideration.

Adenauer, still fighting said Erhard was a great economics minister but unsuitable to be Chancellor. There were others, he said, better suited. Let their names be put in nomination. He called on them one by one, including Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder, and each declined to oppose Erhard.

The sense of the executive was that the parliamentary

party meeting the next day should immediately name Erhard Chancellor-Designate.

Interior Minister Hermann Hoecherl suggested Adenauer ought to personally put Erhard's name in nomination. But the old man stuck to his guns.

"Do you think anyone out there would believe me?" he said caustically. "The people don't think I'm that decent."

On Last Try

The next afternoon Adenauer made one last try, foredoomed though it was. He repeated his objections to Erhard. Provincial leaders stood one by one to dispute him. When the vote came, Adenauer lost by a nearly three to one margin.

At 5:30 p.m. on that black Tuesday when his party deserted him, the 14-year "Adenauer era" in Germany was for all intents and purposes over. Even after retirement from the Chancellorship Adenauer will keep his seat in Parliament and his term as National Chairman of the Christian Democratic party runs until July, 1964.

But in Bonn, now, there is a well-used political joke for sale or — as some wits have wryly suggested — for lend-lease to the France of General Charles de Gaulle: Adenauer, dangling a great-

grandson on his knee, asks the little boy, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" "Chancellor, great-grandpa, just like you," the youngster replies. "Well, that's impossible, my boy," is Adenauer's response, "because I'm Chancellor! What else do you want to be?"

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