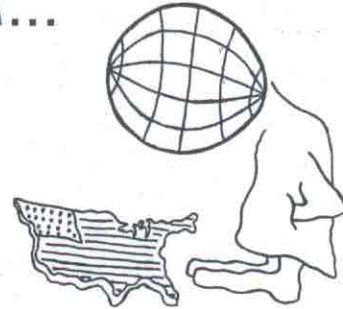


the world looks at the U.S.A.

AS 'THE GUERRILLAS' SET FIRE TO AMERICA...

A German playwright depicts

a coup d'état in the U.S.



Translated from DIE WELTWOCHEN, Zürich

Rolf Hochhuth seems determined to prove that "all idols have clay feet." In *The Deputy*, he portrayed Pope Pius XII as an accomplice of Hitler. In *The Soldiers* he let go at Winston Churchill. In his new play, *The Guerrillas*, he takes on the U.S.A., which is supposed to have "the most perfect police apparatus in history." He emphasizes that his drama, marked by the assassination of an idealistic senator by the C.I.A., is "not anti-American." Before its recent opening in Germany, the play was discussed in this interview with Hochhuth by Reinhardt Stumm, editor of Basel's *Nachrichten* and publisher of the Swiss *Theater-Zeitung*.

REINHARDT STUMM: Herr Hochhuth, what is *Guerrillas* about?

ROLF HOCHHUTH: The play depicts preparations for a coup d'état in the U.S. For it is only in the centers of power, only in the U.S. or in the U.S.S.R., not in the highly industrialized satellites like West Germany or Czechoslovakia, that revolutions have favorable prospects—only when the revolutionaries infiltrate the state apparatus.

The people who really have a chance to pull off a coup d'état are not the street demonstrators, who can be beaten up or deported to Siberia, but the infiltrators who are willing to wear the strait-jacket of officer, civil servant or parliamentarian for years in order to attain the levers of power. These guerrillas put into practice on the stage what Luttwak recommends in his famous handbook. The coup d'état—the least bloody type of revolt, which

can avoid the massacre of civil war—is supposed to overthrow the U.S. plutocratic oligarchy, the club of 120 families who own over 85 percent of the people's wealth and to whom the two indistinguishable political parties and one of the few remaining dailies in New York, the *Times*, are subservient. The U.S. is the one civilized land in the world where no labor party to date has even been able to put up a candidate for election to the House of Representatives! Over a fourth of the population lives below the official "poverty line," while in 1968 forty times more money was spent on armaments—that is, for industry—than on the poor. "True theory must be developed in the context of concrete conditions and existing situations," said Marx, and that is what I tried to do in *Guerrillas*.

R.S.: You use Marx without being a Marxist, if I understand rightly your *Spiegel* article "Class

Warfare Is Not Over." Why are your guerrillas Marxists?

R.H.: They aren't. In his system, Marx did not work out the problem of the opposition. Not the least aspect of my guerrillas' fight is the absence of an opposition in the U.S. Both parties represent only the interests of the establishment.

R.S.: The student Left in Germany acknowledges only those systems of thought which are built along Marxist lines. To that extent, your play should have little success in those circles.

R.H.: Marx claimed that ownership is the root of oppression, but actually the means of oppression is power. If the state has sole ownership, it has total power. And super-power is always fascistic. What Marx wrote about capitalism is not false but merely one-sided. It was not as a capitalist that Truman dropped the atom bomb or as a monarchist or a Nazi that Wilhelm II and Hitler wanted to grab the Ukraine; it was not as a Communist that Stalin had Lenin's fellow-fighters murdered. The super-power is the immoral element, regardless of what flag it sails under. Super-powers can be humanized only by being weakened—divide and liberate! Every state has a degree of decency corresponding to its degree of fear.

R.S.: In *Guerrillas* you develop a

revolutionary model; a proposal for replacing the U.S. plutocracy with democracy. Won't this be interpreted as expressing your anti-U.S. feelings?

R.H.: My play is not anti-American. The hero, like all my heroes, is old-fashioned, an American whose good spirit is the good spirit of America. A Senator, a high-society Republican millionaire, takes it upon himself to give his life in order to put his country's Constitution into practice. The closed circle of special interests can only be broken from within. The state's only role today is furthering the process of dispossession by its taxation policy: a smart millionaire will never pay a dollar in income tax, since he can always reinvest. Bonn took over this system as it took over the American helmet for the Bundeswehr. White House evolutionary programs are not worth the paper they are printed on, as long as there are no personalities there who intend to effect forcible redistribution of the wealth—like the Gracchi in

Rome or Roosevelt and Hopkins in Washington once tried to do.

R.S.: What entitles you as a German—or should I say European—to stage a play dealing in this manner with the U.S.?

R.H.: We are so dependent on America that even U.S. domestic problems are our own. This is particularly true of Germany, which is practically a satellite of the U.S. Economic interrelationships between the capitalist West European powers and the U.S. make their problems ours and vice versa.

R.S.: Could one not say that this close community of interests lessens the danger of conflict?

R.H.: I doubt it. I am afraid of our "protecting power." The Americans remind me of a dog tied to a sausage to guard it. Decades ago the South Americans rejoiced when Big Brother up north proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine that their continent was exclusively in the U.S. sphere of influence. But the price was terrible: total impoverishment of that continent. Now that

the American oligarchy is beginning to colonize Western Europe along the same lines, my sympathy is with statesmen like De Gaulle who refused to open all the doors to the Americans.

R.S.: The hero of your play pays with his life. The question is whether this is not just another model, whether the gigantic power apparatus does not make such a plan impossible from the start?

R.H.: Quite right. European students who talk about revolution do not realize that such a revolution is mortally dangerous. There will be tragedies, long before the shooting begins. America has the most perfect police apparatus in history, probably more perfect than the Russians'. And therefore it is clear that only the top social level can produce a latter-day Cataline. The unions are capitalist machines for practicing extortion on the workers; the unions support the same parties as the Rockefeller and Kennedy families. To say that such elections represent the will of the workers is ridiculous.