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15 CENTS

The Arrival of A Dangerous Wizard

When I got to the Rochambeau monument at the corner of Lafayette Square which is nearest Blair House, the ropes were up along Pennsylvania Avenue but there were few people waiting. It was 9:30 a. m. Two photographers squatted outside Blair House. Three eager beaver students, one in a bright red shirt, were sitting on the curb. There were half a dozen cops on the corner in the sunshine. The air was crisp and autumnal. Four poorly dressed Negroes had anticipated me in finding vantage points around the high base of the monument from which to see Khrushchev arrive.

What one noticed first was that there were no displays of flags along Pennsylvania Avenue; every bantam-weight visiting dictator from Latin America sees his flag hung from the lamp-posts between the Capitol and the White House but there were no hammer-and-sickles in sight. What one noticed next, as the morning wore on and the streets slowly filled, was how vigilantly the police were weeding out hostile banners. An Army sergeant came striding angrily across from the White House and pointed out to police a soldier with a mourning arm-band and a black skull-and-crossbones flag. He was quickly hauled away to await the arrival of MP's, and could be heard muttering indignantly about "a thug like Khrushchev." A stout shapeless woman in blue who tried to unfurl a banner reading "Khrushchev Not Welcome Here" got similar treatment.

A Welcome "Muted" As Planned

The State Department had long planned "a muted welcome," and Government employees had not been released from work to swell out the crowds as is usual when foreign potentates are expected. Lafayette Square filled up slowly. There were many tourists, recognizable by cameras carried on shoulder straps; the kind of white-haired ladies who still go faithfully to peace rallies; a sprinkling of students and a high proportion of Negroes. The latter were guarded and non-committal. The sidewalks did not fill out until the lunch hour, and the crowds were oddly quiet. Nobody seemed to speak to his neighbor; there was no joking; one felt that both the hostile and the friendly were afraid to be heard. The miasma of the loyalty-security program may have affected the latter while new immigrants like the Hungarians brought police state fears with them. A crowd in Moscow in Stalin's day might have been just this unsure about how to welcome a foreign visitor.

It was not so much a cold as a confused and inhibited crowd which stood waiting to see the Soviet Premier. For days in advance, it had been warned that his would be a malignant, almost occult, presence. The Most Rev. Patrick A. O'Boyle, Archbishop of Washington, had publicly requested that Catholic priests and members of religious orders stay away from Khrushchev during his visit, as if something hypnotic in his

very gaze might impel priests to sign up for private lessons in Marxism-Leninism. The newspapers were full of ads warning against the ill effects of the visit. One intrepid fellow named Leon Ackerman inserted a full page subversively bearing the quotation "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" in the *Evening Star* the night before Khrushchev's arrival but dared not openly suggest that this might apply to our Soviet neighbors. Cardinal Spellman astutely prescribed three extra Hail Mary's daily in the parochial schools to protect children during the visit from ideological fallout. No visiting wizard ever had a bigger advance build-up.

They Made The Sign in The Sky

When a loud speaker finally announced the arrival at Andrews Field, a white streak appeared in the cloudless heavens overhead and then a second white streak turned it into a cross, as if to ward off maleficence. Anti-Communists had hired a sky-writing plane. As Khrushchev's unexpectedly pleasant voice and soft Russian began to come over the amplifier, a lone policeman appeared high up on the roof of the rococo old State Department building and stood with folded arms against the sky. When the translation brought across Khrushchev's little joke about the earth being several hundred kilograms lighter and the moon that much heavier, there was no chuckle in the crowd. But there was an angry rumble, the first and only reaction I heard, as Khrushchev went on to say that when the U. S. pennant reached the moon it would be greeted by the Soviet pennant "as an old resident." A bright eyed lady nearby answered the indignant "heys" of the crowd by saying tongue-in-cheek, "he thinks we have a sense of humor." It began to look as if this were another of Khrushchev's misconceptions about the U. S. A.

When the parade started past, there was a burst of applause for the mounted police, riding a troop of horses as graceful as ballet dancers. But there was only light applause and a few timid cheers for the ebullient Khrushchev when he swept by, waving his black homburg above his shiny bald head. Ike, seated between him and the motherly looking Mrs. K., did not seem at all happy, and indeed on the TV screens later that night it began to look as if the CIA had advised him to keep his famous smile carefully hidden lest the visiting Old Bolshevik expropriate it. Ike will get a heartier reception in Moscow. Our capital was lovelier than ever in the bright sun but its bewildered people must have seemed cold. Moscow will be dark, gloomy and chill but its people's welcome will be warm. The Russians must remember that peace has long been regarded as a suspect word here; that these visits represent a sharp turn of policy; and that only Ike could have gotten away with this first ice-breaking prelude to what so many of us hope will be a thaw. The cold war has too long kept our minds in deep freeze.

Still No Evidence of Invasion But More Indications of Pentagon Connivance

Pity That UN Investigating Committee Can't Come to Washington . . .

Mr. Eisenhower's TV report on his European trip consisted largely of that vague and watery soup of thinned out moralisms which are customarily served up to us as foreign policy. It was disturbing to find that the President seemed to be concrete only in discussing Laos. Apparently Mr. Eisenhower discussed the situation in Laos when he was in Bonn, London and Paris as another example of "the aggressive actions of the Communists in Asia" and lined up support for United Nations action. It looks as if the President, who was persuaded to veto intervention in Indochina in 1954, has been sold a bill of goods on Laos.

It is a pity the UN investigating committee now on its way to Laos cannot spend a few days in Washington. We suspect that the committee could learn a great deal more in the Pentagon and at the State Department about the genesis of the fighting in Laos than on the untracked border between that country and North Vietnam.

Threats to Freedom?

The President said in his TV talk, "We must be concerned about threats to freedom, no matter where they occur." The most effective threat to freedom in Indochina since 1954 has come from our own country. Our influence has brought into being undemocratic regimes in both South Vietnam and Laos. The elections held in the former last month were in all but name the same kind of phoney one-party "elections" which are held in Communist countries. As the Associated Press put it delicately in a cable (Aug. 27) from Saigon on the eve of those elections, "the 460 candidates running for 123 seats include no opposition candidates in the western sense of the word."

In Laos on U. S. encouragement the government has been growing progressively more dictatorial since the summer of 1958 when the International Control Commission left. A good part of the current alarms about "invasions" which never turn up seems to be motivated by the desire of the Laotian army to take over completely from the civilians. Our Joint Chiefs of Staff seems to have been throwing its weight behind these incompetent Laotian military men, and encour-

"Their Just Hopes for A Better Life"

"The Communist bloc apparently intends to foment and direct rebellion within Laos and to give extensive support to the attempt to seize important areas and otherwise to prevent the establishment of those peaceful conditions necessary to implement basic economic and social programs. In short, the Communist intervention is apparently aimed at preventing the Lao people from realizing their just hopes for a better life."

—State Department Press Release No. 636, Sept. 5.

"There are some indications, in fact, that this latest flare-up of East-West tension was not a long planned Communist plot to strike at a Free World weak spot, but a reaction against an American-encouraged Laotian internal anti-Communist drive."

—Wash. Post military expert John G. Norris, Sept. 18.

aged them to launch that clean-up operation against Communists and other oppositionists which seems to have sparked the present troubles. It is a pity the UN investigating committee can't have access to the censored material to which we called attention last week. This material, deleted from page 68 of the recently published Porter Hardy subcommittee hearings on *U. S. Aid Operations in Laos* shows that last January our Joint Chiefs of Staff for the first time set tasks for the Laotian army. One of them was to fight some kind of holding action "for the time required to invoke the UN Charter or the SEATO Treaty."

That Alleged Invasion

There is reason to suspect that this operation was a political clean-up of oppositionists which might set off civil war and possibly invasion from North Vietnam; the Laotian army to hold the fighting until the U. S. or its Asian allies could intervene via the UN or SEATO. Even if the UN Committee cannot come to Washington, it may be able to learn more about this possibility if it looks closely enough in Laos. It is curious to notice that the Laotian appeal to the United Nations of September 4 said, "Since 16 July 1959 foreign troops have been crossing the frontier and engaging in actions against

London Daily Telegraph Correspondent on The Background of the "Invasions"

"Plans are being made to fly UN Committee members to areas of tension in Northern Laos, notably Samneua, the source of so much misinformation in recent weeks. In this pretty little mountain town, with its hair-raising airfield approach, Gen. Amkhan, regional commander for four provinces, has been giving out totally inaccurate military information, wielding the red pencil which he uses to mark enemy positions on his situation map with the verve and sweep of an inspired abstract painter.

"Thus a few days ago he told a group of correspondents of a sharp skirmish some 15 miles from his spacious bungalow headquarters, unaware that at the same time the company commander in the village referred to was telling a second group that his area had been quiet for weeks. The same thing has been happening at Army headquarters in Vientiane.

"One is tempted to conclude from this that the Laotian crisis was artificially created by the Government to cover its own deficiencies, or for material gain. But this is far

short of a full explanation.

"There were a number of border crossings in July by Pathet Lao and Black Thai forces, and it is likely that a number of the latter were technically Viet Minh, since this hardy tribal group occupies an area extending across the line so that many Black Thai are legal residents of Communist North Vietnam.

"These incursions created something close to panic in a Government suddenly fully aware that its neglect of tribal groups who constitute almost half of the population and of rural dwellers generally had caused much disaffection."

—Frank Robertson from Vientiane, London Telegraph Sept. 11.

"Representatives of the United States, which is obviously prepared to make some sort of stand in support of the Laotian government, have been almost as busy as the Laotians in their attempts to uncover evidence of Viet Minh participation, but with no greater success." —Same.