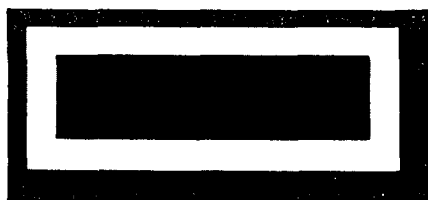


today's terroristic activity—both in order to threaten the existing political structure and to post a claim as a party that could bring back order if only given government responsibility. But today, the CP looks more like the target than the interpreter of the popular ire. The unionized masses evade its control, as shown by the call for a nationwide strike in January that the Communist Party tried vainly to prevent. Terror and violence have turned against the whole of the New Class, Communists included, assuming an ultraleft and ultraright hue and establishing links with the Mafia and common criminality. In short, the Communists, unable to defend even themselves, have lost their charisma as a force for repression and order—a quality so essential to their bid for power.

**T**HIS IS THE REASON WHY the part of the Italian New Class that exercises the highest governmental power does not seem eager today to accept the Communists as formal partners, especially since this would probably cause complications in the delicate international setup necessary to its economic survival. What then are the chances for a return of a modicum of stability? There are just a few glimmers of hope. One is the development inside all the old "center" parties, including the discredited Christian Democrats, of new and younger factions pressing for a return to old-style democracy and liberalism. Another is the formation of a vast "black market" of labor, now representing about 20 percent of the whole labor force, which operates clandestinely outside the planned, statized, welfarized structure created by the New Class. Actively opposed by the unions, it is becoming an important force for a return to productive and competitive work. The Fiat concern, for instance, one of the few big private firms still making a profit, has started farming out orders for automobile parts to black-market producers, who ignore the labor and social security codes. Finally, for the first time there is talk of efforts to re-privatize the economy (although a first concrete offer to buy back some state enterprises in heavy debt, made by an Italian-American group, has failed), and to the east, across the Mediterranean, there is the example of the Israeli government, which has announced its intention of putting the economy on a similar course. It is not much, in a bleak and threatening panorama. ■



JOHN HANRAHAN

## The mugging of Wilfred Burchett

**T**HE NIGHTRIDERS OF THE far right, along with the Hearst press and the one-time liberal *New York Post*, have in recent months been engaged in the journalistic mugging of leftist Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett.

Burchett's background and writings make him a natural hobgoblin for the political extreme right. A correspondent for two decades for the New York-based radical weekly newspaper *The Guardian*, Burchett has never made the standard journalistic pretenses of "objectivity" in his writings. Nor has he tried to hide his philosophy or mask where his sympathies lie: He's a Marxist who, in more than two dozen books and in thousands of articles, has backed leftist revolutionary activities throughout the Third World, and who openly supported victories by the North Koreans and the Vietcong in the United States's two most recent wars. Several times during the Vietnam War, U.S. officials, including Henry Kissinger, used Burchett's connections by having him convey messages or peace feelers to North Vietnam.

This unabashed philosophy has also made him a target of his own government, where for almost two decades he was denied a passport. Until his Australian passport was restored in the early 1970s when the Labor government came to power, he had traveled under papers issued by North Vietnam and Cuba.

The recent attacks by the extreme right and by some segments of the U.S. press, however, go far beyond charging Burchett with left-wing bias or anti-

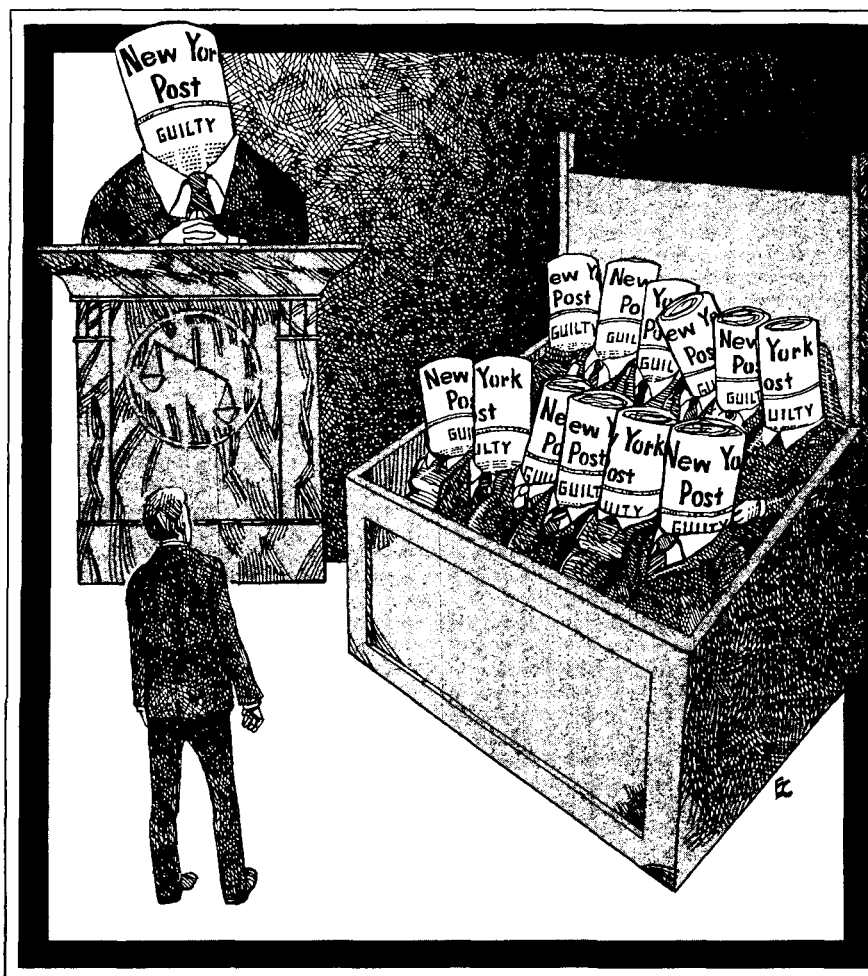
U.S. attitudes. Soon after Burchett came to the United States in mid-October for a two-month fund-raising and speaking tour, he found himself pilloried on the floor of Congress and in several major newspapers, not to mention such traditional forums for right-wing views as the *National Review*, *Accuracy in Media* (AIM), and the magazine of the John Birch Society. He was accused of being a Soviet KGB agent, and of having brainwashed and tortured (rather than merely interviewed for articles) American prisoners during the wars in Korea and Vietnam.

These charges against Burchett are nothing new; they were fully aired in an Australian court in 1974 in a libel suit filed by Burchett against a right-wing Australian publication, *Focus*, which had published the allegations. The jury in that case held that Burchett had in fact been defamed by the charges published by *Focus*. However, the jury also ruled that Burchett could not collect damages because parliamentary privilege applied in the case.

*Focus* had based its charges against Burchett on a speech made in the Australian Parliament by a far-right legislator; the jury determined that the publication's account of the proceedings was accurate and, therefore, immune from damages. (The privilege is similar to the constitutional one that applies to members of the U.S. Congress who cannot be sued for any statement, no matter how slanderous, that they may make during the course of speech and debate on the floor of Congress. And the U.S. press is generally immune from libel suits in reporting accurately on congressional and court proceedings.) The judge in the Australian case also held Burchett accountable for court costs.

**A**T ONE POINT LATE IN THE libel trial, according to a portion of the transcript cited by Burchett, the judge, after sending the jury from the room, commented to defense counsel: "You show me where there is any evidence on which the jury could find that he [Burchett] applied to become a member of the KGB and then became one; that he was put on the payroll; that he indulged in espionage for the KGB; or that he worked for the KGB in any other capacity. . . ." The judge also suggested to defense counsel that he "would be on safer grounds claiming parliamentary privilege" than in trying to argue Burchett was connected with the KGB. (Burchett, inci-

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dentally, says the only spy agency that ever tried to recruit him—unsuccessfully—was the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.)

An appeals court later ruled Burchett had been slandered, and said the defense of parliamentary privilege could not be sustained. However, the appeals body also held Burchett's lawyer responsible for inadequately fighting against the claim of parliamentary privilege, and said it thus would not order a new trial because of the expense that would be entailed for the defense in recalling its witnesses from overseas.

Burchett's recent accusers on the right and in the U.S. press not only ignored the rulings that Burchett had indeed been defamed, and ignored the trial judge's comments about a lack of evidence to support allegations against him, they also misreported the final decision as a *defeat* for Burchett. Almost all the recent articles attacking Burchett state, or suggest strongly, that the jury upheld the accusations made by *Focus*.

The recent published attacks on Burchett have also leaned heavily on statements by Yuri Visilevich Krotkov, a Soviet writer and self-proclaimed

part-time KGB agent who defected to the West in the 1960s. In late 1969, Krotkov (testifying under the alias George Karlin), told the Senate subcommittee on internal security that he had helped recruit Burchett as a KGB agent. A reading of Krotkov's 500 pages of testimony, however, reveal him as something less than a superspy and as someone with a vivid imagination: He also named as possible KGB agents Jean-Paul Sartre and John Kenneth Galbraith, as well as a number of top Indian, French, and Canadian diplomats assigned to the Soviet Union in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet Burchett's accusers in no way suggest that Krotkov's reliability is open to serious question.

**T**HE ATTACKS AGAINST Burchett in the United States were set in motion by Representative Larry McDonald (D.-Ga.), a member of the Birch Society's national council, with a speech in the October 18 *Congressional Record* labeling Burchett a spy and torturer. McDonald's allegations were immediately picked up in the November 2 issue of the Birch Society magazine, *The Review of the News*, in an article by former police and FBI in-

former John Rees. Rees, whose wife, Louise, a former police undercover agent, works for McDonald, is a confidante of the congressman and also produces *Information Digest*, a right-wing intelligence newsletter that provides information for the files kept on purported leftists by many police departments, public utilities, and corporations.

In his article, Rees misreported the libel trial decision as follows: "... the evidence was so overwhelming that the Australian jury took less than four hours to find against KGB agent Burchett and to order him to pay the \$100,000 costs of the trial."

Editorials in the Hearst press attacking Burchett followed within days of the Rees article—and the Hearst publications also misrepresented the libel trial verdict. For example, the *Boston Herald American* stated: "The court dismissed his charges and ordered him to pay \$100,000 in costs." (Hearst columnist Jeffrey Hart also attacked Burchett and referred to testimony in the trial, but did not print the verdict.)

The *New York Post*, in four mid-November articles written by William Heffernan, also gave an inaccurate account of the libel verdict. On November 18, Heffernan reported: "Burchett lost that suit and was ordered to pay \$100,000 in court costs." And the following day: "Burchett lost that suit but insists it was a 'moral victory.'"

The *Post*'s editorial page chief, James Wechsler, himself a target of the far right in the 1950s, also took a potshot at Burchett—and also got the libel trial verdict wrong. Calling Burchett "a veteran of the international Communist propaganda machine" and "an enemy of the U.S." who was involved "in the brainwashing (and worse) of American pawns in Vietnam," Wechsler's editorial went on to state that Burchett had "lost" the libel trial "in the face of firsthand testimony of many of his victims."

At first blush, the *Post*'s attacks seem the most surprising because of that newspaper's past reputation for liberalism. But times have changed. The newspaper is now the production of Australian press mogul Rupert Murdoch, whose screaming headlines telling of sex, violence, and dangerous leftists have sold so many papers for him in Australia and elsewhere. The formula seems to be working in New York as well. By the end of 1977, the *Post* claimed a circulation of about 645,000—up by some 140,000 since

Ed Crocker

Murdoch took over the paper a year earlier. There was speculation among some New York journalists that Murdoch had orchestrated the *Post*'s attack against Burchett, his fellow Australian and an old enemy. Both Wechsler and Heffernan disputed this.

**W**ECHSLER, IN A TELEPHONE interview, said he had written the anti-Burchett editorial (titled "The Impostor") and that it had been his idea. He said he based it entirely on Heffernan's reporting and did no independent checking of the allegations against Burchett "because Heffernan had put in a lot of time" researching the series and it would have been unproductive "to go back over the same ground." Asked if the editorial wasn't based on faulty information (that is, that Burchett lost the libel trial), Wechsler said: "You'll have to take that up with Heffernan."

Heffernan said he stands behind his articles and does not regard his reporting of the Australian libel verdict as a distortion. Under Australian law, he said, a person can be defamed by the truth—and, he said, the jury had not determined if the charges were true or not. But to most readers, the phrase "lost that suit," which was used in two of Heffernan's articles, would mean that the jury upheld the allegations. Shouldn't he have spelled out in more detail exactly what the decision was so that readers could decide for themselves what the jury had ruled? Heffernan, like Rees of the Birch Society magazine, said he sticks by what he had written as being a correct interpretation of the jury's verdict.

Heffernan added that full reporting on the jury's verdict was unnecessary because CIA sources, a reading of the trial transcript, and interviews with Krotkov and former POWs from the Korean War had convinced him that Burchett had done what he was accused of.

As for the origin of the articles, Heffernan said that Bruce Rothwell, an Australian and an "associate of the publisher [Murdoch]," had passed along to the metropolitan editor a clipping from *The Guardian* showing that Burchett was in the country. Rothwell, Heffernan said, had wondered how a man of Burchett's background could get permission to travel in the United States. (Called for comment, Rothwell said he had had nothing to do with the Burchett articles.) Heffernan said Rothwell was merely passing along a story idea, and was not conveying an

order from Murdoch to go after Burchett.

Heffernan's articles were by far more sensationalist in nature than even the Birch Society's. For example, Heffernan's third-day lead said that former prisoners in the Vietnam and Korean wars described Burchett as "a brutal interrogator, who filled them with fear, a man of great power who could say if they lived or died." (Curiously, the rest of the article never again mentions Vietnam prisoners.) One notable as-

**There was speculation that Murdoch orchestrated the *Post*'s attack against Burchett, who is a fellow countryman and an old enemy. Both Wechsler and Heffernan dispute this.**

pect about the former Korean War prisoners quoted in the story is that they had signed confessions that they had engaged in germ warfare in Korea—news that Burchett had reported in leftist publications at the time after interviewing some of the prisoners. The germ warfare charges proved extremely embarrassing to the United States and were vigorously denounced by U.S. officials at the time as Communist propaganda. Later, back in U.S. hands, the prisoners repudiated their confessions and claimed to have been tortured and brainwashed into giving them. In any event, it seems clear that former POWs who confessed to having engaged in germ warfare would not later feel friendly toward a man like Burchett who had conveyed their confessions to the world.

**B**URCHETT DENIED ALLEGATIONS in Heffernan's articles that he had been part of interrogation teams that had extracted confessions from the prisoners. Rather, he said, he was in the prison camps solely as a reporter. He said he had been told of the confessions by North Korean leaders and recognized that, if true, it

was an important news story. He said he interviewed the prisoners to get their side of the story and to test the North Korean officials' claims. Burchett also quoted from statements he said he had received over the years from former POWs who said Burchett had interviewed them—not brainwashed or tortured them. Some even credit him with putting in a word with prison camp officials to get conditions improved.

U.S. State Department officials, in November press briefings and in January interviews with this reporter, have said repeatedly that they have no information to substantiate any of the allegations that Burchett had been a spy and torturer. Kenneth Brown, deputy director of press relations for the State Department, also wrote *The Guardian* that the department has "no evidence that Burchett is guilty of these actions," referring to the torture and brainwashing. Brown told this reporter that Burchett's political ideas were pro-Communist and "might be offensive to us," but that the State Department was following President Carter's lead in providing for "a free flow of ideas" from abroad. He also noted the Australian libel-trial verdict "that the court found that he had been defamed, but that the person he sued had parliamentary immunity."

All the State Department statements, however, weren't enough for syndicated columnist James J. Kilpatrick. On January 10, Kilpatrick assailed Burchett as "a scoundrel" and "the professional Communist propagandist who worked insidiously on our prisoners of war in Korea and later in Vietnam." Kilpatrick didn't even bother to mention the Australian libel trial.

Burchett did have his defenders in several radical publications, as well as Alexander Cockburn, press critic for the *Village Voice*, another Murdoch publication that so far has resisted serious Murdochization. Cockburn assailed Heffernan's articles as "deplorable indeed" and "disgraceful." The *New York Times*, ignoring the controversy, in early January published an op-ed piece by Burchett on what causes oppressed peoples to take up the gun. Perhaps it is a hopeful sign that most of the major news media ignored the affair because it suggests that the press may have learned something from the 1950s after all. Still, the Burchett controversy is a reminder that for some publishers the Cold War isn't over, and that Red-baiting can still sell newspapers. ■



# THE ORIGINS OF THE THERAPEUTIC STATE

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*In this century, planners, therapists,  
managers, and other social engineers have succeeded  
in turning the American Dream on its head.*

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**By PETER SCHRAG**

**B**Y NOW THE "THERAPEUTIC STATE" has become so pervasive that most people no longer notice it. The phrase itself has become a cliché, although hardly anyone can fully comprehend its scope. Each year some 7 million Americans are "treated" by psychiatrists or other members of the mental health establishment, most of them in public clinics; some 40 million take psychoactive prescription drugs—tranquilizers, antidepressants, anti-manics, and sedatives—and millions of others are subject to psychological "services" in schools, offices, prisons, welfare agencies, and public housing projects. Some are conscripts, some are volunteers, and some can no longer tell the difference. Just before World War II there were fewer than 4000 psychiatrists in America. By 1977 there were some

30,000, nearly all of them trained with federal support, and the number of clinical psychologists, technicians, and other "mental health professionals" had grown proportionately. There are now as many mental health workers in this country as there are cops.

What's most significant about that phenomenon, however, is not its scope or its enormous growth—nor the fact that it was government policy which fostered that growth—but the ideology that sustains it, the faith in early intervention, in social sanitation modeled on public health, in the unquestioning belief that social problems are essentially medical problems, not problems of politics or economics or morals, and in the arrogant professional claims about the benefits of the services offered or imposed. In this country, ironically, that ideology is rooted in the most American of beliefs, faith in the perfectibility of man, and in the idea that this was to be the New Jerusalem and that the American was to be the New Adam, a person free of the corruption and constraints of the Old World and therefore free to make and

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His most recent book, *Mind Control*, will be published in March by Pantheon.

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shape his own destiny.

In a single generation—indeed in one decade (1908–1917)—the traditional faith was turned on its head. What had, at least in theory, been a rationale for leaving people alone, a faith that free men, or free land, or political conditions, or the frontier or, indeed, Providence itself, could create a world in which tomorrow would inevitably be better than today, became an equally unverified and unscientific—though in the end much more pernicious—theory of social intervention. Ultimately it fostered the domination of professional elites and bureaucrats, the manipulation of individuals in the name of “psychology” and “mental hygiene,” and the creation of what was to become the therapeutic state. In that one decade American intellectuals discovered and seized upon: Freud and psychoanalysis; Frederick Winslow Taylor and scientific management; Francis Galton and eugenics; Cesare Lombroso and the “science” of criminology; Alfred Binet and psychological testing; John B. Watson and behaviorism. In response to the large numbers of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and what has long since become known as “urban problems,” American intellectuals discovered “race betterment,” social work, and “mental hygiene,” and they found each other as a self-conscious professional class. More important, they took the ideas of Binet and Taylor and Galton, combined and reshaped them into an ideology of intervention that came to look as American as the flag, and promoted them as just another blessing of the New World. “The history of modern society,” said the historian Christopher Lasch, “is the assertion of social control over activities once left to individuals or their families.” In the case of the mental health state, however, few changes were inevitable; they were not simply the product of impersonal forces. They represented deliberate choices and deliberate responses to specific conditions. The objective of those choices—and the result—was the manipulation and control of the individual.

**T**HE ORIGINAL MODEL WAS THE FACTORY itself, and its preeminent technique was “scientific management,” the “gathering in,” as Taylor wrote in 1911, “on the part of those on the management’s side of all knowledge which in the past has been kept in the heads of the workmen,” and the replacement of the employee’s control of his job with control by the planners and engineers in management. Skinner, in an interview, said he had never thought much about Taylor and had certainly not been influenced by him; but it was Taylor who was the intellectual forebear of behaviorism and behavior analysis, of Watson, and of Skinner himself. Although Taylor is often described as the patriarch of the efficiency experts, the great inventor of the time-and-motion study, and although Taylor’s prototypical example was a “sluggish” pig-iron loader named Schmidt, “a man of the type of the ox . . . so stupid that he was unfitted to do most kinds of laboring work, even,” what really concerned him was “soldiering”—machinists and other skilled workers who, because they knew more about the work of the shop and factory than management, could effectively slow or otherwise control production. As the foreman of a machine shop, Taylor had discovered that “although he was the foreman of the shop, the combined knowledge and skill of the workmen under him was certainly ten times as great as his own.” The idea was to restructure the work and the jobs—to de-skill the work force—so that technical experts in the management could run things.

The essential idea [Taylor wrote] of the ordinary types of management is that each workman has become more skilled in his own trade than it is possible for anyone in management to be, and that therefore the details of how work shall be done must be left to him. The idea, then, of taking one man after another and training him under a competent teacher into new working habits until he continually and habitually works in accordance with scientific laws which have been developed by someone else is directly antagonistic to the old idea that each workman can best regulate his own way of doing work.

For Taylor the problem lay in the old method of “initiative and incentive”—the theory of free will that Skinner was to call “mentalism”—where the attitude of management was that of “putting the work up to the workmen.” Under the new system, all the planning, analysis, and evaluation—all the thinking—would be done by an engineer-run department in separate offices removed from the shop floor, and the results broken down into small “tasks” that would be taught, step by step, to the workers. (This would be called “programmed instruction” in Skinnerian jargon.) The objective was not merely to downgrade the worker’s skill—to wrest it away from him—but to give experts the mystifying paraphernalia, watches, slide rules, time sheets, to enhance the legitimacy of control.

To achieve his results, Taylor advocated not only his by now banal time-and-motion studies to analyze and restructure jobs, and to control the work, but also “the accurate study of the motives which influence men.”

It is true that the laws which result from experiments of this class, owing to the fact that the very complex organism—the human being—is being experimented with, are subject to a larger number of exceptions than is the case with laws relating to material things. And yet laws of this kind, which apply to a large majority of men, unquestionably exist, and when clearly defined are of great value as a guide in dealing with men.

The most wonderful part of Taylor’s system, he would say, was that “under scientific management arbitrary power, arbitrary dictation, ceases; and every single subject, large and small, becomes the question for scientific investigation, for reduction to law. . . . The man at the head of the business under scientific management is governed by rules and laws which have been developed through hundreds of experiments just as much as the workman is. . . .” Both business executives and workers would be subject to the judgments and rules of the behavioral engineer. That was the very essence of the Skinnerian spirit. “In the past,” Taylor wrote, “the man has been first; in the future the system must be first.” The system taught the individual that he was incompetent and irresponsible, first in the plant, then in his own life.

The institution of Taylorism in American industry brought in its wake a great army of efficiency experts, motivation researchers, testers, and psychologists—people who would properly select, place, and train the work force and keep it functioning happily on the job—and, along with them, a growing faith in the powers of applied behavioral science which spread quickly from industry to education and other fields. Through the 20 years after World War I, the individual came increasingly to be regarded as a conglomerate of traits subject to measurement, the test increasingly important as a way of justifying school and job placement, and the methods of industrial selection and control increasingly common in other institutions. As Professor Ellwood P. Cubberley of Stanford, a leading philosopher of public education in the first decade of the twentieth century, wrote, “Every manufacturing establishment that turns out a standard product or a series of products maintains a force of efficiency experts to study methods of procedure and to