



The New Communist Propaganda Strategy

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PARIS
THE POET Robert Lowell has refused to attend a gala at the White House," a front-page editorial in the Communist *l'Humanité* exulted recently. "... Six other Pulitzer Prize winners, painters, composers, critics, and twenty writers or artists have associated themselves with his gesture. . . . These twenty intellectuals not only do America honor; they are humanity's chances for peace. And we on our side do not begrudge them our admiration." This unusual testimonial to the non-Communist protest movement in the United States, signed by André Wurmser, one of the French Party's leading journalistic hatchet-men, was naturally balanced with attacks on the Johnson administration's foreign policy. Even so, a hasty reader might have been impressed by the apparent sincerity of Wurmser's disclaimer of any anti-American intent. Impressed, that is, until he turned to the third page, which featured reports on demonstrations or meetings organized throughout the country by the Communist-controlled Peace Movement. In Marseilles, the newspaper noted, a crowd of several hundred persons demonstrated on the Canebière against the arrival in port of a

United States warship. Another street demonstration at Ivry in the Paris suburbs was punctuated, according to the paper, with cries of "Peace in Vietnam," "U.S. Assassins," "Out with the 'Ricains (Americans)."

A Concerted Attack

Talking out of both sides of the mouth is not exactly a new accomplishment for *l'Humanité* or for Communist propaganda in general. In recent years, however, the hate-America line, the basic theme of Soviet psychological warfare during the Korean war, has been so muffled under layers of Khrushchevian coexistence that a number of supposedly hard-minded western policymakers thought it had disappeared for good. Its recent vicious revival is a phenomenon that does not yet appear to have received adequate attention either from the United States's allies abroad or from campus critics of the Johnson administration at home or from the administration itself.

It is only within the last month or so that signs of a coherent offensive strategy have become apparent behind Communist propaganda and subversive tactics in Europe. There was, naturally, some ranting in the Communist press about the U.S.

bombing of North Vietnam and the dispatch of marines to Santo Domingo; there were meetings and street demonstrations in various countries, including France. But to experienced students of Communist propaganda the campaign, if it could be called that, had an essentially defensive character: All the party really seemed concerned about was to show the European masses that its heart still bled for the victims of imperialism, despite Peking's insinuations to the contrary. Sophisticated European leftists were not taken in. "The Sino-Soviet split has paralyzed the international Communist movement," declared the weekly *Nouvel Observateur*. "... Its inability to react is creating a kind of vacuum in history."

Gradually Moscow's anti-U.S. line toughened. Borrowing a favorite tactic of certain Gaullist publications, the official Communist organs in France and elsewhere in Europe repudiated anti-Americanism while stuffing their columns with written or pictorial matter calculated to make the United States look odious and contemptible. The Soviet-controlled rumor-mills and forgery plants in western Europe which had been idling in the last few years began to step up their output. One hitherto unheard-of literary agency has been calling up prospective clients in Paris to offer documents allegedly filched from official archives and said to prove that President Roosevelt's State Department helped finance the Franco revolution in 1936.

THE STRATEGIC GOAL of this new propaganda offensive emerged in an editorial signed by Jeannette Thorez-Vermeersch, Maurice Thorez' widow, which appeared in *l'Humanité* on June 2. "By the admission of the American leaders themselves," the editorial declared, "their [foreign] military bases are not . . . intended to insure peace, to defend the countries in question against an eventual aggression, but to impose on them by violence governments subject to the United States. . . ." The recommended counter-strategy for French patriots was summed up in the article's title: U.S. Go Home.

The familiar slogan has some new trimmings that promise to give it

—at least in France—a far greater potential for subverting the Atlantic Alliance than it has possessed in the past. For one thing, Mme. Thorez-Vermeersch's editorial, reflecting current Kremlin policy directives, was peppered with catchwords borrowed from Gaullist propaganda and seemingly addressed more to the nationalist than to the revolutionary sentiments of *l'Humanité's* readers. It appeared, moreover, precisely at the moment when Paris was buzzing with rumors that President de Gaulle would soon demand the withdrawal of American troops from French soil or that of SHAPE headquarters. The Communist intent apparently is at once to force de Gaulle's hand and to sow suspicion of him in the minds of his allies by creating the false impression that his nationalist policies are secretly inspired by Moscow. Anything that can be exploited by Communist propaganda to exacerbate French suspicion or disapproval of the United States obviously helps increase the pressure for the elimination of American bases here, which in turn strengthens American doubts about Gaullist France as an ally.

NATO observers are convinced that the campaign is being directed from Moscow on a European, or even worldwide basis. Recent dispatches from a special correspondent of *l'Humanité* in the Soviet Union make this clear. Late last month a meeting took place in Geneva between Waldeck Rochet, Thorez' nominal successor as head of the French Communist party, and Luigi Longo, secretary of the Italian party, to coordinate the anti-American activities of their respective organizations. From June 1 to 3, delegations from eighteen Western European nations held an extraordinary conference in Brussels which among other actions called for the launching of "an immense effort" to promote the campaign. Significantly, the final resolution of the conference called special attention to those western European countries "most of whose governments are continuing to support in fact the aggressive policies of American imperialism."

Despite the allusion to the NATO governments that have refrained—unlike the French one—from criticizing U.S. policies in Vietnam and

Santo Domingo, there is reason to believe that France has actually been selected by the Kremlin strategists as the most promising theatre in Europe for a major political breakthrough. The choice is understandable when one remembers that the Gaullist high command here is waging, for quite different reasons, a parallel anti-American campaign that inevitably reinforces the one directed from Moscow.

Moreover, the pro-Chinese, Castroist, and Yugoslav Communist factions all have significant bridgeheads in the French intellectual world, and however much they may insult one another, they still pitch in with a common accord to blacken the United States image whenever possible. And then there is the strongly entrenched French neutralist contingent which is always ready to examine a situation from any an-



gle, provided it is an anti-American angle. An editorial in *Le Monde* on the success of Gemini IV must have seemed to Communist and Gaullist anti-American specialists a masterpiece of its kind. Was there not, the editorial asked, "some kinship between the Big Stick which the U.S. is brandishing here and there and the brutal acceleration of the space program?"

Anxiety and Forecast

Viewed against this background, the danger of the Atlantic Alliance being gravely damaged by cultivated doubts of American leadership seems greater than Washington realizes, and the need for counter-measures of various kinds more urgent. The aid the enemies of America are getting from irresponsible, hysterical, and misinformed domestic criticism of the administration's foreign policy is illustrated by the editorial in *l'Humanité* that has been cited. But there can be no doubt that the administration itself has supplied the anti-American propagandists in Europe with some of their most effective ammunition. Any resolute opposition to Communist expansionism is,

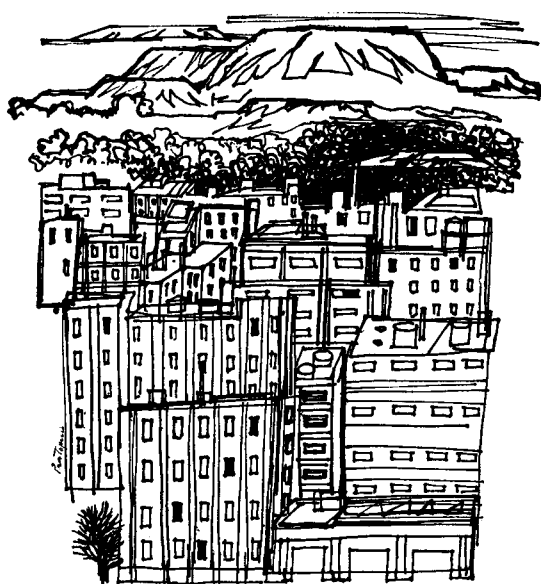
of course, bound to draw psychological fire from the enemy and arouse apprehension among the more faint-hearted of our allies. Brash declarations of what the *London Times* has called "American omnipotence" are not likely to improve matters. To be sure, the more sophisticated European observers realize that much of the tough talk out of Washington is often mere bureaucratic opportunism on the part of officials who used to profess just as loudly how much we loved the Russians and vice versa, but that does not make it any less unpleasant to their ears.

We likewise appear to suffer, at least in Europe, from a consistent inadequacy in the presentation of our policies. As a consequence, there is a good deal of doubt about both our motives and our capabilities. To thoughtful Europeans one of the most disturbing things about a number of our mistakes is the impression that they stem basically from the absence of any broad political warfare strategy for coping with the Communist threat. Since in their judgment the threat lies primarily in the field of political warfare rather than in the military or economic sector, they cannot help having misgivings about the quality of American leadership of the free world. These doubts are aggravated by what the Europeans consider to be our unimaginative counter-guerilla doctrine in Vietnam, by the administration's failure to impose more effective verbal discipline on U.S. officers and officials abroad, by the lack of any effective machinery for coordinating press statements in Washington and in the field, and by the apparent failure of the FBI and the CIA to keep up with the ever-growing sophistication of Communist political-warfare techniques.

Even without some of the errors of execution that have been committed, it is certain that our intervention in Santo Domingo would still have aroused the wide moral and political disapproval that both Communists and Gaullists have been vigorously exploiting against us. One encounters Europeans—even Frenchmen—who can find excuses for President Johnson's decision, or who honestly believe that it may turn out on balance to the advantage of the

West, but this reporter at least has yet to meet one who believes that it was absolutely necessary or wholly justifiable. What especially disturbs the sincere friends of the United States about our Santo Domingo policy is the fear that it will tend to weaken our position in Vietnam, which is considered a more important and a more dangerous theatre in the struggle against Communist expansionism.

ONE of the most significant and constructive French comments on U.S. policy comes from General André Beaufre, former deputy chief of staff at SHAPE, who has held important combat commands in Vietnam and Algeria. Writing early this month in *Le Figaro*, Beaufre did not condemn the American policy of increased military commitment in Vietnam or argue that victory is hopeless. He voiced some fear, however, that too much reliance on conventional military doctrines and too little imagination in seeking political solutions may lead us into a costly impasse. He depicted Chinese strategy as being primarily aimed at inflicting a political or psychological defeat on the United States in order to discredit Soviet leadership in the Communist world. The Soviets on their side, Beaufre believes, are waiting for Peking to over-reach itself and provoke the United States into direct attacks on China. There would be little risk of such a conflict escalating into a general nuclear war, in Beaufre's opinion, but it would not end the guerilla menace in Asia, and regardless of what material damage the United States inflicted on China it would be a disaster for the West. "The present world equilibrium would be profoundly upset," he concluded. "The system existing since 1945 with the United States and the USSR forming its two poles would probably give way to one opposing a nuclear U.S. to a virtually non-nuclear China, while the USSR would tend to become the leader of a third-force neutralist bloc englobing a large part of the 'third world' and of Europe. . . . I hope that our American friends in directing their effort toward the Far East will not lose sight of the possible consequences of their decision for Europe and for the world."



Verwoerd Tightens the Screws

ANTHONY DELIUS

SOUTH AFRICA's race laws have become so much a feature of contemporary international lore that they are even being used as a public-relations gimmick. Recently, in quick succession, two British pop singers in search of attention have come to the country, insisted on singing only where white and colored fans could share the same hall, and been packed off home again in a flood of publicity. The official uproar and confusion that followed resulted in an effort by the ministers of community development and of state planning to curtail the already minimal mixing of the races on beaches, racecourses, and sports grounds, as well as in the entertainment halls. A proclamation was issued warning that anybody found entertaining a mixed audience without a permit to do so would face a fine of \$600 per person of the wrong color being entertained and that the unauthorized patrons themselves would face a similar fine. Permits for mixed audiences are grudgingly granted only on the condition that the places of entertainment have enough separate entrances, exits, seats, and toilet facilities to accommodate the different races present.

A major drive to complete entertainment segregation was started last year by Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd at a time when he was irked by recent decisions at the United States and British embassies to celebrate their respective national days with ostentatious multiracial parties. And in mid-May of this year the U.S. aircraft carrier *Independence* canceled a visit to Cape Town and bypassed the South African coast after the South African government made it known that Negro crew members would not be welcome ashore. The government has followed this up by intimating that it will allow U.S. space-tracking stations in the country only if Washington guarantees that no Negroes will be sent to man them.

Birds of a Feather

Prime Minister Verwoerd has undoubtedly been encouraged to tighten the laws separating the country's 3.2 million whites from the 13.8 million nonwhites by the provincial elections held in March. The results showed a marked swing to the Nationalists in Natal and other strongholds of the British-descended and Jewish minorities who have traditionally supported the opposition