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The Transmission as Propaganda

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order to provide opportunities for the Russian or the Red Chinese, "it ceases to be a progressive ideology."

Those who go along with the communists to the extent of making Philippine nationalism nothing but a "hate America" movement should ponder well and ponder long this remarkable passage of the Transmission.

H. DE LA COSTA

3. The Transmission as Propaganda

Aside from a determined internal attempt to destroy the English language by bad example, the chief propaganda techniques of the Transmission are two, both tried and true. The first is an adaptation to the written word of eye-and-ear censorship, the second the facts-to-conclusion leap.

The first was popularized in Nazi Germany during the nineteen thirties. Foreign newspapermen were allowed to print anything they saw, but they were only allowed to see just the right things, that is, the favorable occurrences or scenes. Their copy was thus edited at the source. Similarly, the reader of the Transmission is overwhelmed with facts, but they are hand-picked facts. The Americans intervene in Lebanon, the British occupy Jordan, but there are of course no Soviets in Syria or Iraq or Iran and no Chinese communists in north Vietnam or, more recently, on the Himalayan borders of Indian states. How could there be? It doesn't say anything about them here.

The facts-to-conclusion leap has several approved variants. One is producing a positive assertion from negative evidence. This is best exemplified by the reasoning processes of the jay-hawk which appeared once in the Pogo comic strip and was accused of being a mythological bird. He stated that, far from being mythological, he had been brought up by a tribe of invisible Indians living north of the Kaw river. "Bein' invisible they natural din't leave no traces an' to this day no sign of 'em is ever been found... Sheer proof!" This may be called

the "invisible Indian" argument. By means of it anything which Philippine officials do not attack tooth and nail they naturally love, honor and obey.

More pervasive than the invisible Indian is the transfusion gambit. This is where a good strong fact provides strength for a weak conclusion near which it is placed. Thus I write: "There are five hundred million bedbugs in the Philippines and they are all due to American imperialism." There may well be five hundred million bedbugs in the Philippines; if so, this is a fact and as such certifiable. As to the linkage of the bedbug menace to the American menace, this is not a fact but an assertion; the causal connection must be proven separately. But why prove it? Proximity covers a multitude of sins in logic. When the veracity of our jayhawk's account of his youth was questioned, he replied confidently: "I got the feathers to prove it." The authors of the Transmission have plenty of feathers.

When it is the foregone conclusion that transmutes the facts rather than the facts the conclusion, a slightly different formula is used. Facts involving human motivation are rarely all black or all white but mostly gray; men everywhere act from mixed motives and their acts, to be thoroughly understood, must be looked at each one in its proper context of circumstance. But in the Transmission there is no gray of mitigating circumstance for men. There is only the black of conscious corruptness and the white of absolute purity: black for all those favoring Western aims, white for all those favoring communist aims. A conclusion which calls for condemnation of Western motivation uses solely black facts, a conclusion which calls for exaltation of communist motivation uses solely white. This procedure is varied by "damning with faint praise" an occasional individual on the wrong, or freedom, side, but in general the line is drawn straight: all their guys are noble, all ours unspeakably depraved.

Who is all this propaganda for? Remember, this is a supposedly secret document directed not to the general public but to fellow communists. In the light of that fact I think we should take a second hard look at Political Trar smision 15,

considering it not as a potential trap for the unwary (who will not see it) but as something the purpose and method of which is highly revealing of the present situation of the Communist Party in the Philippines.

First, this document is propaganda, not information. Whatever else the top communists may be, they are not fools; and as accurate information this document is foolish. For themselves the leaders have to know and know correctly exactly what is going on. They may not accept the hard facts, they may wrest them to the party line, but they themselves have to have them or they cannot lead sensibly. The hard facts, however, as presented in the Transmission are so overlaid with propaganda coloring that they are obscured, and obscured facts do not form a firm basis for effective action or counteraction. The leaders themselves may have, probably do have, a great mass of solid and intimate information. But this is not it. This is a sales talk.

Second, the pitch is being made to their own rank and file, not outsiders. The device that makes it acceptable to their own people, despite its blatancy, is the old one of "telling a secret." Anyone who has ever been let into a deeply kept secret knows well that he is so gratified at getting in "on the inside" that he seldom examines the content of the secret very critically. He clutches it unquestioningly; it is now his. The communist leaders, being excellent psychologists, are letting human nature go to work for them. Some minds among the readers may be acute enough to feel insulted by the tone and method of the Transmission, but such minds are likely to be already entirely outside Communism or else already up at the top inside, within the closed circle. Meanwhile the ordinary minds, and these are the bulk of the working communists, are too busy being conspiratorial to notice anything offkey. They are being brain-washed painlessly. Political Transmission 15 is not principally for information, then, but to keep the comrades in line.

Does this mean that local Communism is weakening, fighting for its life? Not at all. Such time-to-time indoctrination is routine, especially in an "outside" country where the com-

rades are subject to other influences and other ideas. However, the comprehensive nature of this particular indoctrination may indicate that a somewhat massive effort is currently called for, but whether as counteragent or preparation we do not know. Moreover, the low intellectual level of the Transmission is a cheerful note. It would seem to say that the great mass of the communists here are enthusiastic rather than intelligent and that cutting off a few heads at the top would inflict another blow as grave as the round-up of the Politburo, a blow from which it would take the Party years to recover.

H. B. FURAY

4. Philippine Communism: Strategy and Tactics

Probably the most important recent triumph of the Philippine communists in the field of propaganda is to convince a considerable number of people that communism ceased to be a threat with the military defeat and dispersal of the Huks. Anyone who thinks otherwise and says so immediately becomes a somewhat repellent figure of fun—a witch-hunter, a “little brown McCarthy”. This is a great tactical victory.

It is based, of course, on the fallacy that the Hukbalahaps and the Communist Party of the Philippines were one and the same thing; destroy the one, destroy the other. The fact of the matter is that the Party merely used a discontented peasantry as a tool with which to seize political power. The tool broke in its hands, but the Party remains to pick up other tools.

The defeat of the Huks was, then, a temporary setback. The struggle for subversion continues, but on a different level, by different means and methods. A captured document, the application of a Filipino communist to his superiors for reassignment abroad, makes this clear.

I am [he writes] a journalist and a writer with a Marxist outlook... I am fully armed politically and ideologically for the next phase of our revolutionary struggle, the battle for men's minds... A change of tactic, from the armed to the legal and parliamentary form of struggle, would at once disarm our enemy [the United States] who would inter-