

"SOVIET TOTAL WAR," HOUSE COMMITTEE ON UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES, 30 SEPT 1956

THE COMMUNIST ATTACK UPON PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT

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I have always been impressed at our seeming reluctance to give credence to official statements which are made by political leaders in other countries when we disagree fervently with what they say or when their statements seem at the time to be bombastic or unrealistic.

For example, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, written in 1924, had a wide circulation in Germany and left a deep impression on the German people. Over here it received comparatively little attention until after the outbreak of World War II. Yet in this book was the blueprint of the Hitlerian policy of the superiority of the *Herrenvolk*, of the manifest destiny of the German Reich, of the anti-Semitic campaigns, and of the whole trend of Hitlerism.

Similarly, I am afraid we Americans do not pay as much attention as we should to what Communist leaders tell us about the techniques they intend to adopt to undermine the structure of free government based on the rule of law.

A great deal can be learned from the pronouncements of the 20th Party Congress, held in Moscow in February 1956. This was an extraordinary affair. Over a period of 12 days the Soviet leaders poured out a cascade of verbiage—the length of the speeches corresponding roughly to their respective positions in the present Soviet hierarchy. From Khrushchev we had an 8-hour speech and roughly 56,000 words, from Bulganin 4 hours and 27,000 words, from Mikoyan 2 hours and 14,000 words, and so on. The total amounted to some 500,000–600,000 words which the patient party faithful had to endure.

The recent de-Stalinization program has rendered obsolete practically all of the history books and many standard textbooks used throughout the Soviet Union. Something had to replace these books and until the new historians can rewrite a proper Soviet history, the speeches of the party congress can serve as a textbook.

Possibly we should spend some time on what the Soviet leaders at the party congress have just been telling us. Tucked away in all

this oratory are the statements of the policy which we may expect to see the present Kremlin leaders follow for the immediate future. They have told us in no uncertain words what they propose to do to us.

While we read in these speeches that war is no longer inevitable, and that some kind of coexistence is possible, it is clear that Soviet objectives remain basically unchanged, but, they say, can be achieved by new methods. For example, this is what Khrushchev said in his speech of February 14, 1956:

The rightwing bourgeois parties and their governments are suffering bankruptcy with increasing frequency. In these circumstances, the working class, by rallying around itself the toiling peasantry, the intelligentsia, all patriotic forces, and resolutely repulsing the opportunist elements who are incapable of giving up the policy of compromise with capitalists and landlords, is in a position to defeat the reactionary forces opposed to the popular interest, to capture a stable majority in the parliaments, and transform the latter from an instrument of bourgeois democracy into a genuine instrument of the peoples' will. In such an event—

he adds—

this institution, traditional in many highly developed capitalist countries, may become an organ of genuine democracy—democracy for the working people.

Translated into a little less flamboyant language, this means that the Communists propose to infiltrate our free legislative systems, to take over our parliamentary governments, and to use the freedom which our system of government gives to destroy all vestiges of that system. Though they did not quote it specifically, we can be sure that the Soviet leaders still accept the view announced most vividly in Lenin's own heyday, in the Statutes of the Third Communist International in 1920—that—

The Communist Party enters such institutions (as parliaments) not for the purpose of organization work, but in order to blow up the whole bourgeois machinery and the parliament itself from within.

Speaking in February a few days after Khrushchev, Mikoyan accomplished these objectives in the past, and cited particularly the revolution in Czechoslovakia. This is how he put it:

By force of the favorable postwar situation in Czechoslovakia the Socialist revolution was carried out by peaceful means. Communists came into power after having allied themselves not only with the parties of the working people which were close to them but also with the bourgeois parties which supported the common national front. The Czechoslovak people won by way of a peaceful development of revolution.

And, Mikoyan concluded that—

In their own way, yet also without civil war, the working class of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Poland, and other people's democracies arrived at the victory of the Socialist revolution.

In the light of this clear warning of intent, it may be useful to review briefly some past examples of Communist attempts to subvert free governments.

There is no instance where the Communists have taken over a country by free elections or have obtained a parliamentary majority by free elections. Unfortunately, it is also true that the Communists have moved in without having a majority status.

Past Communist takeovers of free countries have generally featured most, if not all, of these four elements:

1. The use of force from outside, or *the overhanging threat of force*.
2. The obtaining by the Communists through popular vote of at least an effective minority position.
3. The willingness of other parties, most often the parties to the left, but in some cases even parties of the extreme right, to join in political alliances and to admit Communists to key positions in the government.
4. Communist manipulation of key ministries so that non-Communist elements were driven out of positions of influence.

The best example of this process is, of course, that of Czechoslovakia. Mikoyan pointedly and ominously boasted of this Soviet "feat." Additional variants are found in the cases of Hungary and Poland, Rumania and Bulgaria.

In all of these cases, except for Czechoslovakia, the actual presence of Soviet forces on the spot played a decisive role. In Czechoslovakia some of the same effect was obtained by the presence, just across the border, of strong Soviet forces and by the fact that the Soviets had previously occupied Prague and many other important Czech centers and had been able, by their terrorist and infiltration methods, to gain a position of strength which far exceeded the numerical representation in the population at large. In fact, they prepared the way for the coup before they evacuated their troops in 1945.

Beginning in 1945, Moscow exercised heavy pressure on the free Czech Government headed by President Benes. Hoping to be able to work with the Kremlin and anxious to insure the quick withdrawal of Russian troops, Benes went to Moscow in March of that year. He sought agreement on the forming of a coalition government acceptable to the Soviets which would include some of the pro-Communist émigrés who had been collected in Moscow during the war and who flooded back to their home country to play roles preassigned to them by the Kremlin.

When the parliamentary government of President Benes was actually reconstituted, the anti-Communist forces were badly divided among four or more parties. The Communist Party, as usual, presented a monolithic front. Under these conditions, the elections of 1946 gave the Communists 38 percent of the votes. Thus they became the largest single party, their leader Gottwald was named Prime Minister, and the Communists were able to take over certain key ministries, including Interior, Information, and Finance, with a crypto-Communist in charge of Defense.

During all this period, Stalin had cultivated President Benes and lulled him into a feeling of security as to Moscow's intentions. Meanwhile the Communists were building up their control of the Czech military forces, the trade unions, and the internal security policy. Finally, one of Moscow's principal "expeditors," Valerian Zorin, now Soviet Ambassador to Bonn, was sent to Prague, and the minority Communist Party seized power in February 1948 without firing a shot.

The principal Czech anti-Communist leaders either escaped abroad, committed suicide, or were eliminated by arrest. Non-Communist parties were liquidated by the armed seizure of their headquarters and newspapers. A purge commission dealt with all so-called unreliable political leaders. President Benes was forced to resign in June 1948,

niques. In other words, he boasted that democracy in Hungary was cut away, piece by piece, just as we slice up a sausage.

These two illustrative examples, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, could be further emphasized by tracing the Communist takeover in Poland, Rumania, and Bulgaria. But two examples serve the purpose. It is useful to have the ballots but there are situations, and the Soviet Union is adept in bringing them about, where bullets prevail.

So much for our past experience with Soviet project "takeover." Does the Kremlin now see fresh opportunities where the clearly announced program of Messrs. Khrushchev and Bulganin might now be put into operation?

First, a word on the element of force. There are few places in the world where a free country is so at the mercy of Soviet or Communist Chinese forces as the satellites stood in 1945-47. Thanks to NATO in Europe, to SEATO in the Far East, to the Baghdad Pact in the Middle East, and to individual commitments of the United States of America in other areas, the free world's umbrella of strength extends almost all the way around the periphery of the Sino-Soviet bloc. We sometimes think of this great effort, in which the United States has played the leading part, as designed only to meet force. But we must never overlook that it also has vital importance in meeting more subtle Communist tactics.

Of course, the blunting of the element or threat of force does not do the whole job. It does tend to channel Soviet activities into the struggle for power by other means.

In this struggle the Communists must see their greatest opportunities where they now have the strongest penetrations into the parliamentary machinery of free governments.

In several countries these penetrations are serious. In the Italian Parliament of 590 members there are now 143 Communist members. To these must be added 75 Nenni fellow-traveling leftwing Socialists, or a total of 218 who consistently vote and act with the Communists. Together in the last elections in 1953, their total popular vote was 9.5 millions, or 35.5 percent of the total.²

The French Chamber of Deputies presents another situation which the Kremlin may be studying. There are today about 150 Communist members in the Chamber out of a present total of about 600.

In Indonesia, the Communist Party received 6 million votes or 17 percent of the total electorate in the elections of September 1955 and they have a representation of 39 members or 16 percent of the total of the Indonesian Assembly.

In some 35 countries of the world, the Communist Party is illegal. Here their rank and file, though seriously large in several cases, must work through underground channels and the more obvious fellow-traveling front organizations, without direct political representation in parliamentary bodies. However, in such areas as Singapore, Communist-influenced parties have an important position and serve as effective vehicles for Communist activity.

Once established as a party to be reckoned with, the next crucial factor is the ability of Communist Parties to enter into alliances with other parties so as to increase their electoral strength and above all to

² Committee note: For possible future developments in Italy, see this volume pp. 633-637.

and the Communists took over and ever since have maintained supreme control.

There are many lessons to be learned from this historical precedent. When the Communists obtain an effective minority position in any parliamentary body, it is a sign of danger. If, in addition to that, they have important places in the government and in particular control the ministries of defense and interior, then the danger is greatly augmented and the country in question is ripe for a Communist takeover.

The situation in Hungary as the war was coming to a close was, as I suggested above, dominated by the Soviet military occupation. Nonetheless, the Hungarian non-Communist political leaders bravely started out to form a free government and in the first postwar elections in November 1945, the anti-Communist parties had over 300 seats to about 70 for the Communists.

Then the trouble started. The Soviet military authorities proceeded to arrest, to drive from the country or terrify and blackmail the leaders of these non-Communist parties so that in the next elections in 1947, the Communists substantially increased their representation and became the largest single party, although the opposition groups still had a majority. The latter, however, were badly divided and facing the pressure tactics of the Communists supported by the Soviet military, they were reduced to impotence and the Communists took over. By 1948 most of the anti-Communist leaders were dead, jailed, or had fled.

Rakosi, one of the Hungarian renegade artisans of all this terror, still maintains a very precarious hold over the Hungarian Government as you can well imagine he almost completely symbolized the Stalinist line and the Stalinist techniques, and sooner or later the new anti-Stalinist look may mean his downfall. In February of 1952, however, he was in fine fettle and described with glee and in the utmost detail the entire history and techniques of the destruction of the free government of Hungary.

I recommend the study of his speech of February 29, 1952, by those who are interested in understanding what Khrushchev and Mikoyan mean today when they tell us that one of their main weapons is to undermine our democratic institutions. Rakosi points out how the presence in the country of the Soviet Army prevented any attempt to defend with force the security of the anti-Communist government and served to protect the Communists from "imperialist intervention."

Meanwhile the Soviet Union, he states, shielded the Communist plotters in Hungary from "diplomatic interference of the great Western Powers." Rakosi frankly admitted that Soviet interference in Hungary's internal affairs was both "quite frequent and of great help in the strengthening of 'the Communist Party.'" He then describes the Smallholders Party, the strongest anti-Communist party, was constantly compelled to expel or discard individuals discredited by Communist blackmail. This gradual day-by-day slicing off of "hostile elements, i.e., non-Communist leaders, he described as "salami" tech-

¹ On Feb. 18, 1956, Matyas Rakosi "stepped down" from his position as First Party

participate in governments formed by the alliance. The prospects and partners for such alliances—united fronts or “popular fronts”—vary greatly between countries.

A few years ago I would have thought that Communist Parties in Europe would have great difficulty ever again in obtaining allies among any non-Communist parties. Then the experience of 1939-41 was still vivid when the Communists tried to sabotage the war effort against Hitler up until Moscow itself became involved. Today, however, the danger of parliamentary compromises with the Communists, even in Europe, is not to be ignored.

In Asia, this threat is even greater because it is generally less well understood. A recent Indonesian Government permitted Communist influence to reach far into the Ministry of Defense. More than in Europe, the Communist Parties have managed in many countries to acquire a dangerous degree of “respectability” and of acceptance as “just another political party.”

On the other hand, despite the relatively solid basis for action which they have in many countries and the preparations for this campaign which they have been making over the past 10 years or more, the Communists face real obstacles.

First of all, they have alerted us to their program. While people worldwide sometimes seem dangerously complacent and even skeptical, it may yet be possible to rouse them to their dangers.

Secondly, the Communists do not have any acknowledged party members in high government positions, of cabinet rank for example, in any of the free countries even there where they have large parliamentary representation. In both France and Italy in the immediate post-war period they did have such representation but were thrown out in the early years following the war.

While undoubtedly in many free countries they have infiltrated sensitive positions, this has been done on a clandestine basis and here and there vigilant steps are being taken to ferret them out. In particular today they do not have positions of control in the Army or in the internal security services of any free country. Naturally they are looking forward to any chance of improving this situation.

All in all, the Communists must, however, see some prospects of success by their so-called “parliamentary means.” It is worthwhile to note that the Communists have made some very sophisticated studies of the government structure of free countries. They have learned how to manipulate their parliamentary representation once elected and also how to get elected. Further, they know quite well what types of parliamentary systems are most vulnerable to their type of subversive action.

They endeavor in every way possible to influence the constitutional structure of free countries so as to eliminate a strong executive. They themselves have collective or one-man dictatorships, reserving all power in the hands of the few with their party congresses represented by hand-picked impotent and powerless stooges. Presumably they judge this to be the most secure form of government, the least subject to outside attack. They consider that the governments which are most vulnerable to their tactics are those at the other extreme, where all power is given to elected representatives, with as little delegation as possible to the executive.

In connection with the formulation of the French Constitution in 1945, the Communists made a strong attack on the idea of a powerful executive. They fought to divide up the authority between various elected bodies. In fact, the first draft of the postwar constitution went so far in this direction that the French people repudiated it and a less Communist-oriented constitution was then voted.

It Italy in 1946 they voted as a bloc to destroy the institution of the monarchy.

When issues of this nature arise one always can tell where Communist influence will be thrown.

Then insofar as the electoral procedures are concerned they abhor anything in the nature of a two-party system and majority rule which by and large has been a bulwark of free institutions. Their effort is to favor a multiplicity of parties. This opens the door to intrigue and helps to build up the minority and weaken the majority.

In general, they like the idea of the voting systems under which even small minorities have a chance of gaining deputies in parliament. In fact, they have often found that the proportional system of voting could serve them as a secret weapon.

In certain free countries where the proportional system prevails, the non-Communist parties have tried to introduce various means of defeating this Communist maneuver. In France, for example, they have the system of electoral alliances—apparentements—and in Italy somewhat the same system has prevailed. Under this system linked tickets of several parties are presented. The French electoral law of 1951, which is still in effect, provides that if the linked parties gather an absolute majority in a given constituency, they gather in all the seats for that district. In the 1951 French election, this system worked quite well and reduced the Communist representation from 164 seats to 97, whereas under the pure proportional representation the Communist would have had 172. But these tactics do not always work. In the 1956 French elections, fought out under the same system, the failure of the non-Communist parties to join as they had done in 1951 resulted in the Communists obtaining approximately the same proportion of the seats as they would have had under the straight proportional system.

The Communists do not restrict their activities to manipulating electoral laws in their favor or to appealing to groups of minority interests who, like the Communists, would get nowhere without the proportional system. They also do not hesitate to take strong action to frustrate the will of the voter after the ballot boxes have been closed.

An important case of this kind occurred in Italy in the 1953 elections. Here the non-Communist Italian parties tried to graft onto their proportional system an element of the direct majority type voting system by providing that any party or coalition of parties which achieved more than 50 percent of the vote would automatically receive a bonus bringing the total seats to at least 65 percent. The vote in this election was very close and in fact the affiliated anti-Communist Italian parties appeared to have obtained a scant margin over the 50 percent. By clever postelection tactics and catching the authorities napping, the Communists were able to contest and fraudulently throw out a sufficient number of votes—several hundred thousand—to reduce the non-Communist just below the 50-percent mark.

They got away with it. The system for handling challenged votes was just too archaic to prove they were wrong.

These examples show the skill and adroitness of the Communists in manipulating our free institutions and the mechanisms of free elections. The Communists hope that people more and more will come to look at them as just another political party, a bit to the left but still of sufficient respectability so as not to cause any lifting of eyebrows against those who are members of it.

We cannot say, in the light of all this evidence of Communist intent, that we have not been warned. The free world is confronted with the plain fact that a great foreign power with vast resources to back a program of subversion and cajolery, proposes to do everything that it can to see to it that free governments shall perish and that dictatorships of the proletariat, allied with Moscow, shall be established throughout the length and breadth of the lands.

It is well to recognize the danger. On the other hand there is no ground for panic. As I have suggested, nowhere outside of the U. S. S. R., with the qualified exceptions of Czechoslovakia and Guatemala, have the Communists succeeded in subverting a free government except with the aid of armed force. This is true for China, North Vietnam, and the other Eastern European satellites. Moreover, good charts and a knowledge of where the shoals lie are a mariner's best guide. The Kremlin leaders have told us what they propose to do. It is up to the leaders of the free world, working together as allies and friends, to help to uncover and to frustrate this Communist design, which otherwise could threaten to wreck the free institutions of many countries and even endanger our own.

THE POPULAR FRONT: ITS POLITICS, SOCIOLOGY, AND ECONOMICS

By Karl H. Cerny

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POLITICAL PARTY WARFARE

Native Communist movements that are legally recognized as political parties provide the international Communist movement with an extremely capable weapon. Although it can be safely assumed that Communist movements will exist in some form or shape even in the absence of legal recognition, the fact that they can appear under the guise of legitimate political parties helps to cloak the true nature of their entire activities. Thus their apparently sincere efforts to win votes and to secure control of the Government through constitutional processes can throw a smokescreen over the underground and deliberately illegal aspects of their activities. Again their day-to-day maneuvering vis-a-vis other parties can appear to be nothing more than the normal "partisan" politics associated with all political parties. In reality, however, their approach to internal politics is entirely different: as Communists in a non-Communist country they look upon themselves as agents of a foreign power in the camp of the enemy. To be sure, some countries are less clearly the enemy; some may even be well on the road toward becoming "friends." But whatever the situation, the chief objective of Communist Parties is to advance the interests not of their native countries but rather of the U. S. S. R. and the Chinese People's Republic. In short, in the unconventional war against the non-Communist world, Moscow and Peiping possess the unique privilege of commanding their own forces behind the lines of the enemy and of having the enemy accord such forces the status of legal participants in the peaceful pursuit of political power.

In the Communist lexicon, Communist parties can be called upon to pursue in the internal politics of their respective countries one of three alternative strategies: the "united front from above" or strategy of the "left"; the "right"; the "united front from below" or strategy of the "right"; and the more recent "Maoist" strategy based on Mao Tse-tung's successful capture of Nationalist China in 1949. Under the "right" strategy, Communists invite the leadership of Socialist parties, left-wing radical parties, and indeed, all parties that are prepared to accept the necessary conditions, to cooperate with them in order to fight