

# The CIA: A Forgotten History

US Global Interventions  
Since World War 2

William Blum

Zed Books Ltd.  
London and New Jersey

People who write  
anomic comments  
I be this to book  
are no  
ifferent than  
olocaust  
denies. May whoever wrote that commit  
rest in hell.

Read your  
his long before  
making accusations  
such as this!

Top Readers  
New Democrats  
Dunaway etc  
The propaganda  
war



*The CIA: A Forgotten History* was first published by Zed Books Ltd., 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, UK, and 171 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716, USA, in 1986.

Copyright © William Blum, 1986.

Cover designed by Ideography.  
Typeset by Format Photosetting, Bristol.  
Printed in the United Kingdom  
by Biddles Ltd., Guildford and King's Lynn.

All rights reserved

Second impression, 1987

**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Blum, William  
The CIA : a forgotten history : US global interventions since World War 2.  
1. United States—Central Intelligence Agency—History  
I. Title  
327.1'2:0973 JK468.I6  
ISBN 0-86232-479-3  
ISBN 0-86232-480-7 Pbk

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Blum, William.  
The CIA : a forgotten history.  
Bibliography : p.  
Includes index.  
1. United States. Central Intelligence Agency.  
2. United States—Foreign relations—1945—  
I. Title.  
JK468.I6B58 1986 327.1'2:06073 86-28962  
ISBN 0-86232-479-3  
ISBN 0-86232-480-7 (pbk.)

# Contents

OMWL  
JK  
468  
I6  
B58  
1986

Introduction	1
1. China 1945 to 1960s: Was Mao Tse-tung just paranoid?	15
2. Italy 1947-1948: Free elections, Hollywood style	23
3. Greece 1947 to early 1950s: From cradle of democracy to client state	31
4. The Philippines 1940s & 1950s: America's oldest colony	37
5. Korea 1945-1953: Was it all what it appeared to be?	44
6. Albania 1949-1953: The proper English spy	56
7. Eastern Europe 1948-1956: Operation Splinter Factor	59
8. Germany 1950s: Everything from juvenile delinquency to terrorism	63
9. Iran 1953: Making it safe for the King of Kings	67
10. Guatemala 1953-1954: While the world watched	77
11. Costa Rica mid-1950s: Trying to topple an ally, part 1	89
12. Syria 1956-1957: Purchasing a new government	91
13. Middle East 1957-1958: The Eisenhower Doctrine claims another backyard for America	96
14. Indonesia 1957-1958: War and pornography	108
15. Western Europe 1950s & 1960s: Fronts within fronts within fronts	113
16. British Guiana 1953-1964: The CIA's international labour mafia	117
17. Soviet Union late 1940s to 1960s: From spy planes to book publishing	123
18. Italy 1950s to 1970s: Supporting the Cardinal's orphans and techno-fascism	130
19. Vietnam 1950-1973: The Hearts and Minds Circus	133
20. Cambodia 1955-1973: Prince Sihanouk walks the high-wire of neutralism	140
21. Laos 1957-1973: L'Armée Clandestine	147
22. Haiti 1959: The Marines land, again	155
23. Guatemala 1960: One good coup deserves another	162
24. France/Algeria 1960s: L'état, c'est la CIA	163
25. Ecuador 1960-1963: A text book of dirty tricks	165
26. The Congo 1960-1964: The assassination of Patrice Lumumba	170

To:

Adelheid Zöfel

and

Alexander Blum

*Without whose help this book would have been finished at least one year earlier.*

# Introduction

27. Brazil 1961-1964: Introducing the marvellous new world of death squads	181
28. Peru 1960-1965: Fort Bragg moves to the jungle	191
29. Dominican Republic 1960-1966: Saving democracy from communism by getting rid of democracy	195
30. Cuba 1959 to 1980s: The unforgivable revolution	206
31. Indonesia 1965: Liquidating President Sukarno . . . and 500,000 others	217
East Timor 1975: And 100,000 more	221
32. Ghana 1966: Kwame Nkrumah steps out of line	223
33. Uruguay 1964-1970: Torture - as American as apple pie	225
34. Chile 1964-1973: A hammer and sickle stamped on your child's forehead	232
35. Greece 1964-1974: "Fuck your Parliament and your Constitution," said the President of the United States	243
36. Bolivia 1964-1975: Tracking down Che Guevara in the land of coup d'état	251
37. Guatemala 1962 to 1980s: A less publicized "final solution"	260
38. Costa Rica 1970-1971: Trying to topple an ally, part 2	272
39. Iraq 1972-1975: Covert action should not be confused with missionary work	275
40. Australia 1973-1975: Another free election bites the dust	278
41. Angola 1975-1976: The Great Powers Poker Game.	284
42. Zaire 1975-1978: Mobutu and the CIA, a marriage made in heaven	292
43. Jamaica 1976-1980: Kissinger's ultimatum	299
44. Seychelles 1979-1981: Yet another area of great strategic importance	304
45. Grenada 1979-1983: Lying - one of the few growth industries in Washington	306
46. Morocco 1983: A video nasty	315
47. Suriname 1982-1984: Once again, the Cuban bogeyman	317
48. El Salvador 1980- : Human rights, Reagan style Military Escalation	319
A Human Face	323
Outside Agitators	327
49. Nicaragua 1981- : Destabilization in slow motion	330
Notes	345
Appendix I: This is How the Money Goes Round	410
Appendix II: Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-1945	412
Index	423

was in the early days of the fighting in Vietnam that a Vietcong officer said to his American prisoner: "You were our heroes after the War. We read American books and saw American films, and a common phrase in those days was 'to be rich and as wise as an American'. What happened?"

An American might have been asked something similar by a Guatemalan, an Angolan or a Cuban during the ten years previous, or by a Uruguayan, a Chilean or a Greek in the decade subsequent. The remarkable international goodwill and credibility enjoyed by the United States at the close of the Second World War was dissipated country by country, intervention by intervention. The opportunity to build the war-ravaged world anew, to lay the foundations for peace, prosperity and justice, collapsed under the awful weight of anti-communism.

The weight had been accumulating for some time; indeed, since Day One of the Russian Revolution. By the summer of 1918 some 13,000 American troops could be found in the newly-born Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Two years and thousands of casualties later, the American troops left, having failed in their mission to "strangle at its birth" the Bolshevik state, as Winston Churchill put it.<sup>2</sup>

The young Churchill was Great Britain's Minister for War and Air during this period. Increasingly, it was he who directed the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Allies (Great Britain, the US, France, Japan and several other nations) on the side of the counter-revolutionary "White Army". Years later, Churchill the historian was to record his views of this singular affair for posterity:

Were they [the Allies] at war with Soviet Russia? Certainly not; but they shot Soviet Russians at sight. They stood as invaders on Russian soil. They armed the enemies of the Soviet Government. They blockaded its ports, and sunk its battleships. They earnestly desired and schemed its downfall. But war — shocking! Interference — shame! It was, they repeated, a matter of indifference to them how Russians settled their own internal affairs. They were impartial — Bang!<sup>3</sup>

What was there about this Bolshevik Revolution that so alarmed the most powerful nations in the world? What drove them to invade a land whose soldiers

*The CIA: A Forgotten History*

had recently fought alongside them for over three years and suffered more casualties than any other country on either side of the World War?

The Bolsheviks had had the audacity to make a separate peace with Germany in order to take leave of a war they regarded as imperialist and not in any way *their* war, and to try and rebuild a terribly weary and devastated Russia. But the Bolsheviks had displayed the far greater audacity of overthrowing a capitalist-feudal regime and proclaiming the first socialist state in the history of the world. This was uppitness writ incredibly large. This was the crime the Allies had to punish, the virus which had to be eradicated lest it spread to their own people.

The invasion did not achieve its immediate purpose, but its consequences were nonetheless profound and persist to the present day. Professor D.F. Fleming, the Vanderbilt University historian of the cold war, has noted:

... for the American people the cosmic tragedy of the interventions in Russia does not exist, or it was an unimportant incident long forgotten. But for the Soviet peoples and their leaders the period was a time of endless killing, of looting and rapine, of plague and famine, of measureless suffering for scores of millions — an experience burned into the very soul of a nation, not to be forgotten for many generations, if ever. Also for many years the harsh Soviet regimentations could all be justified by fear that the capitalist powers would be back to finish the job. It is not strange that in his address in New York, September 17, 1959, Premier Khrushchev should remind us of the interventions, 'the time you sent your troops to quell the revolution', as he put it.<sup>4</sup>

History does not tell us what a Soviet Union, allowed to develop in a "normal" way of its own choosing, would look like today. We do know, however, the nature of a Soviet Union attacked in its cradle, raised alone in an extremely hostile world, and, when it managed to survive to adulthood, overrun by the Nazi war machine with the blessings of the Western powers. The resulting insecurities and fears have inevitably led to deformities of character not unlike that found in an individual raised in a similar life-threatening manner.

We in the West are never allowed to forget the political shortcomings (real and alleged) of the Soviet Union; at the same time we are never reminded of the history which lies behind it. The anti-communist propaganda campaign began even earlier than the military intervention. Before the year 1918 was over, expressions like "Red Peril", "the Bolshevik assault on civilization", and "menace to world by Reds is seen" had become commonplace in the pages of the *New York Times*.

During February and March 1919, a US Senate Judiciary Subcommittee held hearings before which many "Bolshevik horror stories" were presented. The character of some of the testimony presented can be gauged by the headline in the *Times* of 12 February 1919.

DESCRIBE HORRORS UNDER RED RULE. R.E. SIMONS AND W.W. WELSH TELL SENATORS OF BRUTALITIES OF BOLSHIEVSKI — STRIP WOMEN IN STREETS — PEOPLE OF EVERY CLASS EXCEPT THE SCUM SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE BY MOBS.

Historian Frederick Lewis Schuman has written: "The net result of these hearings . . . was to picture Soviet Russia as a kind of bedlam inhabited by abject slaves completely at the mercy of an organization of homicidal maniacs whose purpose was to destroy all traces of civilization and carry the nation back to barbarism".<sup>5</sup>

Literally no story about the Bolsheviks was too contrived, too bizarre, too grotesque, or too perverted to be printed and widely believed — from women being nationalized to babies being eaten.\* The story about women, wrote Schuman, "was broadcasted over the country through a thousand channels and perhaps did more than anything else to stamp the Russian Communists in the minds of most American citizens as criminal perverts".<sup>6</sup> This tale continued to receive great currency even after the State Department was obliged to announce that it was a fraud. (That the Soviets eat their babies was still being taught by the John Birch Society to its large audience at least as late as 1978.)<sup>7</sup>

By the end of 1919, when the defeat of the Allies and the White Army appeared likely, the *New York Times* treated its readers to headlines and stories such as the following:

30. Dec. 1919: "Reds Seek War With America"

9 Jan. 1920: "Official quarters' describe the Bolshevist menace in the Middle East as ominous"

11 Jan. 1920: "Allied officials and diplomats [envisage] a possible invasion of Europe"

13 Jan. 1920: "Allied diplomatic circles" fear an invasion of Persia.

16 Jan. 1920: A page-one headline, eight columns wide: "Britain Facing War With Reds, Calls Council In Paris." "Well-informed diplomats" expect both a military invasion of Europe and a Soviet advance into Eastern and Southern Asia.

The following morning, however, we could read: "No War With Russia, Allies To Trade With Her"

7 Feb. 1920: "Reds Raising Army To Attack India"

11 Feb. 1920: "Fear That Bolsheviki Will Now Invade Japanese Territory"

Readers of the *New York Times* were asked to believe that all these invasions were to come from a nation that was shattered as few nations in history have been; a nation still recovering from a bloody world war; in extreme chaos from a fundamental social revolution that was barely off the ground; engaged in a brutal civil war against forces backed by the major powers of the world; its industries, never advanced to begin with, in a shambles; and the country in the throes of a famine that was to leave many millions dead before it subsided.

\* As the early pagans believed the Christians guilty of devouring their children; the same was believed of the Jews in the Middle Ages.

## The CIA: A Forgotten History

If this was reality as presented by the United States' "newspaper of record", one can imagine only with dismay the witch's brew the rest of the nation's newspapers were feeding to their readers.

This, then, was the American people's first experience of a new social phenomenon that had come upon the world, their introductory education on the Soviet Union and this thing called "communism". The students have never recovered from the lesson. Neither has the Soviet Union.

The military intervention came to an end but, with the sole and partial exception of the Second World War period, the propaganda offensive has never let up. In 1943 *Life* magazine devoted an entire issue in honour of the Soviet Union's accomplishments, going far beyond what was demanded by the need for wartime solidarity, going so far as to call Lenin "perhaps the greatest man of modern times".<sup>8</sup> Two years later, however, with Harry Truman sitting in the White House, such fraternity had no chance of surviving. Truman, after all, was the man who, the day after the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, said: "If we see that Germany is winning, we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning, we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don't want to see Hitler victorious in any circumstances."<sup>9</sup> (Much propaganda mileage has been squeezed out of the Soviet-German treaty of 1939, made possible only by entirely ignoring the fact that the Russians were forced into the pact by the repeated refusal of the Western powers to unite with them in a stand against Hitler.)<sup>10</sup>

From the Red Scare of the 1920s to the McCarthyism of the 1950s to the Reagan Crusade Against the Evil Empire of the 1980s, the American people have been subjected to a relentless anti-communist indoctrination. It is imbibed with their mother's milk, pictured in their comic books, spelled out in their school books; their daily paper offers them headlines that tell them all they need to know; ministers find sermons in it, politicians are elected with it, and *Reader's Digest* becomes rich on it.<sup>11</sup>

The fiercely-held conviction inevitably produced by this insidious assault on the intellect is that a great damnation has been unleashed upon the world, possibly by the devil himself, but in the form of people; people not motivated by the same needs, fears, emotions, and personal morality that govern others of the species, but people engaged in an extremely clever, monolithic, international conspiracy dedicated to taking over the world and enslaving it; the reasons are not always clear perhaps, but evil needs no motivation save evil itself. Moreover, any appearance or claim by these people to be rational human beings seeking a better kind of world or society is a sham, a cover-up, to delude others, and proof only of their cleverness; the repression and cruelties which have taken place in the Soviet Union are forever proof of the bankruptcy of virtue and the evil intentions of these people in whichever country they may be found, under whatever name they may call themselves; and, most important of all, the only choice open to anyone in the United States is between the American Way of Life and the Soviet Way of Life, that nothing lies between or outside these two ways of making the world.

This is how it looks to the simple folk of America. One finds that the

sophisticated, when probed slightly beneath the surface of their academic language, see it exactly the same way.

To the mind carefully brought to adulthood in the United States, the truths of anti-communism are self-evident, as self-evident as the flatness of the world once was to an earlier mind; as the Russian people believed that the victims of Stalin's purges were truly guilty of treason.

The foregoing slice of American history must be taken into account if one is to make sense of the vagaries of American foreign policy since the end of World War Two, specifically, the record, as presented in this book, of what the CIA and other branches of the US Government have done to the peoples of the world.

In 1918, the barons of American capital needed no reason for their war against communism other than the threat to their wealth and privilege, although their opposition was expressed in terms of moral indignation.

During the period between the two world wars, US gunboat diplomacy operated in the Caribbean to make "The American Lake" safe for the fortunes of United Fruit and W.R. Grace & Co., at the same time warning of the Bolshevik threat to the hemisphere and to righteousness, from the likes of Augusto Sandino.

By the end of the Second World War, however, every American past the age of 40 had been subjected to some 25 years of anti-communist radiation, the average incubation period needed to produce a malignancy. Anti-communism had developed a life of its own, independent of its capitalist father. Increasingly, in the post-war period, middle-aged Washington policy makers and diplomats saw the world out there as one composed of "communists" and "anti-communists", whether of nations, movements or individuals. This comic-strip vision of the world, with American supermen fighting communist evil everywhere, had graduated from a cynical propaganda exercise to a moral imperative of US foreign policy.

Even the concept of "non-communist", implying some measure of neutrality, has generally been accorded scant legitimacy in this paradigm. John Foster Dulles, one of the major architects of post-war US foreign policy, expressed this succinctly in his typically simple, moralistic way: "For us there are two sorts of people in the world: there are those who are Christians and support free enterprise and there are the others."<sup>12</sup> As several of the case studies in the present book confirm, Dulles put that creed into rigid practice.

It is as true now as ever, that American multinationals derive significant economic advantages from Third World countries due to their being under-industrialized, under-diversified, capitalist-orientated, and relatively powerless.

It is equally true that the consequence of American interventions has frequently been to keep Third World countries in just such an underdeveloped, impotent state.

There is thus at least a prima-facie case to be made for the contention that the engine of US foreign policy is still fuelled predominantly by "imperialism".

But that the consequence illuminates the intent does not necessarily follow. The argument that economic factors have continued to exert an important and direct influence upon United States interventionist policy in modern times does not stand up to close examination. When all the known elements of the interventions are considered, scarcely any cases actually emerge which conform to the economic model, and even in these the stage is shared with other factors. The upshot in the great majority of cases is that tangible economic gain, existing or potential, did not, and could not, play a determining role in the American decision to intervene. The economic model proves woefully inadequate not only as a means of explanation, but even more so as a tool of prediction. In each of the most recent cases, for example — Grenada, El Salvador, and Nicaragua — American intervention was foreseen and warned of well in advance simply, and only, because of the "communist" nature of the targets. But no one seriously suggested that some treasure lay in these impoverished lands luring the American pirates. Indeed, after the conquest and occupation of Grenada, the US business community displayed a marked indifference to setting up shop on the island, despite being implored to do so by Washington for political reasons. In other cases, where the American side failed to win a civil war, such as in China, Vietnam and Angola, Washington put up barriers to American corporations having any commercial dealings with the new regimes which were actually eager to do business with the United States.

Entirely without regard to financial considerations, CIA operations have been triggered by no more than a country receiving aid from the Soviet bloc, or refusing to break diplomatic relations with Cuba, or simply a leader using Marxist rhetoric. In other instances, in the absence of any special "provocation", the CIA still engages in daily, "routine" subversion of local left-wing elements, whether these are in or out of power; this, then, is the Agency's "job", what its officers do for a living.

Although at one level of US foreign policy, anti-communism is pursued for its own sake — a "moral imperative", as discussed above — at another level it is inextricably bound up with a far older seducer of men and nations, the lust for power: the acquisition, maintenance, use and enjoyment of influence and prestige.

In this scheme of things, "communist" is no more than the name ascribed to those people who stand in the way of the realization of such ambitions (as "national security" is the name given for the *reason* for fighting "communists"). It is another twist of the old adage: if communists didn't exist, the United States would have to invent them. And so they have. The word "communist" (as well as "Marxist") has been so overused and so abused by American leaders and the media as to render it virtually meaningless. (The Left has done the same to the word "fascist".) But merely having a name for something — witches or flying saucers — establishes a certain credence to it.

At the same time, the American public, as we have seen, has been soundly conditioned to react Pavlovianly to the term: it means, still, the worst excesses of Stalin, from wholesale purges to Siberian slave-labour camps\* . . . it means, as Michael Parenti has observed, that "Classic Marxist-Leninist predictions [concerning world revolution] are treated as statements of *intent* directing all present-day communist actions."<sup>14</sup> . . . it means "us" against "them".

And "them" can mean a peasant in the Philippines, a mural-painter in Nicaragua, a legally-elected prime minister in British Guiana, or a European intellectual, a Cambodian nationalist, an African nationalist — all, somehow, part of the same monolithic conspiracy; each, in some way, a threat to the American Way of Life; no land too small, too poor, or too far away to pose such a threat, the "communist threat".

The cases presented in this book illustrate that it has been largely irrelevant whether the particular targets of intervention — be they individuals, political parties, movements or governments — called themselves "communist" or not. It has mattered little whether they were scholars of dialectical materialism or had never heard of Karl Marx; whether they were atheists or priests; whether a strong and influential Communist Party was in the picture or not; whether the government had come into being through violent revolution or peaceful elections . . . all have been targets, all "communists".

It has mattered still less that the Soviet KGB was in the picture. The assertion has been frequently voiced that the CIA carries out its dirty tricks largely *in reaction* to operations of the KGB which have been "even dirtier". This is a lie made out of whole cloth. There may be an isolated incident of such in the course of the CIA's 38 years of life, but it has kept itself well hidden. The relationship between the two sinister agencies is marked by fraternization and respect for fellow professionals more than by hand-to-hand combat. Former CIA officer\*\* John Stockwell has written:

\* In 1982 US Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger said "the evidence has been mounting that the Soviet Union may be using slave labor" on the trans-European natural gas pipeline. "The evidence is not conclusive", he told a Georgetown University conference, "but the available evidence is profoundly troubling and some have found it persuasive." Two months later, in response to a Congressional request, the CIA said that it could not substantiate such reports, but it could state that about four million Soviet citizens were being compelled to do "forced labor". When one made one's way past the scare headlines and read the text carefully, one discovered that the "forced labor" was nothing more than prison inmates doing socially useful labor while serving their sentences, and other convicted criminals doing the same in lieu of going to prison at all.<sup>3</sup>

\*\* The expressions "CIA officer" or "case officer" are used throughout this book to denote regular, full-time, career employees of the Agency, as opposed to "agent", someone working for the CIA on an ad hoc basis. Other sources which are quoted, it will be seen, tend to use the word "agent" to cover both categories.

Actually, at least in more routine operations, case officers most fear the US ambassador and his staff, then restrictive headquarters cables, then curious, gossipy neighbors in the local community, as potential threats to operations. Next would come the local police, then the press. Last of all is the KGB — in my twelve years of case officering I never saw or heard of a situation in which the KGB attacked or obstructed a CIA operation.<sup>15</sup>

Stockwell later adds that the various intelligence services do not want their world to be “complicated” by murdering each other.

It isn't done. If a CIA case officer has a flat tire in the dark of night on a lonely road, he will not hesitate to accept a ride from a KGB officer — likely the two would detour to some bar for a drink together. In fact CIA and KGB officers entertain each other frequently in their homes. The CIA's files are full of mention of such relationships in almost every African station.<sup>16</sup>

Proponents of “fighting fire with fire” come perilously close at times to arguing that if the KGB, for example, had a hand in the overthrow of the Czechoslovak government in 1968, it is OK for the CIA to have a hand in the overthrow of the Chilean government in 1973. It's as if the destruction of democracy by the KGB deposits funds in a bank account from which the CIA is then justified in making withdrawals.

What then has been the thread common to the diverse targets of American intervention which has brought down upon them the wrath, and often the firepower, of the world's most powerful nation? In virtually every case involving the Third World described in this book, it has been, in one form or another, a policy of “self-determination”: the desire, born of perceived need and principle, to pursue a path of development independent of US foreign policy objectives. Most commonly, this has been manifested in a) the ambition to free themselves from political, economic, and often cultural subservience to the United States; b) the refusal to minimize relations with the socialist bloc, or to suppress the left at home, or to welcome an American military installation on their soil; in short, a refusal to be a pawn in the cold war; or c) the attempt to alter or replace a government which held to neither of these aspirations.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that such a policy of independence has been viewed and expressed by numerous Third World leaders and revolutionaries as one not to be equated by definition to anti-Americanism or pro-communism, but as simply a determination to maintain a position of neutrality and non-alignment vis-à-vis the two superpowers. Time and time again, however, it will be seen that the United States was not prepared to live with this proposition. Arbenz of Guatemala, Mossadegh of Iran, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nkrumah of Ghana, Jagan of British Guiana, Sihanouk of Cambodia . . . all, insisted Uncle Sam, must declare themselves unequivocally on the side of “The Free World” or suffer the consequences. Nkrumah put the case for non-alignment as follows:

The experiment which we tried in Ghana was essentially one of developing the country in co-operation with the world as a whole. Non-alignment meant exactly what it said. We were not hostile to the countries of the socialist world in the way in which the governments of the old colonial territories were. It should be remembered that while Britain pursued at home co-existence with the Soviet Union this was never allowed to extend to British colonial territories. Books on socialism, which were published and circulated freely in Britain, were banned in the British colonial empire, and after Ghana became independent it was assumed abroad that it would continue to follow the same restrictive ideological approach. When we behaved as did the British in their relations with the socialist countries we were accused of being pro-Russian and introducing the most dangerous ideas into Africa.<sup>17</sup>

When Washington officials equate nationalism or self-determination with “communism”, there are times when they are “correct”. At other times, they are “wrong”. It doesn't particularly matter, for in either case they are referring to the same phenomenon. Although, in this book, the Soviet Union, China, various communist parties, etc. are sometimes referred to as “communist”, this is primarily a shorthand convenience and a bow to custom, and is not meant to infer a political ideology or practice necessarily different in any way from those governments or parties *not* referred to as communist. Emphasis is placed upon what these bodies have done, not upon reference to what Marx or Lenin wrote.

Perhaps the most deeply ingrained reflex of knee-jerk anti-communism is the belief that the Soviet Union (or Cuba or Vietnam, etc. acting as Moscow's surrogate) is a clandestine force lurking behind the facade of self-determination, stirring up the hydra of revolution, or just plain trouble, here, there and everywhere; yet another incarnation, although on a far grander scale, of the proverbial “outside agitator”, he who has made his appearance regularly throughout history . . . King George blamed the French for inciting the American colonies to revolt . . . disillusioned veterans protesting about their circumstances after the revolution (Shays' Rebellion) were branded as British agents out to wreck the republic . . . labour strikes in late 19th-century America were blamed on “anarchists” and “foreigners”, during the First World War on “German agents”, after the war on “Bolsheviks”.

And in the 1960s, said the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, J. Edgar Hoover “helped spread the view among the police ranks that any kind of mass protest is due to a conspiracy promulgated by agitators, often Communists, ‘who misdirect otherwise contented people’.”<sup>18</sup> The last is the key phrase, one which encapsulates the conspiracy mentality of those in power — the idea that no people, except those living under the enemy, could be so miserable and discontent as to need recourse to revolution or even mass protest; that it is only the agitation of the outsider which misdirects them along this path.

Accordingly, if Ronald Reagan were to concede that the masses of El Salvador have every good reason to rise up against their god-awful existence, it would bring into question his accusation, and the rationale for US intervention, that it is principally (only?) the Soviet Union and its Cuban and Nicaraguan allies who instigate the Salvadoreans: that seemingly magical power of communists everywhere who, with a twist of their red wrist, can transform peaceful, happy people into furious guerrillas.\*

Moreover, and infinitely more threatening to the American position, it would raise the question: Why does not the United States, if it must intervene, take the side of the rebels? Not only might this better serve the cause of human rights and justice and win the friendship of the new regime, but it would shut out the Russians from their alleged role. What better way to frustrate the International Communist Conspiracy? But this is a question that dares not speak its name in the Oval Office, a question that is relevant to many of the cases in this book.

Instead, the United States remains committed to its all-too-familiar policy of establishing and/or supporting the most vile tyrannies in the world whose outrages against their own people confront us daily in the pages of our newspapers: brutal massacres; systematic, sophisticated torture; public whippings; soldiers and police firing into crowds; hunger, runaway unemployment, the homeless, the refugees, the tens of thousands of disappeared persons . . . a way of life that is virtually a monopoly held by America's allies, from Guatemala, Chile and El Salvador to Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia, all members in good standing of the Holy War Against Communism, all members of "The Free World", that little known region of which we hear so much and see so little.

Clearly, the restrictions on civil liberties found in the communist bloc, as severe as they are, pale by comparison to the cottage-industry Auschwitzes of "The Free World", and, except in that curious mental landscape inhabited by The Compleat Anti-Communist, can have little or nothing to do with the sundry American interventions supposedly in the cause of a higher good.

It is interesting to note that as commonplace as it is for American leaders to speak of freedom and democracy while supporting dictatorships, so do Russian leaders speak of wars of liberation, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism while doing extremely little to actually further these causes, American propaganda notwithstanding. The Soviets like to be thought of as champions of the Third World, but they have stood by doing little more than going "tsk, tsk" as progressive movements and governments, even Communist Parties, in Greece, Guatemala, British Guiana, Chile, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere have gone to the wall.

\* The CIA, as we shall see, tried to spark mass revolt in China, Albania, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe with a singular lack of success. The Agency's scribes have laid the blame for these failures on the "closed" nature of the societies involved. But in non-communist countries, the CIA has had to resort to military coups or extra-legal chicanery to get its people into power. It has never been able to light the fire of popular revolution.

During the early 1950s, the Central Intelligence Agency instigated several military incursions into Communist China. In 1960, CIA planes, without any provocation, bombed the sovereign nation of Guatemala. In 1973, the Agency encouraged a bloody revolt against the government of Iraq. In the American mass media at the time, and therefore in the American mind, these events did not happen.

"We didn't know what was happening", became a cliché used to ridicule those Germans who claimed ignorance of the events which took place under the Nazis. Yet, was their stock answer as far-fetched as we'd like to think? It is sobering to reflect that in our era of instant world-wide communications, the United States has, on many occasions, been able to mount a large or small scale military operation or undertake another, equally blatant, form of intervention without the American public being aware of it until years later, if ever. Often the only report of the event or of US involvement was a passing reference to the fact that a communist government had made certain charges — just the kind of thing the American public has been well conditioned to dismiss out of hand, and the press not to follow up; as the German people were taught that reports from abroad of Nazi wrong-doings were no more than communist propaganda.

With few exceptions, the interventions never made the headlines or the evening TV news. With some, bits and pieces of the stories have popped up here and there, but rarely brought together to form a cohesive and enlightening whole; the fragments usually appear long after the fact, quietly buried within other stories, just as quietly forgotten, bursting into the foreground only when extraordinary circumstances have compelled it, such as the Iranian hostage crisis which produced a rash of articles on the role played by the United States in the overthrow of the Iranian government in 1953. It was as if editors had been spurred into thinking: "Just what *did* we do in Iran to make all those people hate us so?"

There have been a lot of Irans in America's recent past, but in the absence of the *New York Daily News* or the *Los Angeles Times* conspicuously grabbing the reader by the collar and pressing against his face the full implication of the deed . . . in the absence of NBC putting it all into real pictures of real people on the receiving end . . . in such absence the incidents become *non-events* for the large majority of Americans, and they can honestly say "We didn't know what was happening."

Former Chinese Premier Chou En-lai once observed: "One of the delightful things about Americans is that they have absolutely no historical memory."\*

\* During the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident in Pennsylvania in 1979, a Japanese journalist, Atsuo Kaneko of the Japanese Kyoto News Service, spent several hours interviewing people temporarily housed at a hockey rink — mostly children, pregnant women and young mothers. He discovered that none of them had heard of Hiroshima. Mention of the name drew a blank.<sup>19</sup>

In 1982, a judge in Oakland, California said he was appalled when some 50 prospective jurors for a death-penalty murder trial were questioned and "none of them knew who Hitler was".<sup>20</sup>



To the foreign policy oligarchy in Washington, it is more than delightful. It is *sine qua non*.

So obscured is the comprehensive record of American interventions that when, in 1975, the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress was asked to undertake a study of covert activities of the CIA to date, it was able to come up with but a very minor portion of the overseas incidents presented in this book for the same period.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, all the information is there for the reading. I have not had access to the secret archives of the CIA or other government agencies. The details of the interventions have been gathered from books, newspapers, periodicals, and US Government publications freely available in one library or another. But for all that has made its way into popular consciousness, or into school texts, encyclopedias, or other standard reference works, there might as well exist strict censorship in the United States.

The reader is invited to look through the relevant sections of the three principal American encyclopedias, Americana, Britannica, and Colliers, after completing this book. The image of encyclopedias as the final repository of objective knowledge takes a beating. What is tantamount to a non-recognition of American interventions may very well be due to these esteemed works employing a criterion similar to that of Washington officials as reflected in the Pentagon Papers. The *New York Times* summarized this highly interesting phenomenon thus:

Clandestine warfare against North Vietnam, for example, is not seen . . . as violating the Geneva Accords of 1954, which ended the French Indochina War, or as conflicting with the public policy pronouncements of the various administrations. Clandestine warfare, because it is covert, does not exist as far as treaties and public posture are concerned. Further, secret commitments to other nations are not sensed as infringing on the treaty-making powers of the Senate, because they are not publicly acknowledged.<sup>22</sup>

The *de facto* censorship which leaves so many Americans functionally illiterate about the history of US foreign affairs may be all the more effective precisely because it is not official, heavy-handed or conspiratorial, but woven artlessly into the fabric of education and the media. No conspiracy is needed. The editors of *Reader's Digest* and *U.S. News and World Report* do not need to meet covertly with the man from NBC in an FBI safe-house to plan next month's stories and programmes; for the simple truth is that these men would not have reached the positions they hold if they themselves had not all been guided through the same tunnel of camouflaged history and emerged with the same selective memory.

As extensive as the historical record presented here is, it is by no means meant to be a complete catalogue of every instance and every kind of American intervention since the Second World War. We are, after all, dealing largely with events which were covert when they occurred and which, for the most part,

remain officially classified. Moreover, with but a few exceptions, this study does not concern itself with espionage or counter-espionage other than in passing. These areas have been well documented in countless "spy" books. Generally speaking, the study is confined to the more significant or blatant cases of intervention: the use of armed aggression by American and/or native troops acting with the United States; an operation, successful or not, to overthrow a government; an attempt to suppress a popular rebellion or movement; an attempted assassination; gross interference in an election, or other flagrant manipulation of a country's political system.

To serve these ends, the CIA over the years has made use of an extraordinary arsenal of weapons. Because of space considerations and to avoid repetition, only selected examples are given here and there amongst the cases. In actuality, at least one, and usually more, of these tactics was brought to bear in virtually every instance. Principal among them are the following:

- 1) *CIA schools*: in the United States and Latin America, where many tens of thousands of Third World military and police personnel have been taught modern methods of controlling insurgency and "subversion"; instruction includes techniques of "interrogation" (often a euphemism for torture); members of the labour movement learn the how and why of organizing workers within a framework of free enterprise and anti-communism.
- 2) *Infiltration and manipulation of selected groups*: political parties, women's organizations, professional, youth and cultural associations, etc. for electoral and propaganda purposes; the creation of unions — local, regional, national and international organizations set up to counterpoise and weaken existing labour groups too closely oriented towards social change or controlled by the left.
- 3) *News manipulation*: the "hiring" of foreign editors, columnists and journalists . . . "I guess I've bought as much newspaper space as the A & P" (the supermarket chain), chortled a former CIA officer one day;<sup>23</sup> the creation and/or subsidizing of numerous periodicals, news services, radio stations, and book publishers. Considering all assets, the CIA, at least until the late 1970s, has probably run what amounts to the largest news organization in the world; its propaganda/disinformation effect is routinely multiplied by world-wide replay.
- 4) *Economic means*: in co-operation with other US government agencies, such as AID, private American corporations, and international lending institutions, the methods of manipulating and applying pressure to selected sectors of a country's economy or the economy as a whole are without number.
- 5) *Dirty tricks department*: bugging, wire-tapping, forged documents, bogus personal letters, planting of evidence, disinformation, blackmail, etc., etc. to create incidents or obtain information to embarrass the left, locally and internationally, particularly to lend credence to charges of a Moscow or Havana conspiracy; to provoke the expulsion of communist-bloc diplomats or the breaking of relations with those countries; to foster distrust and dissension within the left.

Although the cases which follow are presented as more or less discrete stories, fixed in time and with beginnings and ends, this is done mainly to keep the information within manageable bounds and to highlight the more dramatic turns of events, and is not meant to indicate that there was no significant CIA activity in the particular country before or after the years specified. The reader should therefore keep in mind that the above types of operation as well as others are all ongoing programmes, carried out routinely in numerous countries, including many not listed in this book. This is, as mentioned earlier, what CIA officers do for a living.

"The upheaval in China is a revolution which, if we analyze it, we will see is prompted by the same things that prompted the British, French and American revolutions."<sup>24</sup> A cosmopolitan and generous sentiment of Dean Rusk, then Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, later Secretary of State. At precisely the same time as Mr Rusk's talk in 1950, others in his government were actively plotting the downfall of the Chinese revolutionary government.

This has been a common phenomenon. For many of the cases described in the following pages, one can find statements of high or middle-level Washington officials which put into question the policy of intervention; which expressed misgivings based either on principle (sometimes the better side of American liberalism) or concern that the intervention would not serve any worthwhile end, might even end in disaster. I have attached little weight to such dissenting statements as, indeed, in the final analysis, did Washington decision-makers who, in controversial world situations, could be relied upon to play the anti-communist card. In presenting the interventions in this manner, I am declaring that American foreign policy *is* what American foreign policy *does*.

It should be rather obvious at this point that I am not neutral on the question of American interventions. I am opposed to them on both political and moral grounds (to the extent that the two can be separated). This bias certainly colours my language, but I have taken pains to keep it from colouring my selection of facts; that is, I have not knowingly omitted any facts which contradict in any significant way the information I have presented, or the implications of that information. Further, I have chosen not to take into account a number of intriguing disclosures concerning American interventions where I felt that the source could not be sufficiently trusted and/or the information was not presented or documented in a manner which made it credible to me. In any event, it is not demanded of the reader that he accept my biases, but that he reflect upon his own.<sup>25</sup>

**William Blum**

London, March 1986

## 1. China 1945 to 1960s Was Mao Tse-tung paranoid?

For four years, numerous Americans, in high positions and obscure, sullenly harboured the conviction that World War II was "the wrong war against the wrong enemies". Communism, they knew, was the only genuine enemy on America's historical agenda. Was that not why Hitler had been ignored/tolerated/appeased? So that the Nazi war machine would turn East and wipe Bolshevism off the face of the earth once and for all? It was just unfortunate that Adolf turned out to be such a megalomaniac and turned West as well.

But that war was over. These Americans were now to have their day in every corner of the world. The ink on the Japanese surrender treaty was hardly dry when the United States began to use the Japanese soldiers still in China alongside American troops in a joint effort against the Chinese communists. (In the Philippines, as we shall see, the US did not even wait for the war to end before subordinating the struggle against Japan to the anti-communist crusade.)

The communists in China had worked closely with the American military during the war, providing important intelligence about the Japanese occupiers, rescuing and caring for downed US airmen.<sup>1</sup> But no matter. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would be Washington's man; he headed what passed for a central government in China. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS, forerunner of the CIA) estimated that the bulk of Chiang's military effort had been directed against the communists rather than the Japanese. He had also done his best to block the co-operation between the Reds and the Americans. Now his army contained Japanese units and his regime was full of officials who had collaborated with the Japanese and served in their puppet government.<sup>2</sup> But no matter. The Generalissimo was as anti-communist as they come. Moreover, he was a born American client. His forces would be properly trained and equipped to do battle with the men of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai.

President Truman was out front about what he described as "using the Japanese to hold off the Communists".

It was perfectly clear to us that if we told the Japanese to lay down their arms immediately and march to the seaboard, the entire country would be taken over by the Communists. We therefore had to take the unusual step of using the enemy as a garrison until we could airlift Chinese National [Chiang's] troops to South China and send Marines to guard the seaports.<sup>3</sup>

The deployment of American Marines had swift and dramatic results. Two weeks after the end of the war, Peking was surrounded by communist forces. Only the arrival of the Marines in the city prevented the Reds from taking it over.<sup>4</sup> And while Mao's forces were pushing into Shanghai's suburbs, US transport planes dropped Chiang's troops in to seize the city.<sup>5</sup>

In a scramble to get to key centres and ports before the communists, the US transported between 400,000 and 500,000 Nationalist troops by ship and plane all over the vastness of China and Manchuria, places they could never have reached otherwise.

As the civil war heated up, the 50,000 Marines sent by Truman after the close of the war were used to guard railway lines, coal mines, ports, bridges, and other strategic sites. Inevitably, they became involved in the fighting, sustaining dozens, if not hundreds of casualties. US troops, the communists charged, attacked areas controlled by the Reds, directly opened fire on them, arrested military officers, and disarmed soldiers.<sup>6</sup> The Americans found themselves blasting a small Chinese village "unmercifully", wrote a Marine to his congressman, not knowing "how many innocent people were slaughtered".<sup>7</sup>

United States planes regularly made reconnaissance flights over communist territory to scout the position of their forces. The communists claimed that American planes frequently strafed and bombed their troops and in one instance machine-gunned a communist-held town.<sup>8</sup> To what extent, if any, these attacks were carried out by US airmen is not known.

There were, however, American survivors in some of the many crashes of United States aircraft. Surprisingly, the Reds continued to rescue them, tend to their wounds, and return them to US bases. It may be difficult to appreciate now, but at this time the mystique and the myth of "America" still gripped the imagination of peoples all over the world, and Chinese peasants, whether labelled "communist" or not, were no exception. During the war the Reds had helped to rescue scores of American fliers and transported them through Japanese lines to safety. "The Communists", wrote the *New York Times*, "did not lose one airman taken under their protection. They made a point of never accepting rewards for saving American airmen."<sup>9</sup>

When 1946 arrived, about 100,000 American military personnel were still in China, still supporting Chiang. The official United States explanation for the presence of its military was that they were there to disarm and repatriate the Japanese. Though this task was indeed carried out eventually, it was secondary to the military's political function, as Truman's later statement cited above makes abundantly clear.

The American soldiers in China began to protest about not being sent home, a complaint echoed round the world by other GIs kept overseas for political (usually anti-communist) purposes. "They ask me, too, why they're here," said a Marine lieutenant in China at Christmas-time, 1945. "As an officer I am supposed to tell them, but you can't tell a man that he's here to disarm Japanese when he's guarding the same railway with [armed] Japanese."<sup>10</sup>

Strangely enough, the US attempted to mediate in the civil war, this, while being an active, powerful participant on one side. Harry Truman sent General

George Marshall to China to try and arrange a ceasefire and a coalition government. While some temporary success was achieved in an on-and-off truce, the idea of a coalition government was doomed to failure, as unlikely as a marriage between the Czar and the Bolsheviks. As the historian D.F. Fleming has pointed out, "One cannot unite a dying oligarchy with a rising revolution".<sup>11</sup>

What American motivation lay behind this move can only be guessed at; perhaps a public relations exercise to obscure its interventionist role; or a realization that it was either compromise with the communists or see all of China fall under their sway.

Not until early 1947 did the United States begin to withdraw some of its military forces, although aid and support to the Chiang government continued in one form or another long afterward. At about this same time, the Flying Tigers began to operate. The legendary American air squadron under the leadership of General Claire Chennault had fought for the Chinese against the Japanese before and during the world war. Now Chennault, Chiang's former air force adviser, had reactivated the squadron (under the name CAT) and its pilots-of-fortune soon found themselves in the thick of the fray, flying endless supply missions to Nationalist cities under siege, dodging communist shell bursts to airlift food, ammunition, and supplies of all kinds, or to rescue the wounded.<sup>12</sup> Technically, CAT was a private airline hired by the Chiang government, but before the civil war came to an end, the airline had formally interlocked with the CIA to become the first link in the Agency's sprawling air-empire-to-be, best known for the Air America line.

By 1949, United States aid to the Nationalists since the war amounted to almost \$2 billion in cash and \$1 billion worth of military hardware; 39 Nationalist army divisions had been trained and equipped.<sup>13</sup> Yet the Chiang dynasty was collapsing all around in bits and pieces. It had not been only the onslaught of Chiang's communist foes, but the hostility of the Chinese people at large to his tyranny, his wanton cruelty, and the extraordinary corruption and decadence of his entire bureaucratic and social system. By contrast, the large areas under communist administration were models of honesty, progress and fairness; entire divisions of Chiang's forces defected to the communists. The Nationalist forces, said General David Barr, head of the US Military Mission in China, were under "the world's worst leadership".<sup>14</sup>

The Generalissimo, his cohorts and soldiers fled to the Chinese island of Taiwan. They had prepared their entry two years earlier by terrorizing the islanders into submission — a massacre which took the lives of an estimated 5,000 to 20,000 people.<sup>15</sup>

\* Prior to the communist victory, the US Government entertained no doubts that Taiwan (Formosa) was a part of China. Afterward, uncertainty began to creep into the minds of Washington officials. The crisis was resolved in a remarkably simple manner: the US agreed with Chiang that the proper way to view the situation was not that Taiwan belonged to China, but that Taiwan was China. And so it was called.

In the wake of the communist success, China scholar Felix Greene has observed, "Americans simply could not bring themselves to believe that the Chinese, however rotten their leadership, could have preferred a communist government".<sup>16</sup> It must have been the handiwork of a conspiracy, an international conspiracy, at the control panel of which sat, not unexpectedly, the Soviet Union.

The evidence for this was thin to the point of transparency. Indeed, ever since Stalin's credo of "socialism in one country" won out over Trotsky's internationalism in the 1920s, the Russians had sided with Chiang more than with Mao, advising the latter more than once to dissolve his army and join Chiang's government.<sup>17</sup> Particularly in the post-World War II years, when the Soviet Union was faced with its own staggering crisis of reconstruction, did it not relish the prospect of having to help lift the world's most populous nation into the modern age. In 1947, General Marshall stated publicly that he knew of no evidence that the Chinese communists were being supported by the USSR.<sup>18</sup>

But in the United States this did not prevent the rise of an entire mythology of how the US had "lost" China: Soviet intervention, State Department communists, White House cowards, military and diplomatic folly, communist dupes and fellow-travellers in the media . . . treachery everywhere . . .

The Truman administration, said Senator Joseph McCarthy with characteristic charm, was composed of "egg-sucking phony liberals" who protected the "Communists and queers" who had "sold China into atheistic slavery".<sup>19</sup> Yet, short of an all-out invasion of the country by large numbers of American troops, it is difficult to see what more the US Government could have done to prevent Chiang's downfall. Even after Chiang fled to Taiwan, the United States pursued a campaign of relentless assaults against the communist government, despite a request from Chou En-lai for aid and friendship. The Red leader saw no practical or ideological bar to this.<sup>\*20</sup>

Many Nationalist soldiers had taken refuge in northern Burma in the great exodus of 1949, much to the displeasure of the Burmese Government. There, the CIA began to regroup this stateless army into a fighting force, and during the early 1950s a number of large- and small-scale incursions into China were carried out.

In one instance, in April 1951, a few thousand troops, accompanied by CIA advisers and supplied by air drops from American C46s and C47s, crossed the border into China's Yunnan province, but they were driven back by the communists in less than a week. The casualties were high and included several CIA advisers who lost their lives. Another raid that summer took the invaders 65 miles into China where they reportedly held a 100-mile long strip of territory.

\* Instead, the US evidently conspired to assassinate Chou on several occasions. (See Indonesia, 1957-58 chapter and *The Guardian* (London), 24 August 1985).

While the attacks continued intermittently, the CIA proceeded to build up the force's capabilities: American engineers arrived to help construct and expand airstrips in Burma, fresh troops were flown in from Taiwan, other troops were recruited from amongst Burmese hill tribes, CIA air squadrons were brought in for logistical services, and enormous quantities of American heavy arms were ferried in. Much of the supply of men and equipment came in via nearby Thailand.

The army soon stood at more than 10,000 men. By the end of 1952, Taiwan claimed that over 41,000 communists had been killed and more than 3,000 wounded. The figures were most likely exaggerated, but even so, it was clear that the raids would not lead to Chiang's triumphant return to the mainland — although this was not their sole purpose. On the Chinese border two greater battles were raging: in Korea and Vietnam. It was the hope of the United States to force the Chinese to divert troops and military resources away from these areas. The infant People's Republic of China was undergoing a terrible test.

In between raids on China, the "Chinats" (as distinguished from the "Chicomos") found time to clash frequently with Burmese troops, indulge in banditry; and become the opium barons of The Golden Triangle, that slice of land encompassing parts of Burma, Laos and Thailand which was the world's largest source of opium and heroin. CIA pilots flew the stuff all over, to secure the co-operation of those in Thailand who were important to the military operation, as a favour to their Nationalist clients, perhaps even for the money, and, ironically, to serve as cover for their more illicit activities.

The Chinats in Burma kept up their harassment of the Chinese until 1961 and the CIA continued to supply them militarily, but at some point the Agency began to phase itself out of a more direct involvement. When the CIA, in response to repeated protests by the Burmese Government to the United States and the United Nations, put pressure on the Chinats to leave Burma, Chiang responded by threatening to expose the Agency's covert support of his troops there. At an earlier stage, the CIA had entertained the hope that the Chinese would be provoked into attacking Burma, thereby forcing the strictly neutral Burmese to seek salvation in the Western camp.<sup>21</sup> The Chinese did just that, in January 1961, but as part of a combined force with the Burmese to overwhelm the Nationalists' main base and mark finis to their Burmese adventure. Burma subsequently renounced American aid and moved closer to Peking.<sup>22</sup>

For many of the Chinats, unemployment was only short-lived. They soon signed up with the CIA again; this time to fight with the Agency's grand army in Laos.

Burma was not the only jumping-off site for CIA-organized raids into China. The islands of Quemoy and Matsu, about five miles off the Chinese coast, were used as bases for hit-and-run attacks, often in battalion strength; for occasional bombing forays, and to blockade mainland ports. Chiang was "brutally pressured" by the US to build up his troops on the islands beginning around 1953 as a demonstration of Washington's new policy of "unleashing" him.<sup>23</sup>

The Chinese retaliated several times with heavy artillery attacks on Quemoy, on one occasion killing two American military officers. The prospect

of an escalated war led the US later to have second thoughts and to ask Chiang to abandon the islands, but he then refused. The suggestion has often been put forward that Chiang's design was to embroil the United States in just such a war as his one means of returning to the mainland.<sup>24</sup>

Many incursions into China were made by smaller, commando-type teams air-dropped in for intelligence and sabotage purposes. In November 1952, two CIA officers, John Downey and Richard Fecteau, who had been engaged in flying these teams in and dropping supplies to them, were shot down and captured by the communists; only two years later did Peking announce their capture and sentencing. The State Department broke its own two-year silence with indignation: the Department claimed that the two men had been civilian employees of the US Department of the Army in Japan who were presumed lost on a flight from Korea to Japan in November 1952. "How they came into the hands of the Chinese Communists is unknown to the United States . . . the continued wrongful detention of these American citizens furnishes further proof of the Chinese Communist regime's disregard for accepted practices of international conduct."<sup>25</sup>

Fecteau was released in December 1971, shortly before President Nixon's trip to China; Downey was not freed until March 1973, soon after Nixon publicly acknowledged him to be a CIA officer.

The Peking announcement in 1954 also revealed that eleven American airmen had been shot down over China in January 1953 while on a mission which had as its purpose the "air-drop of special agents into China and the Soviet Union". These men were luckier, being freed after only 2½ years.

All told, said the Chinese, it had killed 106 American and Taiwanese agents who had parachuted into China between 1951 and 1954 and had captured 124 others. Although the CIA had little, if anything, to show for its commando actions, it reportedly maintained the programme until at least 1960.<sup>26</sup>

There were many other CIA flights over China for purely espionage purposes, carried out by high-altitude U-2 planes, pilotless "drones", and other aircraft. These overflights began around the late 1950s and were not discontinued until 1971, to coincide with Henry Kissinger's first trip to Peking. The operation was not without incident. Several U-2 planes were shot down and even more of the drones, 19 of the latter by Chinese count between 1964 and 1969. China registered hundreds of "serious warnings" about violations of its air space, and on at least one occasion American aircraft crossed the Chinese border and shot down a Mig-17.<sup>27</sup>

It would seem that no degree of failure or paucity of result was enough to deter the CIA from seeking new ways to torment the Chinese in the decade following their revolution. Tibet was another case in point. The Peking Government claimed Tibet as part of China, as had previous Chinese governments for more than two centuries, although many Tibetans still regarded themselves as autonomous or independent. The United States made its position clear during the war:

The Government of the United States has borne in mind the fact that the Chinese

Government has long claimed suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese constitution lists Tibet among areas constituting the territory of the Republic of China. This Government has at no time raised a question regarding either of these claims.<sup>28</sup>

After the communist revolution, Washington officials tended to be more equivocal about the matter. But US actions against Tibet had nothing to do with the niceties of international law.

Beginning in 1957 or 1958, the CIA began to recruit Tibetan refugees and exiles in neighbouring countries such as India and Nepal. Amongst their number were members of the Dalai Lama's guard, referred to picturesquely as "the fearsome Khamba horsemen", and others who had already engaged in some guerrilla activity against Peking rule and/or the profound social changes being instituted by the revolution. (Serfdom and slavery were, literally, still prevalent in Tibet.) Those selected were flown to the United States, to an unused military base high in the Colorado mountains, an altitude approximating that of their mountainous homeland. There, hidden away as much as possible from the locals, they were trained in the fine points of paramilitary warfare.

After completing training, each group of Tibetans was flown to Taiwan or other friendly Asian countries, thence to be infiltrated back into Tibet, or elsewhere in China, where they occupied themselves in activities such as sabotage, mining roads, cutting communication lines, and ambushing small communist forces. Their actions were supported by CIA aircraft and on occasion led by Agency contract mercenaries.

The operation in Colorado was maintained until some time in the 1960s. How many thousands of Tibetans passed through the course of instruction will probably never be known. Even after the formal training programme came to an end, the CIA continued to finance and supply their exotic clients and nurture their hopeless dream of reconquering their homeland.

In 1961, when the *New York Times* got some wind of the operation, it acceded to a Pentagon request to probe no further. The matter was particularly sensitive because the CIA is expressly forbidden to conduct anything of this sort within the United States.<sup>29</sup>

Above and beyond the bedevilment of China on its own merits, there was the spillover from the Korean war. There were the numerous bombings and strafings by American planes which, the Chinese frequently reported, took civilian lives and destroyed homes. And there was the matter of germ warfare.

The Chinese devoted a great deal of effort to publicizing their claim that the United States, particularly during January to March 1952, had dropped quantities of bacteria and bacteria-laden insects over Korea and north-east China. It presented testimony of about 38 captured American airmen who had purportedly flown the planes with the deadly cargo. Many of the men went into voluminous detail about the entire operation: the kinds of bombs and other containers dropped, the types of insects, the diseases which they carried, etc. At the same time, photographs of the alleged germ bombs and insects were published.

Then, in August, an "International Scientific Committee" was appointed, composed of scientists from Sweden, France, Great Britain, Italy, Brazil and the Soviet Union. After an investigation in China of more than two months, the committee produced a report of some 600 pages, many photos, and the conclusion that:

The peoples of Korea and China have indeed been the objectives of bacteriological weapons. These have been employed by units of the U.S.A. armed forces, using a great variety of different methods for the purpose, some of which seem to be developments of those applied by the Japanese during the second world war.<sup>30</sup>

It should be noted that some of the American airmen's statements contained so much technical biological information and were so full of communist rhetoric "imperialist, capitalist Wall Street war monger" and the like — that their personal authorship of the statements must be seriously questioned. Moreover, it was later learned that most of the airmen had confessed only after being subjected to physical abuse.<sup>31</sup>

But in view of what we have since learned about American involvement with chemical and biological weapons, the Chinese claims cannot be dismissed out of hand. In 1970, for example, the *New York Times* reported that during the Korean War, when US forces were overwhelmed by "human waves" of Chinese, "the Army dug into captured Nazi chemical warfare documents describing Sarin, a nerve gas so lethal that a few pounds could kill thousands of people in minutes. . . . By the mid-nineteen-fifties, the Army was manufacturing thousands of gallons of Sarin".<sup>32</sup>

And during the 1950s and 1960s, the Army and the CIA conducted numerous experiments with biological agents within the United States. To cite just two examples: in 1955, there is compelling evidence that the CIA released whooping-cough bacteria into the open air in Florida; there was an accompanying extremely sharp increase in the incidence of the disease in the state that year.<sup>33</sup> The following year, another toxic substance was disseminated in the streets and tunnels of New York City.<sup>34</sup>

We will also see in the chapter on Cuba how the CIA conducted chemical and biological warfare against Fidel Castro's rule.

In May 1966, Secretary of State Dean Rusk spoke before a Congressional committee about American policy toward China. Mr Rusk, it seems, was perplexed that "At times the Communist Chinese leaders seem to be obsessed with the notion that they are being threatened and encircled". He spoke of China's "imaginary, almost pathological, notion that the United States and other countries around its borders are seeking an opportunity to invade mainland China and destroy the Peiping [Peking] regime". The Secretary then added:

How much Peiping's 'fear' of the United States is genuine and how much it is artificially induced for domestic political purposes only the Chinese Communist

leaders themselves know. I am convinced, however, that their desire to expel our influence and activity from the western Pacific and Southeast Asia is not motivated by fears that we are threatening them.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Italy 1947-1948 Free Elections, Hollywood Style

"Those who do not believe in the ideology of the United States shall not be allowed to stay in the United States," declared the American Attorney-General, Tom Clark, in January 1948.<sup>1</sup>

In March, the Justice Department, over which Clark presided, determined that Italians who did not believe in the ideology of the US would not be allowed to emigrate to, or even enter, the United States.

This was but one tactic in a remarkable American campaign to ensure that Italians who did not believe in the ideology of the United States would not be allowed to form a government of a differing ideology in Italy in their election scheduled for 18 April 1948.

Two years earlier, the Italian Communist Party (PCI), the largest in the world outside the Soviet Union, and the Socialist Party (PSI) had garnered more votes and more seats in the Constituent Assembly election than the Christian Democrats. But the two parties of the left had run separate candidates and thus had to be content with some ministerial posts in a coalition cabinet under a Christian Democrat premier. The results, nonetheless, spoke plainly enough to put the fear of Marx into the Truman administration.

For the 1948 election, the PCI and PSI united to form the Popular Democratic Front (FDP) and in February won municipal elections in Pescara with a 10% increase in their vote over 1946. The Christian Democrats ran a poor second. The prospect of the left winning control of the Italian government loomed larger than ever before. It was at this point that the US began to train its big economic and political guns upon the Italian people. All the good of Yankee know-how, all the Madison Avenue savvy in the art of swaying public opinion, all the Hollywood razzmatazz would be brought to bear on the "target market".

Pressing domestic needs in Italy, such as agricultural and economic reform, the absence of which produced abysmal extremes of wealth and poverty, were not to be the issues of the day. The lines of battle would be drawn around the question of "democracy" vs. "communism" (the idea of "capitalism" remaining discreetly to one side). The fact that the Communists had been the single most active anti-fascist group in Italy during the war, undergoing ruthless

persecution, while the Christian Democrat government of 1948 and other electoral opponents on the right were riddled through with collaborators, monarchists and plain unreconstructed fascists . . . this too would be ignored; indeed, turned around. It was now a matter of Communist "dictatorship" vs. their adversaries' love of "freedom"; this was presumed *a priori*. As one example, a group of American congressmen visited Italy in summer 1947 and concluded that "The country is under great pressure from within and without to veer to the left and adopt a totalitarian-collective national organization".<sup>2</sup>

To make any of this at all credible, the whole picture had to be pushed and squeezed into the frame of The American Way of Life vs. The Soviet Way of Life, a specious proposition which must have come as somewhat of a shock to leftists who regarded themselves as Italian and neither Russian nor American. In February, after non-Communist ministers in Czechoslovakia had boycotted cabinet meetings over a dispute concerning police hiring practices, the Communist government dissolved the coalition cabinet and took sole power. The Voice of America pointed to this event repeatedly, as a warning to the Italian people of the fate awaiting them if Italy "went Communist". Yet, by all appearances, the Italian Christian Democrat government and the American government had conspired the previous year in an even more blatant usurpation of power.

In January 1947, when Italian Premier Alcide de Gasperi visited Washington at the United States' invitation, his overriding concern was to plead for crucial financial assistance for his war-torn, impoverished country. American officials may have had a different priority. Three days after returning to Italy, de Gasperi unexpectedly dissolved his cabinet which included several Communists and socialists. The press reported that many people in Italy believed that de Gasperi's action was related to his visit to the United States and was aimed at decreasing leftist, principally Communist influence in the government. After two weeks of tortuous delay, the formation of a centre or centre-right government sought by de Gasperi proved infeasible; the new cabinet still included Communists and socialists although the left had lost key positions, notably the ministries of foreign affairs and finance.

From this point until May, when de Gasperi's Deputy, Ivan Lombardo, led a mission to Washington to renew the request for aid, promised loans were "frozen" by the United States for reasons not very clear. On several occasions during this period the Italian left asserted their belief that the aid was being held up pending the ouster of leftists from the cabinet. The *New York Times*, not going quite as far, noted that, "Some observers here feel that a further Leftward swing in Italy would retard aid." As matters turned out, the day Lombardo arrived in Washington, de Gasperi again dissolved his entire cabinet and suggested that the new cabinet would manage without the benefit of leftist members. This was, indeed, what occurred, and over the ensuing few months, exceedingly generous American financial aid flowed into Italy, in addition to the cancellation of the nation's \$1 billion debt to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

As the last month of the 1948 election campaign began, *Time* magazine pronounced the possible leftist victory to be "the brink of catastrophe".<sup>4</sup>

"It was primarily this fear," William Colby, former Director of the CIA, has written, "that had led to the formation of the Office of Policy Coordination, which gave the CIA the capability to undertake covert political, propaganda, and paramilitary operations in the first place."<sup>5</sup>

But covert operations, as far as is known, played a distinctly minor role. It was the very overtness of the American campaign, without any apparent embarrassment, that stamps the whole endeavour with such uniqueness and arrogance — one might say swagger. The fortunes of the FDP slid downhill with surprising acceleration during the final month in the face of an awesome mobilization of resources such as the following:<sup>6</sup>

- A massive letter writing campaign from Americans of Italian extraction to their relatives and friends in Italy — at first written by individuals in their own words or guided by "sample letters" in newspapers — soon expanded to mass-produced, pre-written, postage-paid form letters, cablegrams, "educational circulars", and posters, needing only an address and signature. And — from a group calling itself The Committee to Aid Democracy in Italy — half a million picture postcards illustrating the gruesome fate awaiting Italy if it voted for "dictatorship" or "foreign dictatorship". In all, an estimated 10 million pieces of mail were written and distributed by newspapers, radio stations, churches, the American Legion, wealthy individuals, etc.; and business advertisements now included offers to send letters airmail to Italy even if you didn't buy the product.

All this with the publicly expressed approval of the Acting Secretary of State and the Post Office which inaugurated special "Freedom Flights" to give greater publicity to the dispatch of the mail to Italy.

The form letters contained messages such as: "A communist victory would ruin Italy. The United States would withdraw aid and a world war would probably result." . . . "We implore you not to throw our beautiful Italy into the arms of that cruel despot communism. America hasn't anything against communism in Russia [sic], but why impose it on other people, other lands, in that way putting out the torch of liberty?" . . . "If the forces of true democracy should lose in the Italian election, the American Government will not send any more money to Italy and we won't send any more money to you, our relatives."

\* At the very same time, France, which was also heavily dependent upon American financial aid, ousted all its Communist ministers as well. In this case there was an immediate rationale: the refusal of the Communist ministers to support Premier Ramadier in a vote of confidence over a wage freeze. Even so, the ouster was regarded as a "surprise" and considered "bold" in France, and opinion was widespread that American loans were being used, or would be used, to force France to align with the US. Said Ramadier: "A little of our independence is departing from us with each loan we obtain."

These were by no means the least sophisticated. Other themes emphasized were Russian domination of Italy, loss of religion and the church, loss of family life, loss of home and land.

Veteran newsman Howard K. Smith pointed out at the time that "For an Italian peasant a telegram from anywhere is a wondrous thing; and a cable from the terrestrial paradise of America is not lightly to be disregarded."

The letters threatening to cut off gifts may have been equally intimidating. "Such letters," wrote a Christian Democrat official in an Italian newspaper, "struck home in southern Italian and Sicilian villages with the force of lightning." A 1949 poll indicated that 16 percent of Italians claimed relatives in the United States with whom they were in touch; this, apparently, was in addition to friends there.

● The State Department backed up the warnings in the letters by announcing that "If the Communists should win . . . there would be no further question of assistance from the United States." The Italian left felt compelled to regularly assure voters that this would not really happen; this, in turn, inspired American officials, including Secretary of State George Marshall, to repeat the threat. (For the aid programme which bore his name, the Marshall Plan, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.)

● A daily series of direct short-wave broadcasts to Italy backed by the State Department and featuring prominent Americans. (The State Department estimated that there were 1.2 million short-wave receivers in Italy as of 1946.) The Attorney General assured the Italian people that the election was a "choice between democracy and communism, between God and godlessness, between order and chaos." William Donovan, the wartime head of the OSS (forerunner of the CIA) warned that "under a communist dictatorship in Italy," many of the "nation's industrial plants would be dismantled and shipped to Russia and millions of Italy's workers would be deported to Russia for forced labor." If this were not enough to impress the Italian listeners, a parade of unknown but passionate refugees from Eastern Europe went before the microphone to recount horror stories of life behind "The Iron Curtain".

● Several commercial radio stations broadcast to Italy special services held in American Catholic churches to pray for the Pope in "this, his most critical hour". On one station, during an entire week, hundreds of Italian-Americans from all walks of life delivered one-minute messages to Italy which were relayed through the short-wave station. Station WOV in New York invited Italian war brides to transcribe a personal message to their families back home. The station then mailed the recordings to Italy.

● Voice of America daily broadcasts into Italy were sharply increased, highlighting, of course, news of American assistance or gestures of friendship to Italy. A sky-full of show biz stars, including Frank Sinatra and Gary Cooper, recorded a series of radio programmes designed to win friends and influence the vote in Italy. Five broadcasts of Italian-American housewives were aired, and Italian-Americans with some leftist credentials were also enlisted for the cause.

Labour leader Luigi Antonini called upon Italians to "smash the Muscovite fifth column" which "follows the orders of the ferocious Moscow tyranny," or else Italy would become an "enemy totalitarian country".

To counter Communist charges in Italy that negroes in the United States were denied opportunities, the VOA broadcast the story of a negro couple who had made a fortune in the junk business and built a hospital for their people in Oklahoma City. (It should be remembered that in 1948 American negroes had not yet reached the status of second-class citizens.)

● Italian radio stations carried a one-hour show from Hollywood put on to raise money for the orphans of Italian pilots who died in the war. (It was not reported if the same was done for the orphans of German pilots.)

● American officials in Italy widely distributed leaflets extolling US economic aid and staged exhibitions among low-income groups. The US Information Service presented an exhibition on "The Worker in America" and made extensive use of documentary and feature films to sell the American way of life. It was estimated that in the period immediately preceding the election more than five million Italians each week saw American documentaries. The 1939 Hollywood film "Ninotchka", which satirized life in Russia, was singled out as a particularly effective feature film. It was shown throughout working-class areas and the Communists made several determined efforts to prevent its presentation. After the election, a pro-Communist worker was reported as saying that "What licked us was 'Ninotchka'."

● The Justice Department served notice that Italians who joined the Communist Party would be denied that dream of so many Italians, emigration to America. The State Department then ruled that any Italians known to have voted for the Communists would not be allowed to even enter the terrestrial paradise. (A Department telegram to a New York politico read: "Voting Communist appears to constitute affiliation with Communist Party within meaning of Immigration Law and therefore would require exclusion from United States.") It was urged that this information be emphasized in letters to Italy.

● President Truman accused the Soviet Union of plotting the subjugation of Western Europe and called for universal military training in the United States and a resumption of military conscription to forestall "threatened communist control and police-state rule". During the campaign, American and British warships were frequently found anchored off Italian ports. *Time*, in an edition widely displayed and commented upon in Italy shortly before the election, gave its approval to the sentiment that "The U.S. should make it clear that it will use force, if necessary, to prevent Italy from going Communist."

● The United States and Italy signed a ten-year treaty of "friendship, commerce and navigation". This was the first treaty of its kind entered into by the US since the war, a point emphasized for Italian consumption.

● A "Friendship Train" toured the United States gathering gifts and then travelled round Italy distributing them. The train was, naturally, painted red,



white and blue, and bore large signs expressing the friendship of American citizens toward the people of Italy.

- The United States Government stated that it favoured Italian trusteeship over some of its former African colonies, such as Ethiopia and Libya, a wholly unrealistic proposal that could never come to pass in the post-war world. (The Soviet Union made a similar proposal.)

- The US, Great Britain and France manoeuvred the Soviet Union into vetoing, for the third time, a motion that Italy be admitted to the United Nations. (The first time, the Russians expressed their opposition on the grounds that a peace treaty with Italy had not been signed. After the signing in 1947, they said they would accept the proposal if other World War II enemies, such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania were also made members.)

- The same three allied nations proposed to the Soviet Union that negotiations take place with a view to returning Trieste to Italy. Formerly the principal Italian port on the Adriatic coast, bordering Yugoslavia, Trieste had been made a "free city" under the terms of the peace treaty. The approval of the Soviet Union was necessary to alter the treaty, and the Western proposal was designed to put the Russians on the spot. The Italian people had an intense sentimental attachment to Trieste, and if the Russians rejected the proposal it could seriously embarrass the Italian Communists. A Soviet acceptance, however, would antagonize their Yugoslav allies. The US prodded the Russians for a response, but none was forthcoming. From the Soviet point of view, the most obvious and safest path to follow would have been to delay their answer until after the election. Yet they chose to announce their rejection of the proposal only five days before the vote, thus hammering another nail into the FDP coffin.

- A "Manifesto of peace to freedom-loving Italians", calling upon them to reject Communism, was sent to Premier de Gasperi. Its signatories included two former US Secretaries of State, a former Assistant Secretary of State, a former Attorney-General, a former Supreme Court Justice, a former Governor of New York, the former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and many other prominent personages. This message was, presumably, suitably publicized throughout Italy, a task easy in the extreme inasmuch as an estimated 82 percent of Italian newspapers were in the hands of those unsympathetic to the leftist bloc.

- More than 200 American labour leaders of Italian origin held a conference, out of which came a cable sent to 23 daily newspapers throughout Italy similarly urging thumbs down on the Reds. At the same time, the Italian-American Labor Council contributed \$50,000 to anti-Communist labour organizations in Italy. The CIA was already secretly subsidizing such trade unions to counteract the influence of leftist unions,<sup>8</sup> but this was, and is, standard Agency practice independent of electoral considerations. (According to a former CIA officer, when, in 1945, the Communists came very near to gaining control of labour unions, first in Sicily, then in all Italy and southern France, co-operation between the OSS and the Mafia successfully stemmed the tide.)<sup>9</sup>

- The CIA, by its own later admission, gave \$1 million to Italian "center parties", a king's ransom in Italy 1948.<sup>10</sup>

- An American group featuring noted Italian-American musicians travelled to Rome to present a series of concerts.

- President Truman chose a month before the election as the time to transfer 29 merchant ships to the Italian Government as a "gesture of friendship and confidence in a democratic Italy". (These were Italian vessels seized during the war and others to replace those seized and lost.)

- Four days later, the House Appropriations Committee acted swiftly to approve \$18.7 million in additional "interim aid" funds for Italy.

- Two weeks later, the United States gave Italy \$4.3 million as the first payment on wages due to 60,000 former Italian war prisoners in the US who had worked "voluntarily" for the Allied cause. This was a revision of the peace treaty which stipulated that the Italian Government was liable for such payments.

- Six days before election day, the State Department made it public that Italy would soon receive \$31 million in gold in return for gold looted by the Nazis. (The fact that only a few years earlier Italy had been the "enemy" fighting alongside the Nazis was now but a dim memory.)

- Two days later, the US Government authorized two further large shipments of food to Italy, one for \$8 million worth of grains. A number of the aid ships, upon their arrival in Italy during the election campaign, had been unloaded amid ceremony and a speech by the American Ambassador.

- A poster prominent in Italy read: "The bread that we eat — 40 per cent Italian flour — 60 per cent American flour sent free of charge." The poster neglected to mention whether the savings were passed on to the consumer or served to line the pockets of the baking companies.

- The American Ambassador, James Clement Dunn, travelled constantly throughout Italy pointing out to the population "on every possible occasion what American aid has meant to them and their country". At the last unloading of food, Dunn declared that the American people were saving Italy from starvation, chaos and possible domination from outside. His speeches usually received wide coverage in the non-left press. By contrast, the Italian Government prohibited several of its own ambassadors abroad from returning home to campaign for the FDP.

- April 15 was designated "Free Italy Day" by the American Sympathizers for a Free Italy with nation-wide observances to be held.

- The American Commission for the Restoration of Italian Monuments, Inc. announced, four days before election day, an additional series of grants to the Italian Ministry of Fine Arts.

In his historic speech of 12 March 1947, which came to be known as "The Truman Doctrine", the president had proclaimed:

I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.<sup>11</sup>

It scarcely needs to be emphasized how hollow this promise proved to be. But the voices which spoke out in the United States against their government's crusade were few and barely audible above the roar. The Italian-American Committee for Free Elections in Italy held a rally to denounce the propaganda blitz, declaring that "Thousands of Americans of Italian origin feel deeply humiliated by the continuous flow of suggestions, advice and pressure put on the Italians, as though they were unable to decide for themselves whom to elect."<sup>12</sup>

The Progressive Party also went on record, stating: "As Americans we repudiate our Government's threat to cut off food from Italy unless the election results please us. Hungry children must not go unfed because their parents do not vote as ordered from abroad."<sup>13</sup> The party's candidate for president in 1948 was Henry Wallace, the former Vice-President who was an outspoken advocate of genuine detente with the Soviet Union. History did not provide the opportunity to observe what the reaction would have been — amongst those who saw nothing wrong with what the United States was doing in Italy — if a similar campaign had been launched by the Soviet Union in the United States on behalf of Wallace.

Though some Italians must have been convinced at times that Stalin himself was a candidate for the presidency, the actual Soviet intervention in the election hardly merited a single headline. The American press engaged in speculation that the Russians were pouring substantial sums of money into the Communist Party's coffers. However, a survey carried out by the Italian bureau of the United Press revealed that the anti-Communist parties spent 7½ times as much as the FDP on all forms of propaganda, the Christian Democrats alone spending four times as much.<sup>14</sup> As for other Soviet actions, Howard K. Smith's observation is to the point:

The Russians tried to respond with a few feeble gestures for a while — some Italian war prisoners were released; some newsprint was sent to Italy and offered to all parties for their campaign. But there was no way of resisting what amounted to a tidal wave.

There is evidence that the Russians found the show getting too rough for them and actually became apprehensive of what the American and British reaction to a Communist victory at the polls might be. (Russia's concern about conflict with the West was also expressed within a month of the Italian elections in one of the celebrated Cominform letters to Tito, accusing the Yugoslavs of trying to involve the Soviets with the Western powers when 'it should have been known . . . that the U.S.S.R. after such a heavy war could not start a new one'.)<sup>15</sup>

The evidence Smith was alluding to was the Soviet rejection of the Trieste

proposal. By its timing, reported the *New York Times*, "the unexpected procedure caused some observers to conclude that the Russians had thrown the Italian Communist Party overboard."<sup>16</sup> The party's newspaper had a difficult time dealing with the story. Washington did as well, for it undermined the fundamental premise of the Italian campaign: that the Italian Communist Party and the Soviet Union were indistinguishable as to ends and means; that if you buy the one, you get the other as well. Thus the suggestion was put forth that perhaps the Soviet rejection was only a tactic to demonstrate that the US could not keep its promise on Trieste. But the Soviet announcement had not been accompanied by any such propaganda message, and it would not explain why the Russians had waited several weeks until near the crucial end to deliver its body blow to their Italian comrades. In any event, the United States could only come out smelling a lot sweeter than the Russians.

When the Broadway show had ended its engagement in Italy, the Christian Democrats stood as the clear winner with 48 percent of the vote. The leftist coalition had been humiliated with a totally unexpected polling of but 31 percent. It had been a crusade of the kind which Aneurin Bevan had ascribed to the Tories: "The whole art of Conservative politics in the 20th century," the British Labour leader wrote, "is being deployed to enable wealth to persuade poverty to use its political freedom to keep wealth in power."

### 3. Greece 1947 to Early 1950s From cradle of democracy to client state

Jorge Semprun is a Spaniard, a Frenchman, a novelist and film-writer, former Communist, former inmate of Buchenwald. He was at the infamous Nazi concentration camp in 1944 with other party members when they heard the news:

For some days now, we had talked of nothing else . . . At first some of us had thought it was a lie. It had to be. An invention of Nazi propaganda, to raise the morale of the people. We listened to the news bulletins on the German radio, broadcast by all the loudspeakers, and we shook our heads. A trick to raise the morale of the German people, it had to be. But we soon had to face up to the evidence. Some of us listened in secret to the Allied broadcasts, which confirmed the news. There was no doubt about it: British troops really were crushing the Greek Resistance. In Athens, battle was raging. British troops were retaking the city from the ELAS forces, district by district. It was an unequal fight: ELAS had neither tanks nor planes.

But Radio Moscow had said nothing, and this silence was variously interpreted.<sup>1</sup>

The British army had arrived in Greece in October 1944 shortly after the bulk of the Germans had fled, an evacuation due in no small part to ELAS, the People's Liberation Army. Founded during the course of 1941-42 on the initiative of the Greek Communist Party, ELAS and its political wing EAM, cut across the entire left side of the political spectrum, numbering many priests and even a few bishops amongst its followers. The guerrillas had wrested large areas of the country from the Nazi invaders who had routed the British in 1941.

ELAS/EAM partisans could be ruthless and coercive toward those Greeks who did not co-operate with them or who were suspected of collaboration with the Germans. But they also provided another dramatic example of the liberating effects of a world war: the encrusted ways of the Greek old guard were cast aside; in their place arose communities which had at least the semblance of being run by the local residents, inchoate institutions and mechanisms which might have been the precursor of a regenerated Greek society after the war; education, perhaps geared toward propaganda, but for the illiterate education nonetheless; fighting battalions of women, housewives called upon for the first time to act independently of their husbands' control . . . a phenomenon which spread irrepressibly until EAM came to number some one to two million Greeks out of a population of seven million.<sup>2</sup>

This was hardly the kind of social order designed to calm the ulcers of the British old guard (Winston Churchill for one) who had long regarded Greece as their private manor. The Great Man was determined that the Greek king should be restored to his rightful place, with all that that implied, and the British military in Greece lost no time in installing a government dedicated to that end. Monarchists, quislings, and conservatives of all stripes found themselves in positions of political power, predominant in the new Greek army and police; members of EAM/ELAS found themselves dead or in prison.<sup>3</sup>

Fighting broke out in December 1944 between ELAS and the British forces and their Greek comrades-in-arms, many of whom had fought against ELAS during the war and, in the process, collaborated with the Germans; others had simply served with the Germans. (The British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, acknowledged in August 1946 that there were 228 ex-members of the Nazi Security Battalions, whose main task had been to track down Greek resistance fighters, on active service in the new Greek army.)<sup>4</sup> Further support for the campaign against ELAS came from the US Air Force and Navy which transported more than two British divisions into Greece.<sup>5</sup> All this while the war against Germany still raged in Europe.

In mid-January 1945 ELAS agreed to an armistice, one that had much of the appearance and the effect of a surrender. There is disagreement amongst historians as to whether ELAS had been militarily defeated or whether the Communists in the ELAS and EAM hierarchy had received the word from Stalin to lay down the gun. If the latter were the case, it would have been consistent with the famous agreement between Stalin and Churchill, in October 1944, whereby spheres of influence in Eastern Europe were allocated between the two powers. In this cynical (as Churchill acknowledged) Monopoly game Britain had landed on Greece.<sup>6</sup> Churchill later wrote that Stalin had "adhered

strictly and faithfully to our agreement of October, and during all the long weeks of fighting the Communists in the streets of Athens not one word of reproach came from *Pravda* or *Izvestia*."<sup>7</sup>

"It is essential to remember," Professor D. F. Fleming has pointed out in his eminent history of the cold war, "that Greece was the first of the liberated states to be openly and forcibly compelled to accept the political system of the occupying Great Power. It was Churchill who acted first and Stalin who followed his example, in Bulgaria and then in Rumania, though with less bloodshed."<sup>8</sup>

A succession of Greek governments followed, serving by the grace of the British and the United States; thoroughly corrupt governments in the modern Greek tradition, which continued to terrorize the left, tortured them in notorious island prison camps, and did next to nothing to relieve the daily misery of the war-torn Greek people.<sup>9</sup> "There are few modern parallels for government as bad as this," CBS's chief European correspondent Howard K. Smith observed at the time.<sup>10</sup>

In the fall of 1946 the inevitable occurred: leftists took to the hills to launch phase two of the civil war. The Communists had wrenched Stalin's strangulating hand from their throats, for their very survival was at stake and everything that they believed in.

The British were weighed down by their own post-war reconstruction needs, and in February 1947 they informed the United States that they could no longer shoulder the burden of maintaining a large armed force in Greece nor provide sizeable military and economic aid to the country. Thus it was that the historic task of preserving all that is decent and good in Western Civilization passed into the hands of the United States.

Several days later, the State Department summoned the Greek chargé d'affaires in Washington and informed him that his government was to ask the US for aid. This was to be effected by means of a formal letter of request, a document, it turned out, to be written essentially by the State Department. The text of the letter, the chargé d'affaires later reported, "had been drafted with a view to the mentality of Congress . . . It would also serve to protect the U.S. Government against internal and external charges that it was taking the initiative of intervening in a foreign state or that it had been persuaded by the British to take over a bad legacy from them. The note would also serve as a basis for the cultivation of public opinion which was under study."<sup>11</sup>

In July, in a letter to Dwight Griswold, the head of the American Mission to Aid Greece (AMAG), Secretary of State George Marshall said:

It is possible that during your stay in Greece you and the Ambassador will come to the conclusion that the effectiveness of your Mission would be enhanced if a reorganization of the Greek Government could be effected. If such a conclusion is reached, it is hoped that you and the Ambassador will be able to bring about such a reorganization indirectly through discreet suggestion and otherwise in such a manner that even the Greek political leaders will have a feeling that the reorganization has been effected largely by themselves and not by pressure from without.<sup>12</sup>

The Secretary spelled out a further guideline for Griswold, a man the *New York Times* shortly afterwards called the "most powerful man in Greece".<sup>13</sup>

During the course of your work you and the members of your Mission will from time to time find that certain Greek officials are not, because of incompetence, disagreement with your policies, or for some other reason, extending the type of cooperation which is necessary if the objectives of your Mission are to be achieved. You will find it necessary to effect the removal of these officials.<sup>14</sup>

These contrivances, however, were not the most cynical aspects of the American endeavour. Washington officials well knew that their new client government was so venal and so abusive of human rights that even confirmed American anti-communists were appalled. Stewart Alsop for one. On 23 February 1947 the noted journalist had cabled from Athens that most of the Greek politicians had "no higher ambition than to taste the profitable delights of a free economy at American expense".<sup>15</sup> The same year, an American investigating team found huge supplies of food aid rotting in warehouses at a time when an estimated 75% of Greek children were suffering from malnutrition.<sup>16</sup>

So difficult was it to gloss over this picture, that President Truman, in his address to Congress in March 1947 asking for aid to Greece based on the Greek "request" (the "Truman Doctrine" speech), attempted to pre-empt criticism by admitting that the Greek Government was "not perfect" and that "it has made mistakes". Yet, somehow, by some ideological alchemy best known to the President, the regime in Athens was "democratic", its opponents the familiar "terrorists".<sup>17</sup>

There was no mention of the Soviet Union in this particular speech, but that was to be the relentless refrain of the American rationale over the next 2½ years: the Russians were instigating the Greek leftists so as to kidnap yet another "free" country and drag it kicking and screaming behind the Iron Curtain.

The neighbouring Communist states of Bulgaria, Albania, and particularly Yugoslavia, in part motivated by old territorial claims against Greece, did aid the insurgents by allowing them important sanctuary behind their borders and furnishing them with military supplies (whether substantial or merely token in amount depends on whom you read). The USSR, however, in the person of Joseph Stalin, was adamantly opposed to assisting the Greek "comrades". At a meeting with Yugoslav leaders in early 1948 (a few months before Yugoslavia's break with the Soviet Union), described by Milovan Djilas, second-in-command to Tito, Stalin turned to the foreign minister Edvard Kardelj and asked: "Do you believe in the success of the uprising in Greece?"

Kardelj replied, 'If foreign intervention does not grow, and if serious political and military errors are not made.'

Stalin went on, without paying attention to Kardelj's opinion: 'If, if! No, they have no prospect of success at all. What, do you think that Great Britain and the United States — the United States, the most powerful state in the world — will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean?'

Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.<sup>18</sup>

The first major shiploads of military assistance under the new American operation arrived in the summer of 1947. (Significant quantities had also been shipped to the Greek Government while the British ran the show.) By the end of the year the Greek military was entirely supported by American aid, down to and including its clothing and food. The nation's war-making potential was transformed: continual increases in the size of the Greek armed forces . . . fighter-bombers, transport squadrons, air fields, newly-invented napalm bombs, recoilless rifles, naval patrol vessels, communication networks . . . docks, railways, roads, bridges . . . hundreds of millions of dollars of supplies and equipment, approaching a billion in total since the end of the world war . . .<sup>19</sup>

The US Military Mission took over the development of battle plans for the army from the ineffective Greek generals. The Mission, related British military writer Major Edgar O'Ballance, "took a tough line and insisted that all its recommendations be carried into effect, at once and in full".<sup>20</sup> Eventually, more than 250 American army officers were in the country, many assigned to Greek army divisions to ensure compliance with directives; others operated at the brigade level; another 200 or so US Air Force and Navy personnel were also on active duty in Greece.

All military training methods and programmes were "revised, revitalized and tightened up" under American supervision<sup>21</sup> . . . infantry units made more mobile, with increased firepower; special commando units trained in anti-guerrilla tactics; training in mountain warfare, augmented by some 4,000 mules (sic) shipped to Greece by the United States . . . at American insistence, whole sections of the population uprooted to eliminate the guerrillas' natural base of operation and source of recruits . . .

"Both on the ground and in the air, American support was becoming increasingly active," observed C.M. Woodhouse, the British colonel who served in Greece during the mid-1940s, "and the theoretical line between advice, intelligence and combat was a narrow one."<sup>22</sup>

The Greek leftists held out for three terrible years. Despite losses of many tens of thousands, they were always able to replenish their forces, even increase their number. But by October 1949, foreseeing nothing but more loss of lives to a vastly superior destruction-machine, the guerrillas announced over their radio a "cease fire". It was the end of the civil war.

The extent of American hegemony over Greece from 1947 onwards can scarcely be exaggerated. We have seen Marshall's directives to Griswold, and the American management of the military campaign. There were many other manifestations of the same phenomenon, of which the following are a sample:

In August/September 1947, Prime Minister Tsaldaris agreed to enter a broad coalition and hand over the premiership to someone else. In doing so, said the

New York Times, Tsaldaris had "surrendered to the desires of Dwight P. Griswold . . . of [U.S.] Ambassador MacVeagh, and also of the King".<sup>23</sup> Before Tsaldaris addressed the Greek legislature on the matter, MacVeagh stepped in to make changes to the speech.<sup>24</sup>

Over the next several years, each of the frequent changes of prime minister came about only after considerable American input, if not outright demand.<sup>25</sup> One example of the latter occurred in 1950 when the then American Ambassador Henry Grady sent a letter to Prime Minister Venizelos threatening to cut off US aid if he failed to carry out a government reorganization. Venizelos was compelled to step down.<sup>26</sup>

The American influence was felt in regard to other high positions in Greek society as well. Andreas Papandreou, later to become prime minister himself, has written of this period that "Cabinet members and army generals, political party leaders and members of the Establishment, all made open references to American wishes or views in order to justify or to account for their own actions or positions."<sup>27</sup>

Before undertaking a new crackdown on dissidents in July 1947, Greek authorities first approached Ambassador MacVeagh. The Ambassador informed them that the US government would have no objection to "preventive measures if they were considered necessary". Reassured, the Greeks went ahead and rounded up 4,000 people in one week.<sup>28</sup>

An example of what could land a Greek citizen in prison is the case of the EAM member who received an 18-month sentence for printing remarks deemed insulting to Dwight Griswold. He had referred to the American as "the official representative of a foreign country".<sup>29</sup>

"In the economic sphere," Andreas Papandreou noted, the United States "exercised almost dictatorial control during the early fifties requiring that the signature of the chief of the U.S. Economic Mission appear alongside that of the Greek Minister of Co-ordination on any important documents."<sup>30</sup>

Earlier, American management of the economy may have been even tighter. A memorandum from Athens dated 17 November 1947, from the American Mission to Aid Greece to the State Department in Washington, read in part: "we have established practical control . . . over national budget, taxation, currency issuance, price and wage policies, and state economic planning, as well as over imports and exports, the issuance of foreign exchange and the direction of military reconstruction and relief expenditures . . ."<sup>31</sup>

And then there was the creation of a new internal security agency, named and modelled after the CIA (KYP in Greek). Before long, KYP was carrying out all the endearing practices of secret police everywhere, including systematic torture.

By the early 1950s, Greece had been moulded into a supremely reliable ally-client of the United States. It was staunchly anti-Communist and well integrated into the NATO system. It sent troops to Korea to support the United States' pretence that it was not simply an American war.

It is safe to say that had the left come to power, Greece would have been much more independent of the United States. Greece would likely have been

dependent as well of the Soviet Union, to whom the Greek left owed nothing. Like Yugoslavia, which is also free of a common border with the USSR, Greece would have been friendly towards the Russians, but independent.

When, in 1964, there came to power in Greece a government which entertained the novel idea that Greece was a sovereign nation, the United States and its Greek cohorts, as we shall see, quickly and effectively stamped out the heresy.

## 4. The Philippines 1940s and 1950s America's oldest colony

I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed [to] Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night it came to me this way — I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them [the Philippine Islands] back to Spain — that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany — our commercial rivals in the Orient — that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves — they were unfit for self-government — and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died.

*William McKinley, President of the United States, 1899*

William McKinley's idea of doing the very best by the Filipinos was to employ the United States Army to kill them in the tens of thousands, subject them to torture, burn down their villages, and lay the foundation for an economic exploitation which was proudly referred to at the time as "imperialism" by leading American statesmen and newspapers. After the Spanish had been driven out of the Philippines in 1898 by a combined action of the US and the Filipinos, Spain agreed to "cede" (that is, sell) the islands to the United States for \$20 million. But the Filipinos, who had already proclaimed their own independent republic, did not take kindly to being treated like a plot of uninhabited real estate. Accordingly, an American force, numbering at least 50,000, proceeded to instill in the population a proper appreciation of their status.

Thus did America's longest-lasting and most conspicuous colony ever come into being.

Nearly half a century later, the US Army again landed in the Philippines to find a nationalist movement fighting against a common enemy, this time the Japanese. While combatting the Japanese, the American military took many measures aimed at quashing this resistance army, the Huk (a shortening of the Tagalog for "People's Army Against Japan"). Guerrilla forces organized and led by American officers and composed of US and Filipino soldiers (a section of the US Army Forces in the Far East) attacked the Huks, spread disparaging rumours about them to erode their support amongst the peasants, and allowed the Japanese to assault them unmolested. This, while the Huks were engaged in a major effort against the Japanese invaders and Philippine collaborators and frequently came to the aid of American soldiers.

In the closing days of the Second World War, American and Philippine officials arrested leaders of the Huks and the Philippine Communist Party — reportedly on the orders of General MacArthur — forcibly disarmed many Huk soldiers, and removed their followers from local governments which they had set up in areas of Huk popular support.<sup>2</sup> In much of this anti-Huk campaign, the United States made use of Filipinos who were collaborating with the Japanese, such as landlords, large estate owners, many police constables, and other officials. In the post-war period, the US restored to power and position many of those tainted with collaboration, much to the distaste of other Filipinos.<sup>3</sup>

The Huk guerrilla forces had been organized in 1942, largely at the initiative of the Communist Party, in response to the Japanese occupation of the islands. Amongst American policy makers, there were those who came to the routine conclusion that the Huks were thus no more than a tool of the International Communist Conspiracy, to be opposed as all such groups were to be opposed. Others in Washington and Manila, whose reflexes were less knee-jerk, but more cynical, recognized that the Huk movement, if its growing influence was not checked, would lead to sweeping reforms of Philippine society.

The centre-piece of the Huk political programme was land reform, a crying need in this largely agricultural society. (On occasion, US officials would pay lip-service to the concept, but during 50 years of American occupation, nothing had been carried out.) The other side of the Huk coin was industrialization, which the United States had successfully thwarted for so long to provide American industries with a veritable playground in the Philippines. From the Huks' point of view, such changes were but prologue to raising the islanders from their state of backwardness, from illiteracy, grinding poverty, and the diseases of poverty like tuberculosis and beri-beri.<sup>4</sup> "The Communist Hukbalahap rebellion," reported the *New York Times*, "is generally regarded as an outgrowth of the misery and discontent among the peasants of Central Luzon [the main island]."<sup>5</sup> Unmistakably, the Huk movement was a threat to the neo-colonial condition of the Philippines, the American sphere of influence, and those Philippine interests which benefited from the status quo.

The gun-smoke of the war had scarcely cleared when the United States began training and equipping the first force of 50,000 Filipino soldiers.<sup>6</sup> In

testimony before a congressional committee, Major General William Arnold of the US Army candidly stated that this programme was "essential for the maintenance of internal order, not for external difficulties at all".<sup>7</sup> None of the congressmen present publicly expressed any reservation about the international propriety of such a foreign policy.

At the same time, American soldiers were kept on in the Philippines, and in at least one infantry division combat training was re-established. This led to vociferous protests and demonstrations by the GIs who wanted only to go home. Their war, after all, was over. The inauguration of combat training, the *New York Times* disclosed, was "interpreted by soldiers and certain Filipino newspapers as the preparation for the repression of possible uprisings in the Philippines by disgruntled farm tenant groups . . . The soldiers had a lot to say on the subject of American armed intervention in China and the Netherlands Indies" which was occurring at the time.<sup>8</sup> To what extent American military personnel participated directly in the suppression of dissident groups in the Philippines after the war is unrecorded history.

The Huks, though not trusting Philippine and US authorities enough to voluntarily surrender their arms, did test the good faith of the government by taking part in the April 1946 national elections as part of a "Democratic Alliance" of liberal and socialist peasant political groups. (Philippine Independence was scheduled for three months later — the Fourth of July to be exact.) As matters turned out, the commander-in-chief of the Huks, Luis Taruc, and several other Alliance members and reform-minded candidates who won election to Congress (three to the Senate and seven to the House) were not allowed to take their seats under the transparent fiction that coercion had been used to influence voters; no investigation or review of the cases had even been carried out by the appropriate body, the Electoral Tribunal.<sup>9</sup> (Two years later, Taruc was temporarily allowed to take his seat when he came to Manila to discuss a ceasefire with the government.)

The purpose of denying these men was equally transparent: the less-than-autonomous government was then able to push through Congress the controversial Philippine-US Trade Act — passed by two votes more than required in the House, and by nothing to spare in the Senate — which yielded to the United States bountiful privileges and concessions in the Philippine economy, including "equal rights . . . in the development of the nation's natural resources and the operation of its public utilities".<sup>10</sup> This "parity" provision was eventually extended to every sector of the Philippine economy.<sup>11</sup>

The debasement of the electoral process was followed by a wave of heavy brutality against the peasants carried out by the military, the police, and landlord goon squads. According to Luis Taruc, in the months following the election, peasant villages were destroyed, more than 500 peasants and their leaders killed, and about three times that number jailed, tortured, maimed or missing. The Huks and others felt they had little alternative but to take up arms once again, if only in self-defence.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly, independence was not going to change much of significance. American historian George E. Taylor, of impeccable establishment credentials,

in a book which bears the indication of CIA sponsorship, was yet moved to state that independence "was marked by lavish expressions of mutual good will, by partly fulfilled promises, and by a restoration of the old relationship in almost everything except in name . . . Many demands were made of the Filipinos for the commercial advantage of the United States, but none for the social and political advantage of the Philippines."<sup>13</sup>

The American military was meanwhile assuring a home for itself in the Philippines. A 1947 agreement provided sites for 23 US military bases in the country. The agreement was to last for 99 years. It stipulated that American servicemen who committed crimes outside the bases while on duty could be tried only by American military tribunals inside the bases.

By the terms of a companion military assistance pact, the Philippine government was prohibited from purchasing so much as a bullet from any arms source other than the US, except with American approval. Such a state of affairs, necessarily involving training, maintenance and spare parts, made the Philippine military extremely dependent upon their American counterparts. Further, no foreigners other than Americans were permitted to perform any function for or with the Philippine armed forces without the approval of the United States.<sup>14</sup>

By early 1950, the United States had provided the Philippines with over \$200 million of military equipment and supplies, a remarkable sum for that time, and was in addition to the construction of various military facilities.<sup>15</sup> The Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) reorganized the Philippine defence department, put its chosen man, Ramon Magsaysay, at its head, and formed the Philippine army into battalion combat teams trained for counter-insurgency warfare.<sup>16</sup> The Philippines was to be a laboratory experiment for this unconventional type of combat. The methods and the terminology, such as "search-and-destroy" and "pacification", were later to become infamous in Vietnam.

By September, when Lt. Col. Edward G. Lansdale arrived in the Philippines, the civil war had all the markings of a long, drawn-out affair, with victory not in sight for either side. Ostensibly, Lansdale was just another American military adviser attached to JUSMAG, but in actuality he was the head of CIA clandestine and paramilitary operations in the country. His apparent success was to make him a recognized authority in counter-insurgency.

In his later reminiscences about this period in his life, Lansdale relates his surprise at hearing from informed Filipino civilian friends about how repressive the Quirino government was, that its atrocities matched those of (or attributed to) the Huks, that the government was "rotten with corruption" (down to the policeman in the street, Lansdale observed on his own), that Quirino himself had been elected the previous year through "extensive fraud", and that "the Huks were right", they were the "wave of the future", and violence was the only way for the people to get a government of their own. (The police, wrote a correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post*, were "bands of uniformed thieves and rapists, more feared than bandits . . . the army was little better.")<sup>17</sup>

Lansdale was undeterred. He had come to do a job. Accordingly, he told himself that if the Huks took over there would only be another form of injustice by another privileged few, backed by even crueller force. By the next chapter, he had convinced himself that he was working on the side of those committed to "defend human liberty in the Philippines".<sup>18</sup>

As a former advertising man, Lansdale was no stranger to the use of market research, motivation techniques, media, and deception. In CIA parlance, such arts fall under the heading of "psychological warfare". To this end, Lansdale fashioned a unit called the Civil Affairs Office. Its activities were based on the premise — one both new and suspect to most American military officers — that a popular guerrilla army cannot be defeated by force alone.

Lansdale's team conducted a careful study of the superstitions of the Filipino peasants: their lore, taboos, and myths in Huk areas were examined for clues to the appropriate appeals that could wean them from supporting the insurgents. In one operation, Lansdale's men flew over these areas in a small plane hidden by a cloud cover and broadcast in Tagalog mysterious curses on any villagers who dared to give the Huks food or shelter. The tactic reportedly succeeded into starving some Huk units into surrender.<sup>19</sup>

Another Lansdale-initiated "psywar" operation played on the superstitious dread in the Philippine countryside of the *asuang*, a mythical vampire. A psywar squad entered a town and planted rumours that an *asuang* lived on in the neighbouring hill where the Huks were based, a location from which government forces were anxious to have them out. Two nights later, after giving the rumours time to circulate among Huk sympathizers in the town and make their way up the hill, the psywar squad laid an ambush for the rebels along a trail used by them. When a Huk patrol passed, the ambushers silently snatched the last man, punctured his neck vampire-fashion with two holes, held his body by the heels until the blood drained out, and put the corpse back on the trail. When the Huks, as superstitious as any other Filipinos, discovered the bloodless comrade, they fled from the region.<sup>20</sup>

Lansdale regularly held "coffee klatsches" with Filipino officials and military personnel in which new ideas were freely tossed back and forth, à la a Madison Avenue brain session. Out of this came the Economic Development Corps to lure Huks with a programme of resettlement on their own patch of farm land, with tools, seeds, cash loans, etc. It was an undertaking wholly inadequate to the land problem, and the number that responded was very modest, but like many psywar techniques, a principal goal was to steal from the enemy his most persuasive arguments.<sup>21</sup>

Among other tactics introduced or refined by Lansdale were: production of films and radio broadcasts to explain and justify government actions; infiltration of government agents into the ranks of the Huks to provide information and sow dissension; attempts to modify the behaviour of government soldiers so as to curtail their abuse of people in rural areas (for the Huks had long followed an explicit code of proper conduct towards the peasants, with punishment meted out to violators), but on other occasions, government soldiers were allowed to run amok in villages — disguised as Huks.<sup>22</sup>

This last, revealed L. Fletcher Prouty, was a technique "developed to a high art in the Philippines" in which soldiers were "set upon the unwary village in the grand manner of a Cecil B. De Mille production".<sup>23</sup> Prouty, a retired US Air Force colonel, was for nine years the focal point officer for contacts between the Pentagon and the CIA. He has described another type of scenario by which the Huk were tarred with the terrorist brush, serving to obscure the political nature of their movement and mar their credibility:

In the Philippines, lumbering interests and major sugar interests have forced tens of thousands of simple, backward villagers to leave areas where they have lived for centuries. When these poor people flee to other areas, it should be quite obvious that they in turn then infringe upon the territorial rights of other villagers or landowners. This creates violent rioting or at least sporadic outbreaks of banditry, that last lowly recourse of dying and terrorized people. Then when the distant government learns of the banditry and rioting, it must offer some safe explanation. The last thing that regional government would want to do would be to say that the huge lumbering or paper interests had driven the people out of their ancestral homeland. In the Philippines it is customary for the local/regional government to get a 10 percent rake-off on all such enterprise and for national politicians to get another 10 percent. So the safe explanation becomes 'Communist-inspired subversive insurgency.' The word for this in the Philippines is *Huk*.<sup>24</sup>

The most insidious part of the CIA operation in the Philippines was the fundamental manipulation of the nation's political life, featuring stage-managed elections and disinformation campaigns. The high-point of this effort was the election to the presidency, in 1953, of Ramon Magsaysay, the co-operative former defence department head.

Lansdale, it was said, "invented" Magsaysay.<sup>25</sup> His CIA front organizations ran the Filipino's campaign with all the license, impunity, and money that one would expect from the Democratic or Republican National Committees operating in the US, or perhaps more to the point, Mayor Daley operating in Chicago. One of these front organizations, the National Movement for Free Elections, was praised in a *New York Times* editorial for its contribution to making the Philippines "the showcase of democracy in Asia".<sup>26</sup>

Once Magsaysay was in office, the CIA wrote his speeches, carefully guided his foreign policy, and used its press "assets" (paid editors and journalists) to provide him with a constant claque of support for his domestic programmes and his involvement in the US-directed anti-communist crusade in south-east Asia, as well as to attack anti-US newspaper columnists. So beholden was Magsaysay to the United States, disclosed presidential assistant Sherman Adams, that he "sent word to Eisenhower that he would do anything the United States wanted him to do — even though his own foreign minister took the opposite view".<sup>27</sup>

One inventive practice of the CIA on behalf of Magsaysay was later picked up by Agency stations in a number of other Third World countries. This particular piece of chicanery consisted of selecting articles written by CIA writer-agents for the provincial press and republishing them in a monthly *Digest*

of the *Provincial Press*. The *Digest* was then sent to congressmen and other opinion makers in Manila to enlighten them as to what "the provinces were thinking".<sup>28</sup>

After Magsaysay died in a plane crash in 1957, various other Filipino politicians and parties were sought out by the CIA as clients, or offered themselves as such. One of the latter was Diosdado Macapagal who was to become president in 1961. Macapagal provided the Agency with political information for several years and eventually asked for, and received, what he felt he deserved: heavy financial support for his campaign. (*Reader's Digest* called his election: "certainly a demonstration of democracy in action".)<sup>29</sup> Ironically, Macapagal had been the bitterest objector to American intervention in the Magsaysay election in 1953, quoting time and again from the Philippine law that "No foreigner shall aid any candidate directly or indirectly or take part in or influence in any manner any election."<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps even more ironic, in 1957 the Philippine government, at American urging, adopted an anti-subversion law which prohibited organizations which have the intent of turning the Philippines over to "the control of a foreign power".<sup>31</sup>

By 1953 the Huks were scattered and demoralized, no longer a serious threat, although their death would be distributed over the next few years. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent their decline was due to traditional military force, or to Lansdale's more unorthodox methods, or to the eventual debilitation of many of the Huks from malnutrition and disease, brought on by the impoverishment of the peasantry; long before the end, many Huks were also lacking weapons, proper military equipment, even sufficient ammunition, bringing into question the oft-repeated charge of Soviet and Chinese aid to them made by Philippine and American authorities.<sup>32</sup>

"Since the destruction of Huk military power," noted George Taylor, "the social and political program that made the accomplishment possible has to a large extent fallen by the wayside."<sup>33</sup>

Fortress America, however, was securely in place in south-east Asia. From the Philippines would be launched American air and sea actions against Korea and China, Vietnam and Indonesia. The Philippine government would send combat forces to fight alongside the United States in Vietnam and Korea. On the islands' bases, the technology and art of counter-insurgency warfare would be imparted to the troops of America's other allies in the Pacific.



continued to genuinely call for unification on a regular basis.<sup>1</sup> That Korea was still one country, with unification still the goal, at the time the war began, was underscored by the chief US delegate to the UN, Warren Austin, in a statement he made shortly afterwards:

## 5. Korea 1945-1953 Was it all what it appeared to be?

To die for an idea; it is unquestionably noble. But how much nobler it would be if men died for ideas that were true.  
H.L. Mencken, 1919

The artificial barrier which has divided North and South Korea has no basis for existence either in law or in reason. Neither the United Nations, its Commission on Korea, nor the Republic of Korea [South Korea] recognizes such a line. Now the North Koreans, by armed attack upon the Republic of Korea, have denied the reality of any such line.<sup>2</sup>

The two sides had been clashing across the Parallel for several years. What happened on that fateful day in June could thus be regarded as no more than the escalation of an ongoing civil war. The North Korean Government has claimed that in 1949 alone, the South Korean army or police perpetrated 2,617 armed incursions into the north to carry out murder, kidnapping, pillage and arson for the purpose of causing social disorder and unrest, as well as to increase the combat capabilities of the invaders. At times, stated the Pyongyang government, thousands of soldiers were involved in a single battle with many casualties resulting.<sup>3</sup>

A State Department official, Ambassador-at-large Philip C. Jessup, speaking in April 1950, put it this way:

There is constant fighting between the South Korean Army and bands that infiltrate the country from the North. There are very real battles, involving perhaps one or two thousand men. When you go to this boundary, as I did . . . you see troop movements, fortifications, and prisoners of war.<sup>4</sup>

Seen in this context, the question of who fired the first shot on 25 June 1950 takes on a much reduced air of significance. As it is, the North Korean version of events is that their invasion was provoked by two days of bombardment by the South Koreans, on the 23rd and 24th, followed by a surprise South Korean attack across the border on the 25th against the western town of Haeju and other places. Announcement of the southern attack was broadcast over the north's radio later in the morning of the 25th.

Contrary to general belief at the time, no United Nations group — neither the UN Military Observer Group in the field nor the UN Commission on Korea in Seoul — witnessed, or claimed to have witnessed, the outbreak of hostilities. The Observer Group's field trip along the Parallel ended on 23 June. Its statements about what took place afterward are either speculation or based on information received from the South Korean government or the US military.

Moreover, early in the morning of the 26th, the South Korean Office of Public Information announced that southern forces had indeed captured the northern town of Haeju. The announcement stated that the attack had occurred that same morning, but an American military status report as of nightfall on the 25th notes that all southern territory west of the Imjin-River had been lost to a depth of at least three miles inside the border *except* in the area of the Haeju "counter attack".

How is it that the Korean War escaped the protests which surrounded the war in Vietnam? Everything we've come to love and cherish about Vietnam had its forerunner in Korea: the support of a corrupt tyranny, the atrocities, the mass slaughter of civilians, the cities and villages laid to waste, the calculated management of the news, the sabotaging of peace talks. But the American people were convinced that the war was an unambiguous case of one country invading another without provocation. A case of the bad guys attacking the good guys who were being saved by the even better guys; none of the historical, political and moral uncertainty that was the dilemma of Vietnam. The Korean War was seen to have begun in a specific manner: North Korea attacked South Korea in the early morning of 25 June 1950; while Vietnam . . . no one seemed to know how it all began, or when, or why.

And there was little in the way of accusations about American "imperialism" in Korea. The United States, after all, was fighting as part of a United Nations Army. What was there to protest about? (Another difference was the epidemic of McCarthyism, then so prevalent, which served to inhibit protest.)

There were, in fact, rather different interpretations to be made of what the war was all about and how it was being conducted, but these quickly succumbed to the heat of war fever.

Shortly after the close of the Second World War, the Soviet Union and the United States occupied Korea in order to expel the defeated Japanese. A demarcation line between the Russian and American forces was set up along the 38th Parallel. This line in no way had the explicit or implicit intention of establishing two separate countries, but the Cold War was soon to intrude. Both powers insisted that unification of north and south was the principal and desired goal. However, they also desired to see this carried out in their own ideological image, and settled thereby into a routine of proposal and counter-proposal, accusation and counter-accusation, generously intermixed with deviousness, and produced nothing in the way of an agreement during the ensuing years. Although both Moscow and Washington and their hand-picked Korean leaders were not always displeased about the division of the country (on the grounds that half a loaf was better than none), officials and citizens of both sides

In either case, such a military victory is extremely difficult to reconcile with the official Western account, maintained to this day, that has the North Korean army sweeping south in a devastating surprise attack, taking control of everything that lay before it, and forcing South Korean troops to evacuate further south.

Subsequently, the South Korean government denied that its capture of Haeju had actually taken place, blaming the original announcement, apparently, on an exaggerating military officer. One historian has ascribed the allegedly incorrect announcement to "an error due to poor communications, plus an attempt to stiffen South Korean resistance by claiming a victory". Whatever actually lay behind the announcement, it is evident that no reliance at all can be placed upon anything the South Koreans had to say concerning the start of the war.<sup>5</sup>

There were, in fact, reports in the Western press of the attack on Haeju which make no mention of the South Korean Government's announcement and which appear to be independent confirmations of the event. The London *Daily Herald*, in its issue of 26 June, stated that "American military observers said the Southern forces had made a successful relieving counter-attack near the west coast, penetrated five miles into Northern territory and seized the town of Haeju." This was echoed in *The Guardian* of London the same day: "American officials confirmed that the Southern troops had captured Haeju."

Similarly, the *New York Herald Tribune* reported, also on the 26th, that "South Korean troops drove across the 38th Parallel, which forms the frontier, to capture the manufacturing town of Haeju, just north of the line. The Republican troops captured quantities of equipment." None of the accounts specified just when the attack took place.

On the 25th, American writer John Gunther was in Japan preparing his biography of General Douglas MacArthur. As he recounts in the book, he was playing tourist in the town of Nikko with "two important members" of the American occupation, when "one of these was called unexpectedly to the telephone. He came back and whispered, 'A big story has just broken. The South Koreans have attacked North Korea!'" That evening, Gunther and his party returned to Tokyo where "Several officers met us at the station to tell us correctly and with much amplification what had happened . . . there was no doubt whatever that North Korea was the aggressor."<sup>6</sup>

And the telephone call? Gunther explains: "The message may have been garbled in transmission. [Another error in communication!] Nobody knew anything much at headquarters the first few hours, and probably people were taken in by the blatant, corrosive lies of the North Korean radio."<sup>6</sup>

There is something a little incongruous about the picture of American military and diplomatic personnel, practising anti-Communists each one, being taken in on so important a matter by Communist lies — blatant ones no less.

The head of South Korea, Syngman Rhee, may have had good reason for provoking a full-scale war, apart from his oft-expressed desire and readiness to

compel the unification of Korea by force.\* On 30 May 1950, elections for the National Assembly were held in the South in which Rhee's party suffered a heavy setback and lost control of the assembly. Like countless statesmen before and after him, Rhee may have decided to play the war card to rally support for his shaky rule. A labour adviser attached to the American aid mission in South Korea, Stanley Earl, resigned in July, expressing the opinion that the South Korean government was "an oppressive regime" which "did very little to help the people" and that "an internal South Korean rebellion against the Rhee Government would have occurred if the forces of North Korea had not invaded".<sup>7</sup>

Nikita Khrushchev, in his reminiscences, makes it plain that the North Koreans had contemplated an invasion of the South for some time and he reports their actual invasion without any mention of provocation on that day. This would seem to put that particular question to rest. However, Khrushchev's chapter on Korea is a wholly superficial account. It is not a serious work of history, nor was it intended to be. As he himself states: "My memories of the Korean War are unavoidably sketchy." His chapter contains no discussion of any of the previous fighting across the border, nothing of Rhee's belligerent statements, nothing at all even of the Soviet Union's crucial absence from the UN which, as we shall see, allowed the so-called United Nations Army to be formed and intervene in the conflict. Moreover, his reminiscences as published, are an edited and condensed version of the tapes he made. A study based on a comparison between the Russian-language transcription of the tapes and the published English-language book reveals that some of Khrushchev's memories about Korea were indeed sketchy, but that the book fails to bring this out. For example, North Korean leader Kim Il-sung met with Stalin to discuss Kim's desire "to prod South Korea with the point of a bayonet". The book then states simply: "Kim went home and then returned to Moscow when he had worked everything out." The transcript, however, shows that what Khrushchev said was: "In my opinion, either the date of his return was set, or he was to inform us as soon as he finished preparing all of his ideas. Then, I don't remember in which month or year, Kim Il-sung came and related his plan to Stalin." (Emphasis added.)<sup>8</sup>

On 26 June, the United States presented a resolution before the UN Security Council condemning North Korea for its "unprovoked aggression". The resolution was approved, although there were arguments that "this was a fight between Koreans" and should be treated as a civil war, and a suggestion from the

\* On 26 June the *New York Times* reported that "on a number of occasions, Dr. Rhee has indicated that his army would have taken the offensive if Washington had given the consent." The newspaper noted also that before the war began, "The wartime talk strangely [had] almost all come from South Korean leaders."

Egyptian delegate that the word "unprovoked" should be dropped in view of the longstanding hostilities between the two Koreas.<sup>9</sup> Yugoslavia insisted as well that "there seemed to be lack of precise information that could enable the Council to pin responsibility", and proposed that North Korea be invited to present its side of the story.<sup>10</sup> This was not done. (Three months later, the Soviet foreign minister put forward a motion that the UN hear representatives from both sides. This, too, was voted down, by a margin of 46 to 6, because of North Korea's "aggression", and it was decided to extend an invitation to South Korea alone.)<sup>11</sup>

On the 27th, the Security Council recommended that members of the United Nations furnish assistance to South Korea "as may be necessary to repel the armed attack". President Truman had already ordered the US Navy and Air Force into combat by this time, thus presenting the Council with a *fait accompli*,<sup>12</sup> a tactic the US was to repeat several times before the war came to an end. The Council made its historic decision with the barest of information available to it, and all of it derived from and selected by only one side of the conflict. This was, as journalist I.F. Stone put it, "neither honorable nor wise". It should be kept in mind that in 1950 the United Nations was in no way a neutral or balanced organization. The great majority of members were nations very dependent upon the United States for economic recovery or development. There was no Third World bloc which today pursues a UN policy largely independent of the United States. And only four countries of the Soviet bloc were members at the time, none on the Security Council.<sup>13</sup>

Neither could Secretary-General Trygve Lie, of Norway, be regarded as neutral in the midst of cold war controversy. In a book he later wrote, Lie makes it only too clear that he was no objective outsider. The language he employs in his chapters on the Korean War is so heavily biased, emotive, and loaded, his charges against Communist countries so unsubstantiated, as to be more appropriate for a US State Department spokesperson than for a Secretary-General of the United Nations. Only a casual reading of Lie's chapters will impart the tenor of his bias and his manoeuvring on the Korean question.<sup>14</sup>

These resolutions were possible only because the Soviet Union was absent from the proceedings due to its boycott of the United Nations over the refusal to seat Communist China in place of Taiwan. If the Russians had been present, they undoubtedly would have vetoed the resolution. Their absence has always posed an awkward problem for those who insist that the Russians were behind the North Korean invasion. One of the most common explanations offered is that the Russians, as a CIA memorandum stated, wanted "to challenge the US specifically and test the firmness of US resistance to Communist expansion."<sup>15</sup> Inasmuch as the same analysis has been put forth by American political pundits for virtually every encounter between the United States and leftists anywhere in the world, before and since Korea, it would appear that the test has been going on for an inordinately long period and one can only wonder why the Soviets have not yet come to a conclusion.

"The finishing touch," wrote I.F. Stone, "was to make the 'United Nations' forces subject to MacArthur without making MacArthur subject to the United

Nations. This came on July 7 in a resolution introduced jointly by Britain and France. This is commonly supposed to have established a United Nations Command. Actually it did nothing of the sort."<sup>16</sup> The resolution recommended "that all members providing military forces and other assistance . . . make such forces and other assistance available to a *unified command under the United States*" (emphasis added). It further requested "the United States to designate the commander of such forces."<sup>17</sup> This would be the redoubtable MacArthur.

It was to be an American show. Military personnel of some 16 other countries took part in one way or another but, with the exception of the South Koreans, there could be little doubt as to their true status or function. Eisenhower later wrote in his memoirs that when he was considering US military intervention in Vietnam in 1954, also as part of a "coalition", he recognized that the burden of the operation would fall on the United States, but "the token forces supplied by these other nations, *as in Korea*, would lend real moral standing to a venture that otherwise could be made to appear as a brutal example of imperialism." (Emphasis added.)<sup>18</sup>

The war, and a brutal one it was indeed, was fought ostensibly in defence of the Syngman Rhee regime. Outside of books published by various South Korean governments, it is rather difficult to find a kind word for the man the United States brought back to Korea in 1945 after decades of exile in America during the Japanese occupation of his country. Flown into Korea in one of MacArthur's airplanes, Rhee was soon manoeuvred into a position of prominence and authority by the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). In the process, American officials had to suppress a provisional government, the Korean People's Republic, that was the outgrowth of a number of regional governing committees set up by prominent Koreans and which had already begun to carry out administrative tasks, such as food distribution and keeping order. The KPR's offer of its services to the arriving Americans was dismissed out of hand.

Despite its Communist-sounding name, the KPR included a number of conservatives; indeed, Rhee himself had been given the leading position of chairman. Rhee and the other conservatives, most of whom were still abroad when chosen, perhaps did not welcome the honour because the KPR, on balance, was probably too leftist for their tastes, as it was for the higher echelons of the USAMGIK. But after 35 years under the Japanese, any group or government set up to undo the effects of colonialism had to have a revolutionary tinge to it. It was the conservatives in Korea who had collaborated with the Japanese; leftists and other nationalists who had struggled against them; the make-up of the KPR necessarily reflected this, and it was reportedly more popular than any other political grouping.<sup>19</sup>

Whatever the political leanings or intentions of the KPR, by denying it any "authority, status or form",<sup>20</sup> the USAMGIK was regulating Korean political life as if the country were a defeated enemy and not a friendly state liberated from a common foe and with a right to independence and self-determination.

The significance of shunting aside the KPR went beyond this. John Gunther, hardly a radical, summed up the situation this way: "So the first — and

best — chance for building a united Korea was tossed away.<sup>21</sup> And Alfred Crofts, a member of the American military government at the time, has written that “A potential unifying agency became thus one of the fifty-four splinter groups in South Korean political life.”<sup>22</sup>

Syngman Rhee would be Washington’s man: eminently pro-American, rabidly anti-Communist, sufficiently controllable. His regime was one in which landlords, collaborators, the wealthy, and other conservative elements readily found a home. Crofts has pointed out that, “Before the American landings, a political Right, associated in popular thought with colonial rule, could not exist; but shortly afterward we were to foster at least three conservative factions.”<sup>23</sup>

Committed to establishing free enterprise, the USAMGIK sold off vast amounts of confiscated Japanese property, homes, businesses, industrial raw materials and other valuables. Those who could most afford to purchase these assets were collaborators who had grown rich under the Japanese, and other profiteers. “With half the wealth of the nation ‘up for grabs’, demoralization was rapid.”<sup>24</sup> While the Russians did a thorough house-cleaning of Koreans in the north who had collaborated with the Japanese, the American military government in the south allowed many collaborators, and at first even the Japanese themselves, to retain positions of administration and authority, much to the consternation of those Koreans who had fought against the Japanese occupation of their country.<sup>25</sup>

And while the north soon implemented widespread and effective land reform and at least formal equality for women, the Rhee regime remained hostile to these ideals. Two years later, it enacted a land reform measure, but this applied only to former Japanese property. A 1949 law to cover other holdings was not enforced at all, and the abuse of land tenants continued in both old and new forms.<sup>26</sup>

The public resentment against the US/Rhee administration aroused by these policies, as well as by very questionable elections\* and the suppression of the KPR, manifested itself in the form of frequent rebellions from 1946 to the beginning of the war, and even during the war. The rebellions were dismissed by the government as “communist-inspired” and repressed accordingly, but, as John Gunther observed, “It can be safely said that in the eyes of Hodge [the commander of US forces in Korea] and Rhee, particularly at the beginning, almost any Korean not an extreme rightist was a communist and potential traitor.”<sup>28</sup>

General Hodge evidently permitted US troops to take part in the repression. Mark Gayn, a correspondent in Korea for the *Chicago Sun*, wrote that American soldiers “fired on crowds, conducted mass arrests, combed the hills for suspects, and organized posses of Korean rightists, constabulary and police

mass raids.”<sup>29</sup> Gayn related that one of Hodge’s political advisers assured him (Gayn) that Rhee was not a fascist: “He is two centuries before fascism — pure Bourbon.”<sup>30</sup>

Describing the government’s anti-guerrilla campaign in 1948, pro-Western political scientist John Kie-Chiang Oh of Marquette University has written: “In these campaigns, the civil liberties of countless persons were often ignored. Frequently, hapless villagers, suspected of aiding the guerrillas, were summarily executed.”<sup>31</sup>

A year later, when a committee of the National Assembly launched an investigation of collaborators, Rhee had his police raid the Assembly: 22 people were arrested, of whom 16 were later found to have suffered either broken ribs, skull injuries or broken eardrums.<sup>32</sup>

At the time of the outbreak of war in June 1950, there were an estimated 14,000 political prisoners in South Korean jails.<sup>33</sup>

Even during the height of the war, in February 1951, reported Professor Oh, there was the “Koch’ang Incident”, again involving suspicion of aiding guerrillas, “in which about six hundred men and women, young and old, were herded into a narrow valley and mowed down with machine guns by a South Korean army unit.”<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the war, a continuous barrage of accusations was levelled by each side at the other, charging the enemy with engaging in all manner of barbarity and atrocity, against troops, prisoners of war, and civilians alike, in every part of the country (each side occupied the other’s territory at times), trying to outdo each other in a verbal war of superlatives almost as heated as the combat. In the United States this produced a body of popular myths, not unlike those emerging from other wars which are widely supported at home. (By contrast, during the Vietnam war the inclination of myths to flourish was regularly countered by numerous educated protestors who carefully researched the origins of the war, monitored its conduct, and publicized studies sharply at variance with the official version(s), eventually influencing the mass media to do the same.)

There was, for example, the consensus that the brutality of the war in Korea must be laid overwhelmingly on the doorstep of the Communists. The Koch’ang Incident mentioned above may be relevant to providing some counterbalance to this belief. Referring to the incident, the British Korea scholar Jon Halliday observed:

This account not only serves to indicate the level of political violence employed by the UN side, but also confers inherent plausibility on DPRK [North Korea] and Southern opposition accusations of atrocities and mass executions by the UN forces and Rhee officials during the occupation of the DPRK in late 1950. After all, if civilians could be mowed down in the South on suspicion of aiding (not even being) guerrillas — what about the North, where millions could reasonably be assumed to be Communists, or political militants?<sup>35</sup> (Emphasis in original.)

Oh’s account is but one of a number of reports of slaughter carried out by

\* So reluctant was Rhee to allow an honest election, that by 1950 he had become enough of an embarrassment to the United States for Washington officials to threaten to cut off aid if he failed to do so as well as improve the state of civil liberties.<sup>27</sup>

the South Koreans against their own people during the war. The *New York Times* reported a "wave of [South Korean] Government executions in Seoul" in December 1950,<sup>36</sup> René Cutforth, a correspondent for the BBC in Korea, later wrote of "the shooting without trial of civilians, designated by the police as 'communist'. These executions were done, usually at dawn, on any patch of waste ground where you could dig a trench and line up a row of prisoners in front of it."<sup>37</sup> And Gregory Henderson, a US diplomat who served seven years in Korea in the 1940s and 50s, has stated that "probably over 100,000 were killed without any trial whatsoever" by Rhee's forces in the south during the war.<sup>38</sup>

One of the North Korean charges was that following some of the massacres of civilians in the south, the Rhee government turned around and attributed them to northern troops.

One way in which the United States contributed directly to the war's brutality was by introducing a weapon which, although used in the last stage of World War II, and in Greece, was new to almost all observers and participants in Korea. It was called napalm. Here is one description of its effect from the *New York Times*.

A napalm raid hit the village three or four days ago when the Chinese were holding up the advance, and nowhere in the village have they buried the dead because there is nobody left to do so . . . The inhabitants throughout the village and in the fields were caught and killed and kept the exact postures they had held when the napalm struck — a man about to get on his bicycle, fifty boys and girls playing in an orphanage, a housewife strangely unmarked, holding in her hand a page torn from a Sears-Roebuck catalogue crayoned at Mail Order No. 3,811,294 for a \$2.98 'bewitching bed jacket — coral'. There must be almost two hundred dead in the tiny hamlet.<sup>39</sup>

The United States may also have waged germ warfare against North Korea and China, as was discussed earlier in the chapter on China.

Another widely-held belief in the United States during the war was that American prisoners in North Korean camps were dying off like flies because of Communist neglect and cruelty. The flames of this very emotional issue were fanned by the tendency of US officials to exaggerate the numbers involved. During November 1951, for example — long before the end of the war — American military announcements put the count of POW deaths at between 5,000 and 8,000.<sup>40</sup> However, an extensive study completed by the US Army two years after the war revealed that the POW death toll for the entire war was 2,730 (out of 7,190 held in camps; an unknown number of other prisoners never made it to the camps, being shot in the field because of the inconvenience of dealing with them in the midst of combat, a practise engaged in by both sides). The study concluded that "there was evidence that the high death rate was not due primarily to Communist maltreatment . . . it could be accounted for largely by the ignorance or the callousness of the prisoners themselves."<sup>41</sup> "Callousness"

refers here to the soldiers' lack of morale and collective spirit.\* Although not mentioned in the study, the North Koreans, on several occasions, claimed that many American POWs also died in the camps as a result of the heavy US bombing.

The study of course could never begin to catch up with all the scare headlines to which the Western world had been treated for three years. Obscured as well was the fact that several times as many communist prisoners had died in US/ South Korean camps — halfway through the war the official figure stood at 6,600<sup>43</sup> — though these camps did hold many more prisoners than those in the north.

The American public was also convinced, and probably still is, that the North Koreans and Chinese had "brainwashed" US soldiers. This story arose to explain the fact that as much as 30 percent of American POWs had collaborated with the enemy in one way or another, and "one man in every seven, or more than thirteen per cent, was guilty of serious collaboration — writing disloyal tracts . . . or agreeing to spy or organize for the Communists after the war."<sup>44</sup> Another reason the brainwashing theme was promoted by Washington was to increase the likelihood that statements by returning prisoners which questioned the official version of the war would be discounted.

In the words of Yale psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton, brainwashing was popularly held to be an "all-powerful, irresistible, unfathomable, and magical method of achieving total control over the human mind."<sup>45</sup> Although the CIA experimented for a decade or so after the war to develop just such a magic, neither they nor the North Koreans or Chinese before them ever possessed it. Brainwashing, said the Army study, "has become a catch phrase, used for so many things that it no longer has any precise meaning" and "a precise meaning is necessary in this case".<sup>46</sup>

The prisoners, as far as Army psychiatrists have been able to discover, were not subjected to anything that could properly be called brainwashing. Indeed, the Communist treatment of prisoners, while it came nowhere near fulfilling the requirements of the Geneva Convention, rarely involved outright cruelty, being instead a highly novel blend of leniency and pressure . . . The Communists rarely used physical torture . . . and the Army has not found a single verifiable case in which they used it for the specific purpose of forcing a man to collaborate or to accept their convictions.<sup>47</sup>

According to the study, however, some American airmen, of the 90 or so who were captured, were subjected to physical abuse in an attempt to extract confessions about germ warfare. This could reflect either a greater Communist resentment about the use of such a weapon, or a need to produce some kind of corroboration of a false claim.

\* It is to the Army's credit that much of the results of the study were not kept secret; the study, nonetheless, contains some anti-communist statements of the most bizarre sort: lying is often punished in China by death. . . . communists live like animals all their lives . . .<sup>42</sup>

American soldiers were instead subjected to political indoctrination by their jailors. Here is how the US Army saw it:

In the indoctrination lectures, the Communists frequently displayed global charts dotted with our military bases, the names of which were of course known to many of the captives. 'See those bases?' the instructor would say, tapping them on the chart with his pointer. 'They are American — full of war materiel. You know they are American. And you can see they are ringing Russia and China. Russia and China do not have *one* base outside their own territory. From this it's clear which side is the warmonger. Would America have these bases and spend millions to maintain them were it not preparing to war on Russia and China?' This argument seemed plausible to many of the prisoners. In general they had no idea that these bases showed not the United States' wish for war, but its wish for peace, that they had been established as part of a series of treaties aimed not at conquest, but at curbing Red aggression.<sup>48</sup>

The Chinese Communists, of course, did not invent this practise. During the American Civil War, prisoners of both the south and the north received indoctrination about the respective merits of the two sides. And in the Second World War, "democratization courses" were held in US and British POW camps for Germans, and reformed Germans were granted privileges. Moreover, the US Army was proud to state that Communist prisoners in American camps during the Korean War were taught "what democracy stands for".<sup>49</sup>

The predicted Chinese aggression manifested itself about four months after the war in Korea began. The Chinese entered the war after American planes had violated their air space on a number of occasions, had bombed and strafed Chinese territory several times (always "in error"), when hydro-electric plants on the Korean side of the border, vital to Chinese industry, stood in great danger, and US or South Korean forces had reached the Chinese border, the Yalu River, or come within a few miles of it in several places.

The question must be asked: How long would the United States refrain from entering a war being waged in Mexico by a Communist power from across the sea, which strafed and bombed Texas border towns, was mobilized along the Rio Grande, and was led by a general who threatened war against the United States itself? Four months? Or four hours?

American airpower in Korea was fearsome to behold. As would be the case in Vietnam, its use was celebrated in the wholesale dropping of napalm, the destruction of villages "suspected of aiding the enemy", bombing cities so as to leave no useful facilities standing, demolishing dams and dikes to cripple the irrigation system, wiping out rice crops. . . and in those moving expressions like "scorched-earth policy", "saturation bombing", and "operation killer".<sup>50</sup> "You can kiss that group of villages good-bye," exclaimed Captain Everett L. Hundley of Kansas City, Kansas after a bombing raid.<sup>51</sup>

"I would say that the entire, almost the entire Korean Peninsula is just a terrible mess," testified Major General Emmett O'Donnell before the Senate when the war was one year old. "Everything is destroyed. There is nothing standing worthy of the name."<sup>52</sup>

And here, the words of the venerable British military guide, *Brassey's Annual*, in its 1951 yearbook:

It is no exaggeration to state that South Korea no longer exists as a country. Its towns have been destroyed, much of its means of livelihood eradicated, and its people reduced to a sullen mass dependent upon charity and exposed to subversive influences. When the war ends no gratitude can be expected from the South Koreans, but it is to be hoped that the lesson will have been learned that it is worse than useless to destroy to liberate. Certainly, western Europe would never accept such a 'liberation'.<sup>53</sup>

The worst of the bombing was yet to come. That began in the summer of 1952 and was Washington's way of putting itself in a better bargaining position in the truce discussions with the Communists, which had been going on for a full year while the battles raged. The extended and bitter negotiations gave rise to another pervasive Western belief — that it was predominantly Communist intransigence, duplicity, and lack of peaceful intentions which frustrated the talks and prolonged the war. This is a lengthy and entangled chapter of the Korean War story, but one does not have to probe too deeply to discover the unremarkable fact that the barriers were erected by the anti-Communist side as well. Syngman Rhee, for example, was so opposed to any outcome short of total victory that both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations drew up plans for overthrowing him;<sup>54</sup> which is not to suggest that the American negotiators were not playing the oily arts and voicing the rubbery words; the last thing they wanted to be accused of was having allowed the commies to make suckers of them. So successful were they at this, that in November of 1951 we could read in the *New York Times*:

The unadorned way that an apparently increasing number of them [American soldiers in Korea] see the situation right now is that the Communists have made important concessions, while the United Nations Command, as they view it, continues to make more and more demands. . . . The United Nations truce team has created the impression that it switches its stand whenever the Communists indicate that they might go along with it.<sup>55</sup>

At one point during this same period, when the Communists proposed that a ceasefire and a withdrawal of troops from the combat line should take place while negotiations were going on, the United Nations Command reacted almost as if this were a belligerent and devious act. "Today's stand by the Communists," said the JUNC announcement, "was virtually a renunciation of their previously stated position that hostilities should continue during armistice talks."<sup>56</sup>

Once upon a time, the United States fought a great civil war in which the north attempted to reunite the divided country through military force. Did Korea or China or any other foreign power send in an army to slaughter Americans, charging Lincoln with aggression?

Why did the United States choose to wage full-scale war in Korea? Only a year earlier, in 1949, in the Arab-Israeli fighting in Palestine and in the India-Pakistani war over Kashmir, the United Nations, with American support, had intervened to mediate an armistice, not to send in an army to take sides and expand the fighting. And both these conflicts were less in the nature of a civil war than was the case in Korea. If the US/UN response had been the same in these earlier cases, Palestine and Kashmir might have wound up as the scorched-earth desert that was Korea's fate. What saved them, what kept the US armed forces out, was no more than the absence of a communist side to the conflict.

## 6. Albania 1949-1953

### The proper English spy

"To simultaneously plan and sabotage this ill-fated venture must have been a severe test of his energy and ingenuity," wrote one of Kim Philby's biographers.<sup>1</sup> The venture was the attempt, begun in 1949, by the United States and Great Britain to overthrow the pro-Soviet regime of Enver Hoxha through guerrilla-fomented uprisings, or as Philby himself has put it, somewhat more quaintly, "a clandestine operation to detach an East European country from the Socialist bloc".<sup>2</sup>

It ended in disaster, in part because the Russians had apparently been alerted by Philby, the proper Englishman who had gone to all the right schools and penetrated the highest ranks of British and American intelligence, though he had been a Soviet spy since the age of 21.

Philby had moved to Washington the year before to act as the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) liaison to the CIA. In that capacity he served as a co-director of the CIA-SIS task force engaged in planning the Albanian operation. The choice had fallen upon Albania because it was regarded as the most vulnerable of the socialist states, the smallest and the weakest, not sharing a border with the Soviet Union, isolated between a US-controlled Greece and a Yugoslavia that was a renegade from the Soviet bloc.

The task force began by recruiting scattered Albanian émigrés who were living in Italy, Greece and elsewhere. They were exposed to basic military training, with a touch of guerrilla warfare thrown in, at sites established on the

British island of Malta in the Mediterranean, in the American occupation zone of West Germany, and, to a lesser extent, in England itself.<sup>3</sup> "Whenever we want to subvert any place," confided Frank Wisner, CIA's head of covert operations, to Philby, "we find that the British own an island within easy reach."<sup>4</sup>

Intermittently, for some three and a half years, the émigrés were sent back into their homeland: slipping up into the mountains of Greece and over the border, parachuting in from planes which had taken off from bases in Western Europe, entering by sea from Italy. American planes and balloons dropped propaganda leaflets and goods as well, such items in scarce supply in Albania as flour, halvah, needles, and razor blades, along with a note announcing that they were a gift from the "Albanian National Liberation Front"<sup>5</sup> — another instance of the subtle "marketing" touch that the CIA, born and raised in America, was to bring to so many of its operations.

In outline, the plan, or the hope, was for the guerrillas to make for their old home regions and try to stir up anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments, eventually leading to uprisings. They were to distribute propaganda, obtain political, economic and military information, engage in sabotage, recruit individuals into cells, and supply them with equipment. Later infusions of men and material would expand these cells into "centers of resistance".<sup>6</sup>

Cold-war conventional wisdom dictated that the masses of Eastern Europe were waiting to be sparked into open rebellion for their freedom. Even if this were the case, the choice of ignition was highly dubious, for the guerrillas included amongst their numbers many who supported a reinstatement of the Albanian monarchy in the person of the exiled King Zog who had been allied to Mussolini, and others who had collaborated with the Italians or Nazis during their wartime occupations of Albania.

To be sure, there were those of republican and democratic leanings in the various émigré committees as well, but State Department papers, declassified some 30 years later, reveal that prominent Albanian collaborators played leading roles in the formation of these committees.\* These were individuals the State Department characterized as having "somewhat checkered" political backgrounds who "might sooner or later occasion embarrassment to this government". They were admitted to the United States over the Department's objections because of "intelligence considerations". One of these men was Hasan Dosti, Albania's minister of justice in the Italian occupation, whom the CIA was hoping would take a leading role in the expected future Albanian

\* We have thus seen that in the postwar world — in China, Italy, Greece, the Philippines, Korea and now Albania — the US worked closely with those who had collaborated with the Germans, the Japanese, and the Italian fascists, worked even with these former enemies themselves, and used them all against many who had supported the US during the war: Communists and others. The adhesive which bound the Americans and their new-found Axis allies together was of course anti-Communism. (See also the chapters on Germany, the Soviet Union and Vietnam.)

Government. Dosti later became the head of the US-sponsored National Committee for a Free Albania.<sup>7</sup>

It was in the name of this same committee that a powerful underground radio station began broadcasting inside Albania, calling for the liberation of the country from the Soviet Union. In early 1951, several reports came out of Albania of open organized resistance and uprisings.<sup>8</sup> To what extent these happenings were a consequence of the Western infiltration and agitation is impossible to determine. Overall, the campaign had little to show for its efforts. It was hounded throughout by logistical foul-ups, and the grim reality that the masses of Albanians greeted the émigrés as something less than liberators, either from fear of the harsh Hoxha regime, or because they supported the social changes taking place. Worst of all, the Albanian authorities usually seemed to know in which area the guerrillas would be arriving, and when.

Kim Philby was not the only potential source of disclosure. The émigré groups were almost certainly infiltrated, and careless talk indulged in by the motley Albanians could have contributed to the fiasco. Philby, referring to the CIA-SIS task force members' habit of poking fun at Albanians, wrote that: "Even in our more serious moments, we Anglo-Saxons never forgot that our agents were just down from the trees."<sup>9</sup>

So lax was security that *New York Times* correspondent Cyrus L. Sulzberger filed several dispatches from the Mediterranean area touching upon the intervention which required virtually no reading between the lines.<sup>10</sup> (The articles carried no attention-grabbing headlines, there was no public comment about them from Washington, no reporters asked government officials any embarrassing questions . . . ergo: a "non-event" for Americans — cf. Introduction.)

Despite one failure after another, and without good reason to expect anything different in the future, the operation continued until the spring of 1953, resulting in the death or imprisonment of hundreds of men. It was not simply the obsession with chopping off one of Stalin's fingers. Professional prestige and careers had been invested, a visible success was needed to "recoup past losses" and "justify earlier decisions."<sup>11</sup> And the men who were being lost were, after all, only Albanians, who spoke not a word of the Queen's English and did not yet walk upright properly.

There was, however, the danger of the action escalating into conflict with the Soviet Union. The Soviets did in fact send some new fighter planes to Albania, presumably in the hope that they could shoot down the foreign aircraft making drops.<sup>12</sup> The operation could not fail to remind Stalin, Hoxha, and the entire socialist bloc of another Western intervention 30 years earlier in the Soviet Union. It could only serve to make them yet more "paranoid" about Western intentions and convince them to turn the screw of internal security yet tighter, because "the capitalists may be back to finish the job". Indeed, every now and again over the ensuing years, Hoxha mentioned the American and British "invasion" and used it to justify his policy of isolation.<sup>13</sup>

## 7. Eastern Europe 1948-1956 Operation Splinter Factor

Jozef Swiatlo surfaced at a press conference in Washington on 28 September 1954. Swiatlo was a Pole, he had been a very important one, high up in the Ministry of Public Security, the secret police. The story went that he had defected in West Berlin the previous December while on a shopping trip, and now the State Department was presenting him to the world to clear up the mystery of the Fields, the American citizens who had disappeared in 1949. Swiatlo revealed that Noel Field and his wife Herta had been arrested in Hungary, and that brother Hermann Field had suffered the same fate in Poland at the hands of Swiatlo himself, all in connection with the trial of a leading Hungarian Communist. The State Department had already dispatched strong letters to the governments of Hungary and Poland.<sup>1</sup>

There is a more expanded and more sinister version of the Jozef Swiatlo story. This story has Swiatlo seeking to defect to the British in Warsaw back in 1948 at a time when he was already in his high security position. The British, for various reasons, turned his case over to the United States and, at the request of Allen Dulles, Swiatlo was told to remain at his post until further notice.

At this time Dulles was not yet Director of the CIA, but was a close consultant to the Agency, had his own men in key positions, and was waiting only until November for Thomas Dewey to win the presidential election and appoint him to the top position. (Harry Truman's surprising re-election postponed this for four years, but Dulles did become Deputy Director in 1951.)

Noel Field, formerly a State Department Foreign Service Officer, was a long-time Communist fellow-traveller, if not a party member in the United States or Europe. During the Second World War, his path converged with Dulles' in intrigue-filled Switzerland. Dulles was an OSS man, Field the representative of the Unitarian Church in Boston helping refugees from Nazi occupation. Field made it a point particularly to help Communist refugees, of which there were many, inasmuch as Communists were second only to Jews on the German persecution list. The OSS aided the operation financially; the Communists in turn were an excellent source of information about happenings in Europe of interest to Washington and its allies.

Toward the end of the war, Field induced Dulles to provide American support for a project which placed agents in various European countries to prepare the way for the advancing Allied troops. The men chosen by Field, unsurprisingly, were all Communists and their placement in certain Eastern



European countries helped them to get their hands on the reins of power long before non-Communist forces were able to regroup and organize themselves.

It could be concluded from this that Allen Dulles had been duped. Added to this was the fact that the OSS, under Dulles' direction and again with Field involved, had financed the publication of a clandestine newspaper inside Germany; anti-fascist and left-wing, the paper was called *Neues Deutschland*, and immediately upon liberation became the official newspaper of the East German Communist Party.

After the war these incidents served as jokes which intelligence services of both East and West could and did appreciate. Before long, the joke fell heavily upon Noel Field.

In 1949 when Field visited Poland he was regarded with grave suspicion. He was seen to have worked during the war in a position which could easily have been a front for Western espionage, a position which brought him into regular contact with senior Communist Party members; and he had, after all, worked closely with Allen Dulles, famous already as a spymaster, and the brother of John Foster Dulles, prominent in Washington official circles and already making his calls for the "liberation" of the Soviet bloc nations.

At the time of Field's arrival in Poland, Jozef Swiatlo was looking to implicate Jakub Berman, a high party and state official of whom Swiatlo was suspicious, and detested. It was his failure to convince the Polish president to act against Berman that reportedly drove Swiatlo to defect the year before. When Noel Field wrote to Berman asking his help in obtaining a job in Eastern Europe, Swiatlo learned of the letter and saw his chance to nail Berman.

But first Noel Field had to be established as an American spy. Given the circumstantial evidence pointing in that direction, that would not be too difficult for a man of Swiatlo's high position and low character. Of course, if Field really was working with US intelligence, Swiatlo couldn't very well be exposing him since the Polish security officer was now himself an American agent. Accordingly, he sent his first message to the CIA, describing his plan about Berman and Field and the harm it could do to the Communist Party in Poland. He concluded with: "Any objections?"

Allen Dulles had none. His reaction to Swiatlo's message was one of pleasure and amusement. The time had come to settle accounts with Noel Field. More importantly, Dulles saw that Swiatlo, using Noel Field, "the American spy" as a bludgeon could knock off countless leading Communist officials in the Soviet bloc. It could put the whole of the bloc into a state of acute paranoia and set off a wave of repression and Stalinist tyranny that could eventually lead to uprisings. Dulles called his plan: Operation Splinter Factor.

Thus it was that Jozef Swiatlo was directed to find spies everywhere in Eastern Europe. He would uncover American plots and British plots, "Trotskyist" conspiracies and "Titoist" conspiracies. He would report to Soviet secret-police chief Lavrenti Beria himself that at the centre of the vast network was a man named Noel Haviland Field.

Field was arrested and wound up in a prison in Hungary, as did his wife Herta when she came looking for him. And when his brother Hermann Field

sought to track down the two of them, he met the same fate in Poland.

Swiatlo was in a unique position to carry out Operation Splinter Factor. Not only did he have the authority and command, he had the files on countless Communist Party members in the bloc countries. Any connection they had had with Noel Field, anything that Field had done, could be interpreted to show the hand of American intelligence or an act of real or potential subversion of the socialist states. The Soviets, and Stalin himself, were extremely interested in the "Fieldists". Noel Field had known everyone who was anyone in the Soviet bloc.

Just in case the level of paranoia in the infant, insecure governments of Eastern Europe was not high enough, a CIA double agent would "corroborate" a vital piece of information, or introduce the right rumour at the right time; or the Agency's Radio Free Europe would broadcast certain tantalizing, seemingly-coded messages; or the CIA would direct the writing of letters from "East European expatriates" in the United States to leading Communists in their homelands, containing just the bit of information, or the phrase, carefully designed to lift the eyebrows of a security officer.

Many of the victims of Swiatlo's purges were people who had spent the war years in the West rather than in the Soviet Union and thus had crossed Field's path. These were people who tended to be more nationalist Communists, who wanted to put greater distance between their countries and the Soviet Union, as Tito had done, and who favoured a more liberal regime at home. Dulles brushed aside the argument that these were people to be supported, not eliminated. He felt that they were potentially the more dangerous to the West because if their form of Communism were allowed to gain a foothold in Eastern Europe then Communism might become respectable and accepted; particularly with Italy and France threatening to vote Communists into power, Communism had to be shown at its worst.

There were hundreds of trials all over Eastern Europe — "show trials" and lesser spectacles — in which the name of Noel Field played an important part. What Operation Splinter Factor began soon took on a life of its own: following the arrest of a highly-placed person, others fell under suspicion because they knew him or had been appointed by him; or any other connection to an arrested person might serve to implicate some unlucky soul.

Jozef Swiatlo had his counterpart in Czechoslovakia, a man firmly entrenched in the upper rungs of the Czech security apparatus. The man, whose name is not known, had been recruited by General Reinhard Gehlen, the former Nazi intelligence chief who went to work for the CIA after the war.

Czechoslovakia was the worst case. By 1951 an unbelievable 169,000 card-carrying members of the Czech Communist Party had been arrested — ten percent of the entire membership. There were tens of thousands more in Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Bulgaria. Hundreds were put to death, others died in prison or went insane.<sup>2</sup>

After Swiatlo defected in December 1953, East European intelligence services came to realize that he had been working for the other side all along. Four weeks after Swiatlo held his Washington press conference, the Polish Government announced that it was releasing Hermann Field because investigation had revealed that the charges which had been brought against him by "an American agent and provocateur", Jozef Swiatlo, were "baseless".<sup>3</sup> Field was paid \$50,000 for his imprisonment as well as having his convalescence at a sanatorium paid for.<sup>4</sup>

Three weeks later, Noel and Herta Field were released in Hungary. The government in Budapest stated that it could not justify the charges against them.<sup>5</sup> They were also compensated and chose to remain in Hungary.

Once Noel Field had been officially declared innocent, the cases of countless others in East Europe had to be reviewed. First in trickles, then in rushes, the prisoners were released. By 1956 the vast majority stood outside the prison walls.

Throughout the decade following the war, the CIA was fanning the flames of discontent in Eastern Europe in many ways other than Operation Splinter Factor. Radio Free Europe (RFE, cf. Soviet Union chapter), broadcasting from West Germany, never missed a (dirty) trick. In January 1952, for example, after RFE learned that Czechoslovakia was planning to devalue its currency, it warned the population, thus stimulating a nation-wide buying panic.<sup>6</sup> RFE's commentaries about various European Communists were described by Blanche Wiesen Cook in her study of the period, *The Declassified Eisenhower*. She wrote that the broadcasts:

involved a wide range of personal criticism, tawdry and slanderous attacks ranging from rumors of brutality and torture, to corruption, and to madness, perversion, and vice. Everything was used that could be imagined in order to make communists, whether in England or in Poland, look silly, undignified, and insignificant.<sup>7</sup>

One of the voices heard frequently over RFE on the subject of Communist obnoxiousness was none other than Jozef Swiatlo, who had earned the nickname of "Butcher" for his proclivity to torture. Needless to say, the born-again humanitarian made no mention of Splinter Factor or his double role, although some of his broadcasts reportedly shook up the Polish security system for the better.<sup>8</sup>

Any way the CIA could stir up trouble and nuisance . . . supporting opposition groups in Rumania<sup>9</sup> . . . setting up an underground radio station in Bulgaria<sup>10</sup> . . . dropping propaganda from balloons over Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary (on one day in August 1951 alone, 11,000 balloons carrying 13 million leaflets)<sup>11</sup> . . .

In 1955, Eastern Europeans could be found at Fort Bragg, North Carolina training with the Green Berets, learning guerrilla warfare tactics, hopefully to be used in their native lands.<sup>12</sup>

By the following year, hundreds of Hungarians, Rumanians, Poles and others were being trained by CIA paramilitary specialists at a secret installation in West Germany. When, in October 1956, the uprising in Hungary occurred, these men, according to the CIA, were not used because they were not yet ready,<sup>13</sup> but the Agency did send its agents in Budapest into action to join the rebels and help organize them.<sup>14</sup> In the meantime, RFE was exhorting the Hungarian people to continue their resistance, implying that American military assistance was on the way. It never came.

There is no evidence that Operation Splinter Factor contributed to the Hungarian uprising or to the earlier ones in Poland and East Germany. Nonetheless, the CIA could point to all the cold-war, anti-Communist propaganda points it had won because of the witch hunts in the East. A(n) (im)moral victory.

## 8. Germany 1950s Everything from juvenile delinquency to terrorism

Within a period of 30 years and two world wars with Germany, the Soviet Union suffered more than 40 million dead and wounded, and enormous devastation to its land; its cities were razed to the ground. At the close of the Second World War, the Russians were not kindly disposed toward the German people. With their own country to rebuild, they placed the reconstruction of Germany far down on their list of priorities.

The United States emerged from the war with relatively minor casualties and its territory completely unscathed. It was ready, willing and able to devote itself to its main priority in Europe: the building of an anti-Communist bulwark in the West, particularly in the strategic location of Germany.

In 1945, official American policy was explicitly "to bring home to the Germans that they could not escape the suffering they had brought upon themselves . . . (and) to control (the) German economy to . . . prevent any higher standard of living than in neighboring nations."<sup>15</sup>

"From the outset," wrote former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, US officials in Germany believed this plan "to be unworkable".<sup>16</sup>

Acheson did not explain what lay behind this prognosis, but its correctness soon became apparent for three distinct reasons: 1) Influential American business and financial leaders, some of them occupying important government positions, had too great a stake in a highly-industrialized Germany (usually dating back to before the war) to allow the country to sink to the depths that some American policy-makers advocated; 2) A revitalized West Germany

was seen as an indispensable means of combatting Soviet influence in the Eastern sector of the country, if not in all of Eastern Europe. West Germany was to become "the showcase of Western democracy" — dramatic, living proof of the superiority of capitalism over socialism; 3) In American conservative circles, and some liberal ones as well, wherein a Soviet invasion of Western Europe remained perpetually imminent, the idea of tying West Germany's industrial hands was one which came perilously close to being "soft on communism", if not worse.<sup>3</sup>

Dwight Eisenhower echoed this last sentiment when he later wrote:

Had certain officials in the Roosevelt administration had their way, Germany would have been far worse off, for there were those who advocated the flooding of the Ruhr mines, the wrecking of German factories, and the reducing of Germany from an industrial to an agricultural nation. Among others, Harry Dexter White, later named by Attorney General Brownell as one who had been heavily involved in a Soviet espionage ring operating within our government . . . proposed exactly that.<sup>4</sup>

Thus it was that the de-industrialization of West Germany met the same fate as de-militarization, as the United States poured in massive economic assistance: \$4 billion of Marshall Plan aid and an army of industrial and technical experts.

At the same time, the Soviet Union was pouring massive economic assistance *out* of East Germany. The Soviets dismantled and moved back home entire factories with large amounts of equipment and machinery, and thousands of miles of railroad track. When added to war reparations, the toll reached into the billions of dollars.

By the early 1950s, though social services, employment, and cultural life in East Germany were on a par or superior to that in West Germany, the Western sector had the edge in those areas of prosperity with the most sex appeal: salaries were higher, the eating was better, consumer goods more available, and the neon lights emblazoned the nights along the Kurfürstendamm.

American cold warriors, however, as if discontent with the game score or with leaving so much to chance, instituted a crude campaign of sabotage and subversion against East Germany designed to throw the economic and administrative machinery out of gear. The CIA and other US intelligence and military services in West Germany (with occasional help from the likes of British intelligence and the West German police) recruited, equipped, trained and financed German activist groups and individuals of West and East. Finding recruits for such a crusade was not difficult, for in post-war Germany, anti-communism lived on as the only respectable vestige of Nazism.

The actions carried out by these operatives — most of whom were associated with organizations with names like Fighting Group Against Inhumanity, Association of Political Refugees from the East, and the Investigating Committee of Freedom-minded Jurists of the Soviet Zone — ran the spectrum from juvenile delinquency to terrorism; anything "to make the commies look bad". It added up to the following remarkable record:<sup>5</sup>

- through explosives, arson, short circuiting, and other methods they damaged power stations, shipyards, a dam, canals, docks, public buildings, petrol stations, shops, a radio station, outdoor stands, public transportation.
- derailed freight trains, seriously injuring workers; burned 12 cars of a freight train and destroyed air pressure hoses of others.
- blew up road and railway bridges; placed explosives on a railway bridge of the Berlin-Moscow line but these were discovered in time — hundreds would have been killed.
- used special acids to damage vital factory machinery; put sand in the turbine of a factory, bringing it to a standstill; set fire to a tile-producing factory; promoted work slow-downs in factories; stole blueprints and samples of new technical developments.
- killed 7,000 cows of a co-operative dairy by poisoning the wax coating of the wire used to bale the cows' corn fodder.
- added soap to powdered milk destined for East German schools.
- raided and wrecked left-wing offices in East and West Berlin, stole membership lists; assaulted and kidnapped leftists and, on occasion, murdered them.
- set off stink bombs to disrupt political meetings.
- floated balloons which burst in the air, scattering thousands of propaganda pamphlets down upon unsuspecting East Germans.
- were in possession, when arrested, of a large quantity of the poison cantharidin with which it was planned to produce poisoned cigarettes to kill leading East Germans.
- attempted to disrupt the World Youth Festival in East Berlin by sending out forged invitations, false promises of free bed and board, false notices of cancellations; carrying out attacks on participants with explosives, firebombs, and special tyre-puncturing equipment; setting fire to a wooden bridge on a main motorway leading to the festival.
- forged and distributed large quantities of food ration cards — for example, for 60,000 pounds of meat — to cause confusion, shortages and resentment.
- sent out forged tax notices and other government directives and documents to foster disorganization and inefficiency within industry and unions.
- "gave considerable aid and comfort" to East Germans who staged an uprising on 17 June 1953; during and after the uprising, the US radio station in West Berlin, RIAS (Radio In the American Sector), issued inflammatory broadcasts into East Germany appealing to the populace to resist the government; RIAS also broadcast warnings to witnesses in at least one East German criminal case being monitored by the Investigating Committee of Freedom-minded Jurists of the Soviet Zone that they would be added to the committee's files of "accused persons" if they lied.

Although many hundreds of the American agents were caught and tried by East Germany, the ease with which they could pass-back and forth between the two sectors and infiltrate different enterprises without any language barrier

provided opportunities for the CIA unmatched anywhere else in Eastern Europe. These circumstances led, in May 1952, to the East Germans instituting the first tightening up of entry into the country from the West.

Throughout the 1950s, the East Germans and the Soviet Union repeatedly lodged complaints with the Soviets' erstwhile allies in the West about specific sabotage and espionage activities and called for the closure of the offices in West Germany they claimed were responsible, and for which they provided names and addresses. In December 1956, East Germany filed a lengthy and detailed formal protest with the United Nations charging the United States with "continually interfering in the internal affairs of the German Democratic Republic, and carrying on subversive activity in breach of the normal rules of international law".<sup>6</sup>

While staging their commando and fifth-column attacks upon East Germany, American authorities and their German agents were apparently convinced that the Soviet Union had belligerent designs upon West Germany. (A text-book case of projection?) On 8 October 1952, the Minister-President of the West German state of Hesse, Georg August Zinn, disclosed that the United States had created a secret civilian army in his state for the purpose of resisting a Russian invasion.

This force of between 1,000 and 2,000 men belonged to the so-called "Technical Service" of the German Youth Federation, the latter described by the *New York Times* as "a Right-wing youth group frequently charged with extremist activities" (a reference to the terrorist tactics described above). The stalwarts of the Technical Service were hardly youths, however, for almost all appeared to be between 35 and 50 and most, said Zinn, were "former officers of the Luftwaffe, the Wehrmacht and the S.S. [Hitler's Black-shirts]". For more than a year they had received American training in infantry weapons and explosives and "political instruction" in small groups at a secluded site in the countryside and at an American military installation.

The intelligence wing of the Technical Service, the state president revealed, had drawn up lists and card indexes of persons who were to be "put out of the way" when the Soviet tanks began to roll. These records, which contained detailed descriptions and intimate biographical information, were of some 200 leading Social Democrats (including Zinn himself), 15 Communists, and various others, all of whom were deemed "politically untrustworthy" and opponents of West German militarization. Apparently, support for peaceful co-existence and detente with the Soviet bloc was sufficient to qualify one for inclusion on the hit-list, for one man was killed at the training site, charged with being an "East-West bridge builder". It was this murder that led to the exposure of the entire operation.

The United States admitted its role in the creation and training of the guerrilla army, but denied any involvement in the "illegal, internal, and political activities" of the organization. But Zinn reported that the Americans had learned of the plotting in May and had not actually dissolved the group until

September, the same month that German Security Police arrested a number of the group's leaders. At some point, the American who directed the training courses, Sterling Garwood, had been "supplied with carbon copies of the card-entries". It appears that at no time did US authorities communicate anything of this matter to the West German Government.

As the affair turned out, those who had been arrested were quickly released and the United States thwarted any further investigation in this the American Zone of occupied Germany. Commented Herr Zinn: "The only legal explanation for these releases can be that the people in Karlsruhe [the Federal Court] declared that they acted upon American direction."<sup>7</sup>

To add to the furor, the national leader of the Social Democrats accused the United States of financing an opposition group to infiltrate and undermine his party. Erich Ollenhauer, whose name had also appeared on the Technical Service's list, implied that American "clandestine" agencies were behind the plot despite the disapproval of high-ranking US officials.<sup>8</sup>

The revelations about the secret army and its hit-list resulted in a storm of ridicule and denunciation falling upon the United States from many quarters in West Germany. In particular, the delicious irony of the Americans working hand-in-glove with "ex"-Nazis did not escape the much-castigated German people.

## 9. Iran 1953 Making it safe for the King of Kings

"So this is how we get rid of that madman Mossadegh," announced John Foster Dulles to a group of top Washington policy makers one day in June 1953.<sup>1</sup> The Secretary of State held in his hand a plan of operation to overthrow the prime minister of Iran prepared by Kermit (Kim) Roosevelt of the CIA. There was scarcely any discussion among the high-powered men in the room, no probing questions, no legal or ethical issues raised.

"This was a grave decision to have made," Roosevelt later wrote. "It involved tremendous risk. Surely it deserved thorough examination, the closest consideration, somewhere at the very highest level. It had not received such thought at this meeting. In fact, I was morally certain that almost half of those present, if they had felt free or had the courage to speak, would have opposed the undertaking."<sup>2</sup>

Roosevelt, the grandson of Theodore and distant cousin of Franklin, was expressing surprise more than disappointment at glimpsing American foreign policy-making undressed.

The original initiative to oust Mossadegh had come from the British, for the elderly Iranian leader had spearheaded the parliamentary movement to nationalize the British-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), the sole oil company operating in Iran. In March 1951, the bill for nationalization was passed, and at the end of April Mossadegh was elected prime minister by a large majority of parliament. On 1 May, nationalization went into effect. The Iranian people, Mossadegh declared, "were opening a hidden treasure upon which lies a dragon".<sup>3</sup>

As the prime minister had anticipated, the British did not take the nationalization gracefully, although it was supported unanimously by the Iranian parliament and by the overwhelming majority of the Iranian people for reasons of both economic justice and national pride. The Mossadegh government tried to do all the right things to placate the British: it offered to set aside 25% of the net profits of the oil operation as compensation; it guaranteed the safety and the jobs of the British employees; it offered to sell its oil without disturbance to the tidy control system so dear to the hearts of the international oil giants. But the British would have none of it. What they wanted was their oil company back. And they wanted Mossadegh's head. A servant does not affront his lord with impunity.

A military show of force by the British navy was followed by a ruthless international economic blockade and boycott, and a freezing of Iranian assets which brought Iran's oil exports and foreign trade to a virtual standstill, plunged the already impoverished country into near destitution, and made payment of any compensation impossible. Nonetheless, and long after the British had moved to oust Mossadegh, they demanded compensation not only for the physical assets of the AIOC, but for the value of their enterprise in developing the oil fields; a request impossible to meet, and, in the eyes of Iranian nationalists, something which decades of huge British profits had paid for many times over.

The British attempt at economic strangulation of Iran could not have got off the ground without the active co-operation and support of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations and American oil companies. At the same time, the Truman administration argued with the British that Mossadegh's collapse could open the door to the proverbial communist takeover.<sup>4</sup> When the British were later expelled from Iran, however, they had no alternative but to turn to the United States for assistance in toppling Mossadegh. In November 1952, the Churchill government approached Roosevelt, the *de facto* head of the CIA's Middle East division, who told the British that he felt that there was "no chance to win approval from the outgoing administration of Truman and Acheson. The new Republicans, however, might be quite different."<sup>5</sup>

John Foster Dulles was certainly different. The apocalyptic anti-communist saw in Dr Mohammed Mossadegh the epitome of all that he detested in the Third World: unequivocal neutralism in the cold war, tolerance of Communists, and disrespect for free enterprise, as demonstrated by the oil nationalization. (By a curious twist of this morality, the fact that Great Britain in recent years had nationalized several of its own basic industries was apparently not at all disturbing.)

The Iranian leader was indeed an eccentric. And when the Secretary of State considered further that Iran was a nation exceedingly rich in the liquid gold, and that it shared a border with the Soviet Union more than 1,000 miles long, he was not unduly plagued by indecision as to whether Mossadegh should finally retire from public life.

As matters turned out, the overthrow of the Iranian prime minister in August 1953 was an American-only operation. Twenty-six years later, Kermit Roosevelt took the unusual step of writing a book about how he and the CIA carried through the operation. He called his book *Countercoup* to press home the idea that the CIA coup was staged only to prevent a takeover of power by the Iranian Communist Party (The Tudeh) closely backed by the Soviet Union. Roosevelt was thus arguing that Mossadegh had to be removed to prevent a Communist takeover, whereas the Truman administration had felt that Mossadegh had to be kept in power to prevent one.

It would be incorrect to state that Roosevelt offers little evidence to support his thesis of the Communist danger. It would be more precise to say that he offers *no* evidence at all. Instead, the reader is subjected to mere assertions of the thesis which are stated over and over, apparently in the belief that enough repetition will convince even the most sceptical. Thus are we treated to variations on the theme such as the following:

"The Soviet threat (was) indeed genuine, dangerous and imminent" ... Mossadegh "had formed an alliance" with the Soviet Union to oust the Shah ... "the obvious threat of Russian takeover" ... "the alliance between (Mossadegh) and the Russian-dominated Tudeh was taking on a threatening shape" ... Mossadegh's "increasing dependence on the Soviet Union" ... "the hand of the Tudeh, and behind them the Russians, is showing more openly every day" ... "Russian backing of the Tudeh and Tudeh backing of (Mossadegh) became ever more obvious" ... the Soviet Union was "ever more active in Iran. Their control over Tudeh leadership was growing stronger all the time. It was exercised often and, to our eyes, with deliberate ostentation" ...<sup>6</sup>

But none of this subversive and threatening activity was, apparently, ever open, obvious, or ostentatious enough to provide Roosevelt with a single example he could impart to a curious reader.

In actuality, although the Tudeh Party more or less faithfully followed the fluctuating Moscow line on Iran, the relation of the party to Mossadegh was much more complex than Roosevelt and other cold-war chroniclers have made it out to be. The Tudeh felt very ambiguous about the wealthy, eccentric, land-owning prime minister who, nonetheless, was standing up to imperialism. On occasion it had supported his policies; more often it had attacked them bitterly, and in one instance, 15 July 1951, a Tudeh-sponsored demonstration was brutally suppressed by Mossadegh, resulting in some 100 deaths and 500 injured.

What, indeed, did Mossadegh have to gain by relinquishing any of his power to the Tudeh and/or the Soviet Union? The idea that the Russians even desired the Tudeh to take power is no more than speculation. There was just as much evidence, or as little, to conclude that the Russians, once again, were more

concerned about their relationship with Western governments than with the fate of a local Communist party in a country outside the Soviet domain.<sup>7</sup>

A secret State Department intelligence report, dated 9 January 1953, in the closing days of the Truman administration, stated that Mossadegh had not sought any alliance with the Tudeh, and that "The major opposition to the National Front [Mossadegh's governing coalition] arises from the vested interests, on the one hand, and the Tudeh Party on the other."<sup>8</sup>

The Tudeh Party had been declared illegal in 1949 and Mossadegh had not lifted that ban although he allowed the party to operate openly, at least to some extent because of his democratic convictions, and had appointed some Tudeh sympathizers to government posts.

Many of the Tudeh's objectives paralleled those espoused by the National Front, the State Department report observed, but "An open Tudeh move for power . . . would probably unite independents and non-Communists of all political leanings and would result . . . in energetic efforts to destroy Tudeh by force."<sup>9</sup>

The National Front itself was a coalition of highly diverse political and religious elements including right-wing anti-communists, held together by Mossadegh's personality and by nationalistic sentiments, particularly in regard to the nationalization of oil.

In 1979, when he was asked about this State Department report, Roosevelt replied: "I don't know what to make of that . . . Loy Henderson [US ambassador to Iran in 1953] thought that there was a serious danger that Mossadegh was going to, in effect, place Iran under Soviet domination."<sup>10</sup> Henderson, as we shall see in the Middle East chapter, was a man given to alarmist statements about "communist takeovers".

One can but wonder what Roosevelt, or anyone else, made of a statement by John Foster Dulles before a Senate committee in July 1953, when the operation to oust Mossadegh was already in process. The Secretary of State, the press reported, testified "that there was 'no substantial evidence' to indicate that Iran was cooperating with Russia. On the whole," he added, "Moslem opposition to communism is predominant, although at times the Iranian Government appears to rely for support on the Tudeh party, which is communistic."<sup>11</sup>

The young Shah of Iran had been relegated to little more than a passive role by Mossadegh and the Iranian political process. His power had been whittled away to the point where he was "incapable of independent action", noted the State Department intelligence report. Mossadegh was pressing for control of the armed forces and more say over expenditures of the royal court, and the inexperienced and indecisive Shah — the "King of Kings" — was reluctant to openly oppose the prime minister because of the latter's popularity.

The actual sequence of events instigated by Roosevelt which culminated in the Shah's ascendancy appears rather simple in hindsight, even ingenious, and owed not a little to luck. The first step was to reassure the Shah that Eisenhower and Churchill were behind him in his struggle for power with Mossadegh and

were willing to provide whatever military and political support he needed. Roosevelt did not actually know what Eisenhower felt, or even knew, about the operation, and went so far as to fabricate a message from the president to the Shah expressing his encouragement.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, the Shah was persuaded to issue royal decrees dismissing Mossadegh as prime minister and replacing him with one Fazlollah Zahedi, a general who had been imprisoned during the war by the British for collaboration with the Nazis. (To what extent his collaboration sprang from sympathy towards the Germans, and to what extent from hostility towards the British and Russian occupation of Iran is not known.)<sup>13</sup>

Late in the night of 14/15 August, the Shah's emissary delivered the royal decree to Mossadegh's home, which was guarded by troops. Not surprisingly, he was received very coolly and did not get in to see the prime minister. Instead, he was obliged to leave the decree with a servant who signed a receipt for the piece of paper dismissing his master from power. Equally unsurprising, Mossadegh did not abdicate. The prime minister, who maintained that only parliament could dismiss him, delivered a radio broadcast the following morning in which he stated that the Shah, encouraged by "foreign elements", had attempted a *coup d'état*.<sup>14</sup> Mossadegh then declared that he was, therefore, compelled to take full power unto himself. He denounced Zahedi as a traitor and sought to have him arrested, but the general had been hidden by Roosevelt's team.

The Shah, fearing that all was lost, fled with his queen to Rome via Baghdad without so much as packing a suitcase. Undeterred, Roosevelt went ahead and directed the mimeographing of copies of the royal decrees for distribution to the public, and sent two of his Iranian agents to important military commanders to seek their support. It appears that this crucial matter was left to the last minute, almost as an afterthought. Indeed, one of the two Iranians had been recruited for the cause only the same day, and it was only he who succeeded in winning a commitment of military support from an Iranian colonel who had tanks and armoured cars under his command.

Beginning on 16 August, demonstrations supporting Mossadegh and attacking the Shah and the United States broke out in the capital city, Tehran. Roosevelt characterized the demonstrators simply as "the Tudeh, with strong Russian encouragement",<sup>15</sup> once again failing to offer any evidence to support his assertion. The *New York Times* referred to the demonstrators as "Tudeh partisans and Nationalist extremists",<sup>16</sup> the latter term being one which could have applied to individuals comprising a wide range of political leanings.

During the demonstrations, the Tudeh raised their familiar demand for the creation of a democratic republic; they appealed to Mossadegh to form a united front and to provide them with arms to defend against the coup, but the prime minister refused.<sup>17</sup> Instead, on 18 August the prime minister ordered the police and army to put an end to the demonstrations, which they did with considerable force. According to the accounts of Roosevelt and Ambassador Henderson, Mossadegh took this step as a result of a meeting with Henderson in which the ambassador complained of the extreme harassment being suffered

by US citizens at the hands of the Iranians. It is left unclear by both men how much of this harassment was real and how much manufactured by them for the occasion. In any event, Henderson told Mossadegh that unless it ceased, he would be obliged to order all Americans to leave Iran at once. Mossadegh, says Henderson, begged him not to do this for an American evacuation would make it appear that his government was not able to control the country, although at the same time the prime minister accused the CIA of being behind the issuance of the royal decrees.<sup>18</sup> (The Tudeh newspaper at this time was demanding the expulsion of "interventionist" American diplomats.)<sup>19</sup>

Whatever Mossadegh's motivation, his action was again in sharp contradiction to the idea that he was in alliance with the Tudeh or that the party was in a position to grab the reins of power — it did not take to the streets again. The following day, 19 August, Roosevelt's Iranian agents staged a parade through Teheran. With a fund of some one million dollars having been established in a safe in the American embassy, the "extremely competent professional organizers", as Roosevelt called them, had no difficulty in buying themselves a mob, probably using but a fraction of the fund. (The various accounts of the CIA role in Iran have the Agency spending from \$10,000 to \$19 million to overthrow Mossadegh. The larger amounts are based on reports that the CIA engaged in heavy bribery of members of parliament and other influential Iranians to enlist their support against the prime minister.)<sup>20</sup>

Soon a line of people could be seen coming out of the ancient bazaar, led by circus and athletic performers to attract the public. The marchers were waving banners, shouting "Long live the Shah!" Along the edges of the procession, men were passing out Iranian currency adorned with a portrait of the Shah.

The demonstrators gathered followers as they went, people joining and picking up the chants, undoubtedly for a myriad of personal and political reasons. The balance of psychology had swung against Mossadegh.

Along the way, some marchers broke ranks to attack the offices of pro-Mossadegh newspapers and political parties, Tudeh and government offices. . . . presently, a voice broke in over the radio in Teheran announcing that "The Shah's instruction that Mossadegh be dismissed has been carried out. The new Prime Minister, Fazlollah Zahedi, is now in office. And His Imperial Majesty is on his way home!"<sup>21</sup>

This was a lie, or a "pre-truth" as Roosevelt suggested. Only then did he go to fetch Zahedi from his hiding place. On the way, he happened to run into the commander of the air force who was among the marching throng. Roosevelt told the officer to get hold of a tank in which to carry Zahedi to Mossadegh's house in proper fashion.

Kermit Roosevelt would have the reader believe that at this point it was all over but the shouting and the champagne he was soon to uncork: Mossadegh had fled, Zahedi had assumed power, the Shah had been notified to return — a dramatic, joyful, and peaceful triumph of popular will. Inexplicably, he neglects to mention at all that in the streets of Teheran and in front of Mossadegh's house that day, a nine-hour battle raged, with soldiers loyal to Mossadegh on one side and those supporting Zahedi and the Shah on the other. Some 300 people were

reported killed and hundreds more wounded before Mossadegh's defenders finally succumbed.<sup>22</sup>

The US Military Mission in Iran also played a role in the fighting, as Major General George C. Stewart later testified before Congress:

Now, when this crisis came on and the thing was about to collapse, we violated our normal criteria and among the other things we did, we provided the army immediately on an emergency basis, blankets, boots, uniforms, electric generators, and medical supplies that permitted and created the atmosphere in which they could support the Shah. . . . The guns that they had in their hands, the trucks that they rode in, the armored cars that they drove through the streets, and the radio communications that permitted their control, were all furnished through the military defense assistance program. . . .<sup>23</sup>

The latter part of the General's statement would, presumably, apply to the other side as well.

"It is conceivable that the Tudeh could have turned the fortunes of the day against the royalists," wrote Kennett Love, a *New York Times* reporter who was in Teheran during the crucial days of August. "But for some reason they remained aloof from the conflict. My own conjecture is that the Tudeh were restrained by the Soviet Embassy because the Kremlin, in the first post-Stalin year, was not willing to take on such consequences as might have resulted from the establishment of a communist-controlled regime in Teheran."<sup>24</sup>

Love's views, contained in a paper he wrote in 1960, may well have been inspired by information received from the CIA. By his own admission, he was in close contact with the Agency in Teheran and even aided them in their operation.

Earlier in the year, the *New York Times* had noted that "prevailing opinion among detached observers in Teheran" was that "Mossadegh is the most popular politician in the country". During a period of more than 40 years in public life, Mossadegh had "acquired a reputation as an honest patriot".<sup>25</sup>

In July, the State Department Director of Iranian Affairs had testified that "Mossadegh has such tremendous control over the masses of people that it would be very difficult to throw him out."<sup>26</sup> (The gentleman was obviously not privy to his boss's scheme.)

A few days later, "at least 100,000" people filled the streets of Teheran to express strong anti-US and anti-Shah sentiments. Though sponsored by the Tudeh, the turnout far exceeded any estimate of party adherents.<sup>27</sup>

But popularity and masses, of the unarmed kind, counted for little, for in the final analysis what Teheran witnessed was a military showdown carried out on both sides by soldiers obediently following the orders of a handful of officers, some of whom were staking their careers and ambitions on choosing the winning side; others had a more political commitment. The *New York Times* characterized the sudden reversal of Mossadegh's fortunes as "nothing more than a mutiny . . . against pro-Mossadegh officers" by "the lower ranks" who

revered the Shah, had brutally quelled the demonstrations; the day before, and refused to do the same on 19 August, but instead turned against their officers.<sup>28</sup>

What connection Roosevelt and his agents had with any of these rebellious officers beforehand is not certain. In an interview given at about the same time that he finished his book, Roosevelt stated that a number of pro-Shah officers were given refuge in the CIA compound adjoining the US Embassy at the time the Shah fled to Rome.<sup>29</sup> But inasmuch as Roosevelt mentions not a word of this rather important and interesting development in his book, it must be regarded as yet another of his assertions to be approached with caution.

In any event, it may be that the 19 August demonstration organized by Roosevelt's team was just the encouragement and spark these officers were waiting for. Yet, if so, it further illustrates how much Roosevelt had left to chance.

In light of the questionable, contradictory, and seemingly devious statements which emanated at times from John Foster Dulles, Kermit Roosevelt, Loy Henderson and other American officials, what conclusions can be drawn about American motivation in the toppling of Mossadegh? The consequences of the coup may speak eloquently to this.

For the next 25 years, the Shah of Iran stood fast as the United States' closest ally in the Third World, to a degree that would have shocked the independent and neutral Mossadegh. The Shah literally placed his country at the disposal of US military and intelligence organizations to be used as a cold-war weapon, a window and a door to the Soviet Union: electronic listening and radar posts were set up near the Soviet border; American aircraft used Iran as a base to launch surveillance flights over the Soviet Union; espionage agents were infiltrated across the border; various American military installations dotted the Iranian landscape. Iran, along with South Korea and the Philippines, had become a vital link in the chain being forged by the United States to "contain" the Soviet Union. In a telegram to the British acting Foreign Secretary in September, Dulles said: "I think if we can in coordination move quickly and effectively in Iran we would close the most dangerous gap in the line from Europe to South Asia."<sup>30</sup> In February 1955, Iran became a member of the Baghdad Pact, set up by the United States, in Dulles' words, "to create a solid band of resistance against the Soviet Union".<sup>31</sup>

One year after the coup, the Iranian government completed a contract with an international consortium of oil companies which left Iran as the owner of the oil industry in name only, for obvious public consumption, and the consortium as the *de facto* owners. The sole ownership the British had enjoyed previously was reduced to 40%, another 40% now going to American oil firms, the remainder elsewhere. The British, however, received an extremely generous compensation for their former property.<sup>32</sup>

In 1958, Kermit Roosevelt left the CIA and presently went to work for Gulf Oil Co., one of the American oil firms in the consortium. In this position, Roosevelt was director of Gulf's relations with the US government and foreign

governments and had occasion to deal with the Shah. In 1960, Gulf appointed him a vice president.

Subsequently, Roosevelt formed a consulting firm, Downs and Roosevelt, which, between 1967 and 1970, reportedly received \$116,000 a year above expenses for its efforts on behalf of the Iranian government. Another client, the Northrop Corporation, a Los Angeles-based aerospace company, paid Roosevelt \$75,000 a year to aid in its sales to Iran, Saudi Arabia and other countries.<sup>33</sup> (See the Middle East chapter for Roosevelt's CIA connection with King Saud of Saudi Arabia.)

Another American member of the new consortium was Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey (now Exxon), a client of Sullivan and Cromwell, the New York law firm of which John Foster Dulles had long been the senior member. Brother Allen, Director of the CIA, had also been a member of the firm.<sup>34</sup> Syndicated columnist Jack Anderson reported some years later that the Rockefeller family, who controlled Standard Oil and Chase Manhattan Bank, "helped arrange the CIA coup that brought down Mossadegh". Anderson lists a number of ways in which the Shah demonstrated his gratitude to the Rockefeller family, including heavy deposits of his personal fortune in Chase Manhattan, and housing developments in Iran built by a Rockefeller family company.<sup>35</sup>

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, the standard "text-book" account of what took place in Iran in 1953 is that — whatever else one might say for or against the operation — the United States saved Iran from a Soviet/Communist takeover. Yet, during the two years of American and British subversion of a bordering country, the Soviet Union did nothing that would support such a premise. When the British Navy staged the largest concentration of its forces since World War II in Iranian waters,<sup>36</sup> the Soviets took no belligerent steps; nor when Great Britain instituted draconian international sanctions which left Iran in a deep economic crisis and extremely vulnerable, did the oil fields "fall hostage" to the Bolshevik Menace; this, despite "the whole of the Tudeh Party at its disposal" as agents, as Roosevelt put it.<sup>37</sup> Not even in the face of the coup, which clearly showed the imprint of foreign hands, did Moscow make a threatening move; neither did Mossadegh at any point ask for Russian help. One year later, however, the *New York Times* could editorialize that "Moscow . . . counted its chickens before they were hatched and thought that Iran would be the next 'People's Democracy'." At the same time, the newspaper warned, with surprising arrogance, that "underdeveloped countries with rich resources now have an object lesson in the heavy cost that must be paid by one of their number which goes berserk with fanatical nationalism."<sup>38</sup>

A decade afterward, Allen Dulles solemnly stated that Communism had "achieved control of the governmental apparatus" in Iran.<sup>39</sup> And a decade after that, the prestigious *Fortune* magazine, to cite one of many examples, kept the story alive by writing that Mossadegh "plotted with the Communist party of Iran, the Tudeh, to overthrow Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and hook up with the Soviet Union."<sup>40</sup>



And what of the Iranian people? What did being saved from communism do for them? For the preponderance of the population, life under the Shah was a grim tableau of grinding poverty, police terror, and torture. Thousands were executed in the name of fighting communism. Dissent was crushed from the outset of the new regime with American assistance. Kennett Love wrote that he believed that CIA officer George Carroll, whom he knew personally, worked with General Farhat Dadsetan, the new military governor of Teheran, "on preparations for the very efficient smothering of a potential dissident movement emanating from the bazaar area and the Tudeh in the first two weeks of November, 1953".<sup>41</sup>

The notorious Iranian secret police, SAVAK, created under the guidance of the CIA and Israel,<sup>42</sup> spread its tentacles all over the world to punish Iranian dissidents. According to a former CIA analyst on Iran, SAVAK was instructed in torture techniques by the Agency.<sup>43</sup> Amnesty International summed up the situation in 1976 by noting that Iran had the "highest rate of death penalties in the world, no valid system of civilian courts and a history of torture which is beyond belief. No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran".<sup>44</sup>

When to this is added a level of corruption that "startled even the most hardened observers of Middle Eastern thievery",<sup>45</sup> it is understandable that the Shah needed his huge military and police force, maintained by unusually large US aid and training programmes,<sup>46</sup> to keep the lid down for as long as he did. Said Senator Hubert Humphrey, apparently with some surprise:

Do you know what the head of the Iranian Army told one of our people? He said the Army was in good shape, thanks to U.S. aid — it was now capable of coping with the civilian population. That Army isn't going to fight the Russians. It's planning to fight the Iranian people.<sup>47</sup>

Where force might fail, the CIA turned to its most trusted weapon — money. To insure support for the Shah, the Agency began making payments to Iranian religious leaders, always a capricious bunch. The payments to the ayatollahs and mullahs began in 1953 and continued regularly until 1977 when President Carter abruptly halted them. One "informed intelligence source" estimated that the amount paid reached as much as \$400 million a year; others thought that figure too high, which it certainly seems to be. The cut-off of funds to the holy men, it is believed, was one of the things which precipitated the beginning of the end for the King of Kings.<sup>48</sup>

## 10. Guatemala 1953-1954 While the world watched

Whom do you turn to for help when the police are assaulting you? The old question.

To whom does a poor banana republic turn when a CIA army is advancing upon its territory and CIA planes are bombing the country?

The leaders of Guatemala tried everyone — the United Nations, the Organization of American States, other countries individually, the world press, even the United States itself, in the desperate hope that it was all a big misunderstanding, that reason would prevail in the end.

Nothing helped. Dwight Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles had decided that the legally-elected government of Jacobo Arbenz was "communist", therefore must go; and go it did, in June 1954.

In the midst of the American preparation to overthrow the government, the Guatemalan Foreign Minister, Guillermo Toriello, lamented that the United States was categorizing "as 'communism' every manifestation of nationalism or economic independence, any desire for social progress, any intellectual curiosity, and any interest in progressive liberal reforms."<sup>1</sup>

Toriello was close to the truth, but Washington officials retained enough contact with reality and world opinion to be aware of the inappropriateness of coming out against nationalism, independence or reform. Thus it was that Secretary of State Dulles asserted that Guatemalans were living under a "Communist type of terrorism"<sup>2</sup>. . . President Eisenhower warned about "the Communist dictatorship" establishing "an outpost on this continent to the detriment of all the American nations"<sup>3</sup>. . . the US Ambassador to Guatemala, John Puerifoy, declared that "We cannot permit a Soviet Republic to be established between Texas and the Panama Canal"<sup>4</sup>. . . others warned that Guatemala could become a base from which the Soviet Union might actually seize the Canal. . . Senator Margaret Chase Smith hinted, unmistakably, that the "unjustified increases in the price of coffee" imported from Guatemala were due to communist control of the country, and called for an investigation<sup>5</sup>. . . and so it went.

The Soviet Union could be excused if it was somewhat bewildered by all the rhetoric, for the Russians had scant interest in Guatemala, did not provide the country with any kind of military assistance, did not even maintain diplomatic relations with it, thus did not have the normally indispensable embassy from which to conduct such nefarious schemes. (During this period, the height of

McCarthyist "logic", there were undoubtedly those Americans who reasoned: "All the better to deceive us!"

With the exception of one occasion, the countries of Eastern Europe had as little to do with Guatemala as did the Soviet Union. A month before the coup, that is, long after Washington had begun preparation for it, Czechoslovakia made a single arms sale to Guatemala for cash, something the Czechs would no doubt have done for any other country willing to pay the price. (The weapons, it turned out, were, in the words of the *New York Times*, "worthless military junk".\*) The American propaganda mill made much of this transaction. Less publicized was the fact that Guatemala had to seek arms from Czechoslovakia because the United States had refused to sell it any since 1948, due to its reformist governments, and had pressured other countries to do the same despite Arbenz's repeated pleas to lift the embargo.<sup>7</sup>

Like the Soviets, Arbenz had reason to wonder about the American charges. The Guatemalan president, who took office in March 1951 after being elected by a wide margin, had no special contact or spiritual/ideological ties with the Soviet Union or the rest of the Communist bloc. Although American policymakers and the American press, explicitly and implicitly, often labelled Arbenz a communist, there were those in Washington who knew better, at least during their more dispassionate moments. Under Arbenz's administration, Guatemala had voted at the United Nations so closely with the United States on issues of "Soviet imperialism" that a State Department group occupied with planning Arbenz's overthrow concluded that propaganda concerning Guatemala's UN record "would not be particularly helpful in our case".<sup>8</sup> And a State Department analysis paper reported that the Guatemalan president had support "not only from Communist-led labor and the radical fringe of professional and intellectual groups, but also among many anti-Communist nationalists in urban areas".<sup>9</sup>

Nonetheless, Washington repeatedly and adamantly expressed its displeasure about the presence of communists working in the Guatemalan government and their active participation in the nation's political life. Arbenz maintained that this was no more than proper in a democracy, while Washington continued to insist that Arbenz was too tolerant of such people — not because of anything they had done which was intrinsically threatening or offensive to the US or Western civilization, but simply because they were of the species communist, well known for its infinite capacity for treachery. Ambassador Puerfroy — a diplomat whose suit might have been pinstriped, but whose soul was a loud check — warned Arbenz that US-Guatemalan relations would remain strained so long as a single communist remained on the public payroll.<sup>10</sup>

\* *Time* magazine pooh-poohed the newspaper's report and cited US military men giving a better appraisal of the weapons. Clearly, neither *Time* nor the military men could conceive that one member of the International Communist Conspiracy could do such a thing to another member.<sup>6</sup>

The centerpiece of Arbenz's programme was land reform. The need for it was clearly expressed in the all-too-familiar underdeveloped-country statistics: in a nation overwhelmingly rural, 2.2 percent of the landowners owned 70 percent of the arable land; the annual per capita income of agricultural workers was \$87. Before the revolution of 1944, which overthrew the Ubico dictatorship, "farm laborers had been roped together by the Army for delivery to the low-land farms where they were kept in debt slavery by the landowners."<sup>11</sup>

The expropriation of large tracts of uncultivated acreage which was distributed to approximately 100,000 landless peasants, the improvement in union rights for the workers, and other social reforms, were the reasons Arbenz had won the support of Communists and other leftists, which was no more than to be expected. When Arbenz was criticized for accepting Communist support, he challenged his critics to prove their good faith by backing his reforms themselves. They failed to do so, thus revealing where the basis of "their criticism lay."<sup>12</sup>

The party formed by the Communists, the Guatemalan Labor Party, held four seats in Congress, the smallest component of Arbenz's ruling coalition which commanded a total of 51 seats in the 1953-54 legislature.<sup>13</sup> Communists held several important sub-cabinet posts but none was ever appointed to the cabinet. In addition, there were Communists employed in the bureaucracy, particularly in the administration of land reform.<sup>14</sup>

Lacking anything of substance they could accuse the Guatemalan left of, Washington officials were reduced to condemnation by semantics. Thus, Communists, unlike normal human beings, did not take jobs in the government — they "infiltrated" the government. Communists did not support a particular programme — they "exploited" it. Communists did not back Arbenz — they "used" him. Moreover, communists "controlled" the labour movement and land reform — but what type of person is it who devotes himself in an underdeveloped country to furthering the welfare of workers and peasants? None other than the type that Washington calls "communist".

The basic idea behind the employment of such language was (and still is today) to deny the idea that communists could be people sincerely concerned about social change. American officials denied it to each other as well as to the world. Here, for example, is an excerpt from a CIA report about Guatemala, prepared in 1952 for the edification of the White House and the intelligence community:

Communist political success derives in general from the ability of individual Communists and fellow travellers to identify themselves with the nationalist and social aspirations of the Revolution of 1944. In this manner, they have been successful in infiltrating the Administration and pro-Administration political parties and have gained control of organized labor . . . [Arbenz] is essentially an opportunist whose politics are largely a matter of historical accident . . . The extension of [communist] influence has been facilitated by the applicability of Marxist 'cliches' to the 'anti-colonial' and social aims of the Guatemalan Revolution.<sup>15</sup>

The first plan to topple Arbenz was a CIA operation approved by President Truman in 1952, but at the eleventh hour, Secretary of State Dean Acheson persuaded Truman to abort it.<sup>16</sup> However, soon after Eisenhower became president, in January 1953, the plan was resurrected.

Both administrations were pressured by executives of United Fruit Company, much of whose vast and uncultivated land in Guatemala had been expropriated by the Arbenz government as part of the land reform programme. The company wanted nearly \$16 million for the land, the government was offering \$525,000, United Fruit's own declared valuation for tax purposes.<sup>17</sup>

United Fruit functioned in Guatemala as a state within a state. It owned the country's telephone and telegraph facilities, administered its only important Atlantic harbour and monopolized its banana exports. A subsidiary of the company owned nearly every mile of railroad track in the country. The fruit company's influence amongst Washington's power elite was equally impressive. On a business and/or personal level, it had close ties to the Dulles brothers, various State Department officials and congressmen, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, and others. Anne Whitman, the wife of the company's public relations director, was President Eisenhower's personal secretary. Under-secretary of State (and formerly Director of the CIA) Walter Bedell Smith was seeking an executive position with United Fruit at the same time he was helping to plan the coup. He was later named to the company's board of directors.<sup>18</sup>

Under Arbenz, Guatemala constructed an Atlantic port and a highway to compete with United Fruit's holdings, and built a hydro-electric plant to offer cheaper energy than the US-controlled electricity monopoly. Arbenz's strategy was to limit the power of foreign companies through direct competition rather than through nationalization, a policy not feasible of course when it came to the question of land. In his inaugural address, Arbenz stated that,

Foreign capital will always be welcome as long as it adjusts to local conditions, remains always subordinate to Guatemalan laws, cooperates with the economic development of the country, and strictly abstains from intervening in the nation's social and political life.<sup>19</sup>

This hardly described United Fruit's role in Guatemala. Amongst much else, the company had persistently endeavoured to frustrate Arbenz's reform programmes, discredit him and his government, and induce his downfall.

Arbenz was, accordingly, wary of multinationals and could not be said to welcome them into his country with open arms. This attitude, his expropriation of United Fruit's land, and his "tolerance of communists" were more than enough to make him a marked man in Washington. The United States saw these policies as being inter-related; that is, it was communist influence — not any economic or social exigency of Guatemalan life — which was responsible for the government's treatment of American firms.

In March 1953, the CIA approached disgruntled right-wing officers in the Guatemalan army and arranged to send them arms. United Fruit donated \$64,000 in cash. The following month, uprisings broke out in several towns but were quickly put down by loyal troops. The rebels were put on trial and revealed the fruit company's role in the plot, but not the CIA's.<sup>20</sup>

The Eisenhower administration resolved to do the job right the next time around. With cynical glee, almost an entire year was spent in painstaking, step-by-step preparation for the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. Of the major CIA undertakings, few have been as well documented as has the coup in Guatemala. With the release of many formerly classified government papers, the following story has emerged.<sup>21</sup>

Headquarters for the operation were established in Opa Locka, Florida, on the outskirts of Miami. The Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza lent/leased his country out as a site for an airstrip and for hundreds of men — Guatemalan exiles and US and Central American mercenaries — to receive training in the use of weapons and radio broadcasting, as well as in the fine arts of sabotage and demolition. Thirty airplanes were assigned for use in the "Liberation", stationed in Nicaragua, Honduras and the Canal Zone, to be flown by American pilots. The Canal Zone was set aside as a weapons depot from which arms were gradually distributed to the rebels who were to assemble in Honduras under the command of Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas before crossing into Guatemala. Soviet-marked weapons were also gathered for the purpose of planting them inside Guatemala before the invasion to reinforce US charges of Russian intervention. And, as important as arms, it turned out, hidden radio transmitters were placed in and around the perimeter of Guatemala, including one in the US Embassy.

An attempt was made to blow up the trains carrying the Czech weapons from portside to Guatemala City; however, a torrential downpour rendered the detonators useless, whereupon the CIA paramilitary squad opened fire on one train, killing a Guatemalan soldier and wounding three others; but the convoy of trains made it safely to its destination.

After the Czech ship had arrived in Guatemala, Eisenhower ordered the stopping of "suspicious foreign-flag vessels on the high seas off Guatemala to examine cargo".<sup>22</sup> The State Department's legal adviser wrote a brief which concluded in no uncertain terms that "Such action would constitute a violation of international law." No matter. At least two foreign vessels were stopped and searched, one French and one Dutch. It was because of such actions by the British, that the United States had fought the War of 1812.

The Guatemalan military came in for special attention. The US ostentatiously signed mutual security treaties with Honduras and Nicaragua, both countries hostile to Arbenz, and dispatched large shipments of arms to them in the hope that this would signal a clear enough threat to the Guatemalan military to persuade it to withdraw its support of Arbenz. Additionally, the US Navy dispatched two submarines from Key West, saying only that they were going "south". Several days later, the Air Force, amid considerable fanfare, sent three B-360 bombers on a "courtesy call" to Nicaragua.

The CIA also made a close study of the records of members of the Guatemalan officer corps and offered bribes to some of them. One of the Agency's clandestine radio stations broadcast appeals aimed at military men, as well as others, to join the liberation movement. The station reported that Arbenz was secretly planning to disband or disarm the armed forces and replace it with a people's militia. CIA planes dropped leaflets over Guatemala carrying the same message.

Eventually, at Ambassador Puerifoy's urging, a group of high-ranking officers called on Arbenz to ask that he dismiss all communists who held posts in his administration. The president assured them that the communists did not represent a danger, that they did not run the government, and that it would be undemocratic to dismiss them. At a second meeting, the officers also demanded that Arbenz reject the creation of the "people's militia".

Arbenz himself was offered a bribe by the CIA, whether to abdicate his office or something less is not clear. A large sum of money was deposited in a Swiss bank for him, but he, or a subordinate, rejected the offer.

On the economic front, contingency plans were made for such things as cutting off Guatemalan credit abroad, disrupting its oil supplies, and causing a run on its foreign reserves.<sup>23</sup> But it was on the propaganda front that American ingenuity shone at its brightest. Inasmuch as the Guatemalan government was being overthrown because it was communist, the fact of its communism would have to be impressed upon the rest of Latin America. Accordingly, the US Information Agency (USIA) began to place unattributed articles in foreign newspapers labelling particular Guatemalan officials as communist and referring to various actions by the Guatemalan government as "communist-inspired". In the few weeks prior to Arbenz's fall alone, more than 200 articles about Guatemala were written and placed in scores of Latin American newspapers.

Employing a method which was to become a standard CIA/USIA feature all over Latin America and elsewhere, as we shall see, articles placed in one country were picked up by newspapers in other countries, either as a result of CIA payment or unwittingly because the story was of interest. Besides the obvious advantage of multiplying the potential audience, the tactic gives the appearance that independent world opinion is taking a certain stand and further obscures the American connection.

The USIA also distributed more than 100,000 copies of a pamphlet entitled "Chronology of Communism in Guatemala" throughout the hemisphere, as well as 27,000 copies of anti-communist cartoons and posters. The American propaganda agency, moreover, produced three films on Guatemala, with predictable content, and newsreels favourable to the United States for showing free in cinemas.

Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York, a prelate possessed of anti-communism, a man who feared social change more than he feared God, was visited by the CIA. Would his Reverence arrange CIA contact with Archbishop Mariano Rossell Arellano of Guatemala? The Cardinal would be delighted. Thus it came to pass that on 9 April 1954, a pastoral letter was read

in Guatemalan Catholic churches calling to the attention of the congregations the presence in the country of a devil called communism and demanding that the people "rise as a single man against this enemy of God and country", or at least not rally in Arbenz's defence. To appreciate the value of this, one must remember that Guatemala's peasant class was not only highly religious, but that very few of them were able to read, and so could receive the Lord's Word only in this manner. For those who could read, many thousands of pamphlets carrying the Archbishop's message were air-dropped around the country.

In May, the CIA covertly sponsored a "Congress Against Soviet Intervention in Latin America" in Mexico City. The same month, Somoza called in the diplomatic corps in Nicaragua and told them, his voice shaking with anger, that his police had discovered a secret Soviet shipment of arms (which had been planted by the CIA) near the Pacific Coast, and suggested that the communists wanted to convert Nicaragua into "a new Korean situation". A few weeks later, an unmarked plane parachuted arms with Soviet markings on to Guatemala's coast.

On such fare as that dispensed by the American propaganda campaign have the people of Latin America dined for decades. By such tactics have they been educated about "communism".

In late January 1954 the operation appeared to have suffered a serious setback when photostat copies of Liberation documents found their way into Arbenz's hands. A few days later, Guatemala's newspapers published copies of correspondence signed by Castillo Armas, Somoza and others under banner headlines. The documents revealed the existence of some of the staging, training and invasion plans, involving, amongst others, the "government of the North".<sup>24</sup>

The State Department labelled the accusations of a US role "ridiculous and untrue" and said it would not comment further because it did not wish to give them a dignity they did not deserve. Said a Department spokesperson: "It is the policy of the United States not to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. This policy has repeatedly been reaffirmed under the present administration."

*Time* magazine gave no credence whatsoever to the possibility of American involvement in such a plot, concluding that the whole exposé had been "masterminded in Moscow".<sup>25</sup>

The *New York Times* was not so openly cynical, but its story gave no indication that there might be any truth to the matter. "Latin American observers in New York," reported the newspaper, "said the 'plot' charges savored of communist influence." This article was followed immediately on the page by one headed "Red Labor Chiefs Meet, Guatemalan Confederation Opens Its Congress".<sup>26</sup>

And the CIA continued with its preparations as if nothing had happened.

The offensive began in earnest on 18 June with planes dropping leaflets over Guatemala demanding that Arbenz resign immediately or else various sites would be bombed. CIA radio stations broadcast similar messages. That

afternoon, the planes returned to machine-gun houses near military barracks, drop fragmentation bombs and strafe the National Palace.

Over the following week, the air attacks continued daily — strafing or bombing ports, fuel tanks, ammunition dumps, military barracks, the international airport, a school, and several cities; nine persons, including a three-year-old girl, were reported wounded, an unknown number of houses were set afire by incendiary explosives. During one night-time raid, a tape recording of a bomb attack was played over loudspeakers set up on the roof of the US Embassy to heighten the anxiety of the capital's residents. When Arbenz went on the air to try and calm the public's fear, the CIA radio team jammed the broadcast.

Meanwhile, the Agency's army had crossed into Guatemala from Honduras and captured a few towns, but its progress in the face of resistance by the Guatemalan army was unspectacular. On the broadcasts of the CIA's "Voice of Liberation" the picture was different: the rebels were everywhere and advancing; they were of large numbers and picking up volunteers as they marched; war and upheaval in all corners; fearsome battles and major defeats for the Guatemalan army. Some of these broadcasts were transmitted over regular public and even military channels, serving to convince some of Arbenz's officers that the reports were genuine. In the same way, the CIA was able to answer real military messages with fake responses. All manner of disinformation was spread and rumours fomented; dummy parachute drops were made in scattered areas to heighten the belief that a major invasion was taking place.

United Fruit Company's publicity office circulated photographs to journalists of mutilated bodies about to be buried in a mass grave as an example of the atrocities committed by the Arbenz regime. The photos received extensive coverage. Thomas McCann of the company's publicity office later revealed that he had no idea what the photos represented: "They could just as easily have been the victims of either side — or of an earthquake. The point is, they were widely accepted for what they were purported to be — victims of communism."<sup>27</sup>

In a similar vein, Washington officials reported on political arrests and censorship in Guatemala without reference to the fact that the government was under siege (let alone who was behind the siege), that suspected plotters and saboteurs were the bulk of those being arrested, or that, overall, the Arbenz administration had a fine record on civil liberties. The performance of the American press in this regard was little better.

The primary purpose of the bombing and the radio broadcasts, as well as other propaganda, was to make it appear that military defences were crumbling, that resistance was futile, thus provoking confusion and division in the Guatemalan armed forces and causing some elements to turn against Arbenz. The psychological warfare conducted over the radio was directed by E. Howard Hunt, later of Watergate fame, and David Atlee Phillips, a newcomer to the

CIA. When Phillips was first approached about the assignment, he asked his superior, Tracy Barnes, in all innocence, "But Arbenz became President in a free election. What right do we have to help someone topple his government and throw him out of office?"

"For a moment," wrote Phillips later, "I detected in his face a flicker of concern, a doubt, the reactions of a sensitive man." But Barnes quickly recovered and repeated the party line about the Soviets establishing "an easily expandable beachhead" in Central America.<sup>28</sup>

Phillips never looked back. When he retired from the CIA over 20 years later, he founded the Association of Retired Intelligence Officers, an organization formed in the mid-1970s to counteract the flood of unfavourable publicity which was sweeping over the Agency at the time.

American journalists reporting on the events in Guatemala continued to exhibit neither an investigative inclination nor a healthy conspiracy mentality. But what was obscure to the US press was patently obvious to large numbers of Latin Americans. Heated protests against the United States broke out during this week in June in at least eleven countries and was echoed by the governments of Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile which condemned American "intervention" and "aggression".

*Life* magazine noted the events by observing that "world communism was efficiently using the Guatemalan show to strike a blow at the U.S.". It scoffed at the idea that Washington was behind the revolt.<sup>29</sup> *Newsweek* reported that Washington "officials interpreted" the outcry "as an indication of the depth of Red penetration into the Americas".<sup>30</sup> A State Department memo at the time, however, privately acknowledged that much of the protest emanated from non-communist and even pro-American moderates.<sup>31</sup>

On 21 and 22 June, Guatemalan Foreign Minister Toriello made impassioned appeals to the United Nations for help in resolving the crisis. American UN Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge tried to block the Security Council from discussing a resolution to send an investigating team to Guatemala, characterizing Toriello's appeals as communist manoeuvres. But under heavy pressure from UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, the Council was convened. Before the vote, while Lodge worked on the smaller nations represented on the Council, Eisenhower and Dulles came down hard on France and Great Britain, both of whom favoured the resolution. Said the President of the United States to his Secretary of State about Britain: "Let's give them a lesson."

As matters turned out, the resolution was defeated by five votes to four, with Britain and France abstaining, although their abstentions were not crucial inasmuch as seven votes were required for passage. Hammarskjöld was so upset with the American machinations, which he believed undercut the strength of the United Nations, that he considered resigning.

During this same period, the CIA put into practice a plan to create an "incident". Agency planes were dispatched to drop several harmless bombs on

Honduran territory. The Honduran government then complained to the UN and the Organization of American States, claiming that the country had been attacked by Guatemalan planes.<sup>32</sup>

Arbenz finally received an ultimatum from certain army officers: resign or they would come to an agreement with the invaders. The CIA and Ambassador Puerifoy had been offering payments to officers to defect, and one army commander reportedly accepted \$60,000 to surrender his troops. With his back to the wall, Arbenz made an attempt to arm civilian supporters to fight for the government, but army officers blocked the disbursement of weapons. The Guatemalan president knew that the end was near.

The Voice of Liberation meanwhile was proclaiming that two large and heavily armed columns of invaders were moving towards Guatemala City. As the hours passed, the further advance of the mythical forces was announced, while Castillo Armas and his small band had actually not progressed very far from the Honduran border. The American disinformation and rumour offensive continued in other ways as well, and Arbenz, with no one he could trust to give him accurate information, could no longer be certain that there wasn't at least some truth to the radio bulletins.

Nothing would be allowed to threaten the victory so near at hand: a British freighter docked in Guatemala and suspected of having arrived with fuel for Arbenz's military vehicles, was bombed and sunk by a CIA plane after the crew had been warned to flee. It turned out that the ship had come to Guatemala to pick up a cargo of coffee and cotton.

A desperate Toriello pleaded repeatedly with Ambassador Puerifoy to call off the bombings, offering even to reopen negotiations about United Fruit's compensation. In a long cable to John Foster Dulles, the foreign minister described the aerial attacks on the civilian population, expressed his country's defencelessness against the bombings, and appealed to the United States to use its good offices to put an end to them. In what must have been a deeply humiliating task, Toriello stated all of this without a hint that the United States was, or could be, a party to any of it. The pleas were not simply too late. They had *always* been too late.

The Castillo Armas forces could not have defeated the much larger Guatemalan army, but the air attacks, combined with the belief in the invincibility of the enemy, persuaded Guatemalan military officers to force Arbenz to resign. No Communists, domestic or foreign, came to his aid. He asked the head of the officers, Army Chief of Staff Col. Carlos Diaz, only that he give his word not to negotiate with Castillo Armas, and Diaz, who despised the rebel commander as much as Arbenz did, readily agreed. What Diaz did not realize was that the United States would not be satisfied merely to oust Arbenz. Castillo Armas had been groomed as the new head of government, and that was not negotiable.

A CIA official, Enno Hobbing, who had just arrived in Guatemala to help draft a new constitution (sic) for the incoming regime, told Diaz that he had "made a big mistake" in taking over the government. "Colonel," said Hobbing, "you're just not convenient for the requirements of American foreign policy."

Presently, Puerifoy confronted Diaz with the demand that he deal directly with Castillo Armas. At the same time, the Ambassador showed Diaz a list of Communists he wanted shot within 24 hours.<sup>33</sup> Although the Guatemalan officer was willing to eliminate Communist influence in the country, he refused both requests, and indicated that the struggle against the invaders would continue.<sup>34</sup> Puerifoy left, livid with anger. He then sent a simple cable to CIA headquarters in Florida: "We have been doubled-crossed. BOMB!" Within hours, a CIA plane took off from Honduras, bombed a military base and destroyed the government radio station. Col. Castillo Armas, whose anti-communism the United States could trust, was soon the new leader of Guatemala.

The propaganda show was not yet over. In reaction to scepticism in Latin America and elsewhere, the United States took foreign and American newsmen on a tour of Arbenz's former residence where they could see for themselves rooms filled with school textbooks published in . . . yes, the Soviet Union. The *New York Times* correspondent, Paul Kennedy, considered to be strongly anti-Arbenz, concluded that the "books had been planted" and did not bother to report the story.<sup>35</sup> *Time* made no mention of the books either, but somehow came upon the story that mobs had plundered Arbenz's home and found "stacks of communist propaganda and four bags of earth, one each from Russia, China, Siberia and Mongolia."<sup>36</sup> *Time's* article made it clear enough that it now knew of the American role in Arbenz's downfall (although certainly not the full story), but the magazine had nothing to say about the propriety of overthrowing a democratically elected government by force.

Castillo Armas celebrated the liberation of Guatemala in various ways. In July alone, thousands were arrested on suspicion of communist activity. Many were tortured or killed.<sup>37</sup> Further implementation of the agrarian reform law was stopped and all expropriations of land already carried out were declared invalid.<sup>38</sup> United Fruit Company not only received all its land back, but the government banned the banana workers' unions as well. Moreover, seven employees of the company who had been active labour organizers were found mysteriously murdered in Guatemala City.

The new regime also disenfranchised three-quarters of Guatemala's voters by barring illiterates from the electoral rolls and outlawed all political parties, labour confederations and peasant organizations. To this was added the closing down of opposition newspapers (which Arbenz had not done)<sup>39</sup> and the burning of "subversive" books, including Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, Dostoyevsky novels, and the works of Guatemala's Nobel Prize-winning author Miguel Angel Asturias, a biting critic of United Fruit.

Meanwhile, John Foster Dulles, who was accused by Toriello of seeking to establish a "banana curtain" in Central America,<sup>40</sup> was concerned that some Communists might escape retribution. In cables he exchanged with Ambassador

Puérifoy, Dulles insisted that the government arrest those Guatemalans who had taken refuge in foreign embassies and that "criminal charges" be brought against them to prevent them leaving the country, charges such as "having been covert Moscow agents". The Secretary of State argued that Communists should be automatically denied the right of asylum because they were connected with an international conspiracy. The only way they should be allowed to leave, he asserted, was if they agreed to be sent to the Soviet Union. But Castillo Armas refused to accede to Dulles' wishes on this particular issue, influenced perhaps by the fact that he, as well as some of his colleagues, had been granted political asylum in an embassy at one time or another.

One of those who sought asylum in the Argentine Embassy was a 25-year-old Argentine doctor named Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Guevara, who had been living in Guatemala since sometime in 1953, tried to spark armed resistance to the invading forces, but without any success. Guevara's experience in Guatemala had a profound effect upon his political consciousness. His first wife, Hilda Gadea, whom he met there, later wrote:

Up to that point, he used to say, he was merely a sniper, criticizing from a theoretical point of view the political panorama of our America. From here on he was convinced that the struggle against the oligarchic system and the main enemy, Yankee imperialism, must be an armed one, supported by the people.<sup>41</sup>

On 30-June, while the dust was still settling, Dulles summed up the situation in Guatemala in a speech which was a monument to coldwarspeak:

[The events in Guatemala] expose the evil purpose of the Kremlin to destroy the inter-American system . . . having gained control of what they call the mass organizations, [the communists] moved on to take over the official press and radio of the Guatemalan Government. They dominated the social security organization and ran the agrarian reform program . . . dictated to the Congress and to the President . . . Arbenz . . . was openly manipulated by the leaders of communism . . . The Guatemalan regime enjoyed the full support of Soviet Russia . . . [the] situation is being cured by the Guatemalans themselves.<sup>42</sup>

When it came to rewriting history, however, Dulles' speech had nothing on these lines from a CIA memo written in August 1954 and only for internal consumption no less: "When the communists were forced by outside pressure to attempt to take over Guatemala completely, they forced Arbenz to resign (deleted). They then proceeded to establish a Communist Junta under Col. Carlos Diaz."<sup>43</sup>

In October, John Puenifoy sat before a Congressional committee and told them:

My role in Guatemala prior to the revolution was strictly that of a diplomatic observer . . . The revolution that overthrew the Arbenz government was engineered and instigated by those people in Guatemala who rebelled against the policies and ruthless oppression of the Communist-controlled government.<sup>44</sup>

Later, Dwight Eisenhower was to write about Guatemala in his memoirs. The former president chose not to offer the slightest hint that the United States had anything to do with the planning or instigation of the coup, and indicated that his administration had only the most tangential of connections to its execution.<sup>45</sup>

Thus it was that the educated, urbane men of the State Department, the CIA and the United Fruit Company, the pipe-smoking, comfortable men of Princeton, Harvard and Wall Street, decided that the illiterate peasants of Guatemala did not deserve the land which had been given to them, that the workers did not need their unions, that hunger and torture were a small price to pay for being rid of the scourge of communism.

The terror carried out by Castillo Armas was only the beginning. It was, as we shall see, to get much worse in time. It has continued with hardly a pause for over 30 years.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1955, the *New York Times* reported from the United Nations that "The United States has begun a drive to scuttle a section of the proposed Covenant of Human Rights that poses a threat to its business interests abroad." This section dealt with the right of peoples to self-determination and to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources. Said the newspaper: "It declares in effect that any country has the right to nationalize its resources . . ."<sup>46</sup>

## 11. Costa Rica mid-1950s Trying to topple an ally, part 1

If ever the CIA maintained a love-hate relationship, it was with José Figueres, three times the head of state of Costa Rica.

On the one hand, Figueres, by his own admission in 1975, worked for the CIA "in 20,000 ways" . . . "all over Latin America" for 30 years.<sup>1</sup> "I collaborated with the CIA when we were trying to topple Trujillo," he divulged, speaking of the Dominican Republic dictator.<sup>2</sup>

\* When Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs were published in the West, the publisher saw fit to employ a noted Kremlinologist to annotate the work, pointing out errors of omission and commission.