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Philippine Communism: Strategy and Tactics

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

H. B. FURAY

4. Philippine Communism: Strategy and Tactics

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

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

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

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

fere in a civil war by effectively nullifying his own dictated tactic and restoring to our Party the freedom of action denied it since 1946.

"The struggle for men's minds": that is how the Party conceives its present task. The armed struggle having failed, the ideological struggle, "legal and parliamentary" in form, must be prosecuted with the utmost vigor. The immediate target is to alienate the Filipino people, particularly Filipino intellectuals, from the United States, presumably because the United States is identified in the minds of Filipinos with the idea of democratic government. Only by subverting the faith of Filipinos in the democratic idea will the Communist Party regain "the freedom of action denied it since 1946."

Political Transmission 15 is a particularly good example of the new party line in action. The pitch here is no longer to uneducated tenants and farm workers but definitely to the intelligentsia, or to those who like to consider themselves as part of an intellectual elite. As shown above, the pitch does not quite go over the plate. Any competent economist can see that the Transmission's imposing array of figures and tables are either doctored or misinterpreted. The picture of the local political scene is a caricature; and as for the summary of the international situation, even the ordinarily assiduous newspaper reader will at once perceive that it took the authors of the Transmission considerable agility of mind and elasticity of conscience to make it all come out as an epic struggle between the comrades (splendid fellows) and the bloated imperialists, with embattled communism holding a monopoly of right, justice, truth, integrity, omniscience and the milk of human kindness. However, there are certain circles where the material provided in the Transmission, if adroitly used by an experienced agent, would be quite effective. There is unfortunately no lack of otherwise sensible people whose defense mechanisms cease to operate when met with the hoary approach: "Now you, sir, are an extremely intelligent fellow; don't you agree that . . . etc., etc."

Thus, Transmission 15 is proof, if proof were needed, (1) that communism in the Philippines did not perish with the Huk movement; (2) that the Party leaders are by no means pea-

sants—they are extremely capable and unscrupulous men; (3) that their apparatus for preparing and disseminating propaganda materials and for training and placing ideological effectives remains intact; (4) that they have access to government records and statistics; and (5) that while their tactics have changed, their objectives remain the same: the overthrow of democratic government and the Christian order of society in the Philippines.

In the “legal and parliamentary” struggle “front” organizations are of the highest importance. French and Spanish communism created and manipulated them with the greatest effectiveness in the 1930’s and the Party in the Philippines is at present drawing from that rich fund of experience. Front organizations are not necessarily communist. Far from it; it is in fact essential to the tactic that they should not be associated with communism in any way. There might be a few active agents planted in them to establish control, but the rank and file and even the officers should be merely dupes. Their function is analogous to that of the Ivy-League graduates who, in the notorious days of the great Chicago gangs, “fronted for the mob.”

The task of the front organization is to win as wide a popular following as possible, hence it should ride the wave of the movement, political, social or economic, which is currently the most vital and powerful. In the Philippines today nationalism is such a movement. Hence it is among the groups promoting nationalism in one form or another that front organizations are likely to be found. Both officers and members of associations like the National Youth Movement of the Philippines (NYMP), the Philippine League for Economic and Cultural Nationalism (PLECNA), the Katipunang Manggagawang Pilipino (KMP), and the National Progress Movement (NPM), otherwise known as the Kilusang Makabansa (KMB), would do well to find out whether they are being used as front organizations without their knowledge.

Some of these organizations have, unfortunately, embarked on an intensive “hate America” campaign. If they have done so on their own and not under communist direction they ought to reflect that they are in effect contributing considerably to

the stated communist objectives in Asia. The Joint Manifesto of Communist Parties of the United States, China and Japan (cited by Budenz in *Men Without Faces*, p. 248) quite explicitly appeals to Filipinos to join in a grand crusade "to rid the Far East of imperialism and imperialists, and specifically Yankee imperialism." The American military and naval bases in the Philippines, forming as they do a *cordon sanitaire* across the path of Red China's expansion, are singled out for special attention. The Philippines should get rid of them in order that thus the United States may be rendered powerless "to crush the ever growing power of the Chinese Soviets."

The "legal and parliamentary" struggle on which the Communist Party of the Philippines has now embarked is in many ways more dangerous than the military. More dangerous because less overt and hence less likely to arouse immediate and determined opposition. Lenin wrote that it was highly desirable "to maneuver, to utilize the conflicts of interests among one's enemies, to temporize and compromise with possible allies." And Stalin: "With revolutionary tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for disintegrating this regime, into instruments for strengthening the revolution, into a base for further development of the revolutionary movement." And again: "The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work, to intensify under its cover the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie."

The language of threat could not be any clearer. Communist leaders point their finger at us and tell us to our faces that they will destroy our way of life and ourselves with it if we do not submit to their wishes. They have made good their threats in Europe, in China, Korea, Indo-China, Kerala, Tibet and have come within an inch of doing so in the Philippines. Our leaders, civil and ecclesiastical, cannot ignore this and survive.

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