

EXCURSUS I

Wilson Carey McWilliams Traitors Might Serve Us Better

There are no traitors or spies in the Congress of the United States, which is a pity.

In counterespionage, when one has infiltrated an enemy's network or broken his codes, it is important to let some useful information get through in order to preserve the secret of one's success, thus lulling the enemy into a false sense of security. Just so, traitors in high places must—in order to preserve their sensitive and important positions—appear to be patriots and must, perforce, render some real service to those they betray. Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night* portrays an Allied agent so useful as a Nazi propagandist that it is difficult to tell which side he has served best. Vonnegut warned all potential traitors (and all of us), "We are what we pretend to be, so we must be very careful what we pretend to be." But one need not go to extremes; what matters is that traitors must preserve the appearances and do something valuable for those they nominally serve.

Congressional liberals are under no such constraint. Free from disloyalty, they are also free from any necessity to serve the interests of the United States.

No traitor, I think, would imagine that he could safely adopt the Congressional majority's position on Angola. The argument that Angola is "another Vietnam" is too thin to bear examination, the validity of such historical analogies ("another Munich") aside. In Angola the MPLA is a city movement; it is supported, if not propped up, by a sizable foreign army; it is opposed by all Angola's immediate neighbors. In all of these it resembles the late South Vietnamese regime more than that government's opponents.

To be sure, half the African states have recognized the MPLA. But then a majority of Asian states mumbled supportive words (albeit rather covertly) about the United States presence in Vietnam. In any event, counting recognitions is a poor way to conduct foreign policy. Not so long ago the majority of states recognized Taiwan as the government of China.

One wonders what the Congressional response would have been if Cuba had dispatched many thousands of its soldiers to Venezuela or Bolivia, which was a live possibility a short while back. There is more than a hint of racism in liberal indifference to Angola, but the blinders of liberal ideology may be explanation enough. The reasoning that damns Savimbi, Roberto, and their supporters because of South African support is only a rationalization for indifference. Roberto and Savimbi have been in the field against Portuguese

colonialism for years; their credentials as patriots are beyond reproach. What must it have cost them to accept South African aid? They must have seen the issues as supremely critical to make South African assistance tolerable. But the Afrikaners at least care about Angola, however perverse their reasons and their goals, and *faute de mieux* their aid is some answer to Soviet-Cuban intervention. The American liberal answer to blacks—in the American cities or in Africa—is verbal sympathy and real indifference.

Of course, the American conservatives are worse, which makes this bicentennial election year an unpleasant prospect. So far, however, the Congress has succeeded in refurbishing the case for Presidential government: it has been untrustworthy, sensationalistic, cheaply political (as in Senator Church's desperate effort to protect JFK's reputation), and visibly incapable of any concern for the common good beyond the negation of the President's fumbings.

The Congressional liberals mean well, which damns with faint praise; the actively disloyal would probably do no worse and might serve us better.

EXCURSUS II

Richard W. Wilson Chou En-lai: Urbanity, Ruthlessness, and Conscience

One of the most colorful yet terrible periods in the history of the world is ending. While we cannot guess what the future will hold, whether Armageddon, utopia, or some point in between, it is clear that the period of European imperialism, of cataclysmic world wars, and of shattering revolutions is rapidly drawing to a close. The death of Chou En-lai, late Premier of the People's Republic of China, is one of the last acts in this drama. While tales spun in the future about the twentieth century may never place, Chou as the central figure, his name, his style, and the ideas for which he stood will reverberate as long as historical records of our time exist.

Born in the waning years of the nineteenth century into a still very traditional Chinese society beset by foreign powers and internal woes, men and women like Chou En-lai, although only a handful at first, responded to the shame and humiliation of their people with vigorous steps to build a new and powerful China. How successfully their work was done can only be gauged by viewing the People's Republic of China of today against the virtually defenseless and prostrate China of the first decades of this century. While Chou En-lai himself became a famed participant in the councils