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 fumblings.

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

of the world powers, he was in many ways only a larger-than-life representative of all those millions whose toil and suffering created a new China. The road from one of the most traditional to one of the most revolutionary societies in the world was fraught with the greatest danger. Only a smiling fortune, an astonishing luck, seems to have kept Chou alive throughout this tumultuous period. He was immersed very early in student outrage against China's plight. Later, during a brief period in France during the First World War, he was introduced to communism, which gave him a lifelong framework within which to act out his revolutionary aspirations. Chou was active in the first stirrings of communism in China, rapidly became a major leader, and through all the major party factional disputes of more than fifty years was never far from the center of power. In the nineteen twenties, when the Nationalist and Communist parties cooperated under Sun Yat-sen in efforts to unify China, Chou was political commissar to Chiang Kai-shek. Surviving, once only barely, the brutal suppression of the Communists by the Nationalists in 1927, Chou participated in the incessant fighting of the next years and was one of the heroes of the legendary Long March of the mid-thirties when the remnants of the Communist forces moved from central to northwest China.

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Preceding and during the Second World War, when the Nationalists and Communists again cooperated, this time against a cruel Japanese imperialism, Chou was the Communist emissary in Chungking, where he presented the Communist case to the Nationalists and their American allies. Following the defeat of Japan and the renewal of full-scale civil war that culminated in 1949 in a Communist victory, Chou entered the new government as its premier and remained for the rest of his life at the core of a decision-making process that has reshaped the social and political foundations of China. From mandarin to revolutionary he exhibited a remarkable fusion of scholarly and administrative skills. In the mix of talents the Communist leaders of China brought to their movement Chou's contributions were of enormous importance.

For many, no doubt, the death of Chou En-lai is but a harbinger of the eventual demise of Mao Tse-tung. Then truly will the first phase of the Communist revolution in China be at an end. What will happen then? Much speculation surrounds who the coming leadership of China will be. While the personalities of the contenders are clearly important, the thrust of policies already undertaken is perhaps of more basic significance. Barring a major war for China, it is hard to imagine a reversal of many of the trends already under way. For instance, China, with Japan, is one of the two major Asian powers of our current world. Given a pattern of increasing population control and sustained economic growth, it is difficult not to foresee the ultimate preeminent position for China in Asia and, perhaps, in the world; it may also, however, work to stabilize relations in Asia, which, after all, like Europe, has been an arena for war in the twentieth century. Such problems as those that now exist over the status of Taiwan will surely fade as China's self-confidence and power increase.

Internally the phenomenon of exhortation to progress by ideological commitment is likely to become less disruptive of economic planning. This does not mean an end to ideological fervor nor a rolling back of the commune system on the land or a turn away from the drive for greater egalitarianism in other areas of life. Rather there will be a firmer absorption of the Communist ethic into the framework of the national assumptions by which Chinese live. Mao Tse-tung and men like Chou En-lai have done their best to break down traditional patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior, and we can expect this process to continue. Indeed, as Chou En-lai espoused, the need for many cultural revolutions for numberless years to come is inherent in the notion of progress. The initial and decisive blows against the old order, however, have been delivered by the first generation of Communist leaders. While struggle will continue, one cannot see a turning away by the new Communist-educated generation from the road that has been charted.

The political and social system of China today is not a congenial one for liberal democrats, and it may never be so. The means by which this system came into being is also foreign to those bred to the notions of parliamentary procedure. Chou En-lai lived through, and was molded by, extraordinarily violent and cruel events. His personal response to China's needs was sometimes ruthless and sometimes urbane and was always infused with intelligence and with ideological commitment and zeal. Today China is a country proud of itself and freed from the shackles of decades of misery. In the light of his own conscience this extraordinary man worked with unparalleled constancy of purpose against the plundering of society and for the betterment of mankind.

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