

3

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Why the CIA Often Succeeds

by Hermyle Galthier, Jr.

Recently, in dosages ranging from the MIT-"Club of Rome" Limits of Growth, through the publications of John D. Rockefeller III's burgeoning Zero-Growth movement, and Herman Kahn's latest best-seller, intellectual and semi-intellectual readership circles are being deluged with an eerie genre of literature coming to be called "futurolgy." Although the collection reeks of the traditions of Nostradamus, Churchward, and L. Ron Hubbard, most of the research behind these publications is sponsored in dead seriousness by such CIA-type agencies as the RAND Corporation, Ford Foundation, and a proliferation of only less celebrated institutions throughout the advanced capitalist sector.

Those agencies are not wasting their time and funds; in a certain sense, the stuff works.

Two of the papers presented at the recent Linz conference attempted to unravel some of the recent output. The first, by Columbia University's Edward W. Said (1), offered a scholarly overview of a sophisticated U.S. Mid-East policy developed, in part, by the RAND Corporation. The second, which veered off its track at the end, was the provocative review offered by Lund University's Research Director for the Division of Social Psychology and Conflict Research, Lars Dencik. (2) The Labor Committee delegation's differences with Dencik provide the point of departure for an account of why CIA operations so often succeed.

Dencik characterizes the genre:

"So called future research is not only humbug, it is not only the last spasmodic attempts by a senile positivistic social science to get out of its hopeless impotency, not only a death-throe in the body of late capitalism. On the contrary, it is something to look out for in the struggle against imperialism, since

what 'future research' really is, is an instrument of power in the hands of the most important forces of imperialism." (3)

So far, so good.

Our issue with him was made clear during the plenary discussions of his paper and oral presentation. During that presentation and subsequent exchanges, he emphasized the need to combat futurolgy by debunking it. According to both his replies to several queries on the point and the internal evidence of his paper and presentation, he locates the main significance of the genre in its use for journalistic "brainwashing" of large populations.

Said's reporting on the Arab counter-insurgency programs locates Dencik's mistake. Futurolgy studies may have an incidental significance as they provide the direct propaganda for influencing mass opinion; their important application — and purpose — lies elsewhere. All important futurolgy studies represent A STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS POLICY, TO BE IMPLEMENTED AS FIELD WORK CONDUCTED BY TRAINED TEAMS OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIVES.

The CIA's Vietnam Hamlet program could easily provide the material for a futurolgy best-seller of the Kahn type. The policy would be used by such a writer to paint a picture of Southeast Asia in the year 2000 A. D., a culture developed around the principle of "local control." The significance of such a book would not be that identified by Dencik. Its import would be the elaboration of a policy being conducted in South Vietnam by counter-insurgency teams.

The Limits of Growth and Blueprint for Survival

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