

org PACS (WAR) CH 2 to Stop WAR
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Why CIA Was Compelled to Investigate

U.S. Radicals

By DeWITT S. COPP

As a result of the ever-pressing demands of the present, it is not all that I remembered today that between 1965-1970 the nation was wracked by civil-war upheaval over the issue of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. In the violence of their protests, leftist revolutionaries and student radicals wreaked massive physical and financial damage on a host of public and private institutions.

For example, in 1968, at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., "protesters" burned the Navy ROTC building at a cost of \$75,000, burned the president's office at a cost of \$230,000 and staged a sit-in that cost the university \$100,000—actually not a large sum when compared to others of a similar nature and purpose.

In that half-decade of turbulence there was, of course, ample evidence to show that the directing arm behind the anti-Vietnam coalition was to be found amongst such organizations as Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Trotskyite Socialist Workers party (SWP) and the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC). In their own words they were intent upon tearing apart the fabric of political and public stability, and although Americans got their daily dose of home-grown protests, sabotage and violence, little attention was paid to the extension and spread of these activities into the countries of our NATO allies and throughout Western Europe.

As columnists Evans and Novak have pointed out in a recent article, President Lyndon Johnson became worried that the anti-Vietnam movement might be under Soviet KGB or international Communist control. As a result, he directed the Central Intelligence Agency to look into the matter, and quite naturally the movement and activities of those Americans traveling and living abroad who were engaged in the action came under CIA scrutiny.

In the aforementioned five-year period more than 28 million U.S. citizens traveled back and forth to Europe, while another 5.5 million resided there under various resident conditions. Paris early on had become a center of both an anti-Vietnam and an anti-American movement. This was so partially because of the strength of the French Communist Party and North Vietnamese influence, and partially because Washington and Hanoi agreed to use Paris as a place to restle over peace.

In February 1966, the Paris American Committee to Stop War (PACS) was organized by a small group of resident Americans.

In a statement of principles PACS declared: "Members of PACS believe that in view of the immense wealth and power of their country, and of its gigantic, fearful nuclear arsenal, the United States has a solemn duty to revise its now sadly obsolete foreign policy and join the world in combatting the vicious circle constituted by ignorance, poverty, hunger and, above all, war...."

PACS held bimonthly meetings. The meetings were open to the public and their stated purpose was to hear "talks by specialists on the national and international repercussions of the imperialist policies of our government."

One such specialist featured by PACS was the Australian journalist, Wilfred Burchett. In November 1974, Burchett lost a libel suit against a former Australian senator who had accused him of being a spy for both the Soviets and the Chinese. At the trial, former U.S. POWs from both the Korean and the Vietnam Wars testified against Burchett. Earlier ex-KGB agent Yuri Kropotkov, who defected in 1963, gave evidence that in the early '60s Burchett had boasted to him that he was on the payroll of the party in Hanoi. In Kropotkov's mind there was no doubt that the Australian was, like himself, a member of the KGB.

It would certainly follow that relationships of PACS members with specialists of Burchett's type would come under CIA scrutiny.

Additionally, as PACS had pointed out, it had aligned itself with a number of French Marxist fronts such as the *Mouvement Contre l'Armement Atomique*, the *Comité Vietnam National* as well as establishing "cordial relationships with representatives of both the DRV [Hanoi] and the NLF [Vietcong National Liberation Front]." Beyond these affiliations PACS membership, which grew to an estimated 850, was to be found scattered among a gaggle of similar groups whose overt purpose was to protest U.S. policies in Vietnam and elsewhere while championing the Hanoi-Moscow line, and whose covert activities involved aiding U.S. deserters and other persons in a host of cases of possible Soviet espionage connections.

With regard to deserters, within PACS and its connected groups, there were two schools of thought. One school was for encouraging desertion, giving aid and assistance to those who did desert. Out of these efforts emerged the American Deserters Committee with open support from the NLF. It was headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, backed by 25 fronts, and also drew support from the U.S. from a number of other like-minded organizations such as SDS.

The second school of thought was smaller in nature but more subversive in concept. It went under the initials FRITA—Friends of Resisters in the Army. Later the "F" was dropped, and it was known as RITA.

Between 1966 and October 1968, when he was expelled from France, RITA's founder was known under the names Max Watts and Mr. Cook. Actually he was Thomas Schwaetzer, an Austrian "geophysicist." Whatever his credentials, after aiding many U.S. deserters to find jobs and relocate, he came to believe, under his own orders or someone else's, that he could do more for the cause by keeping the potential deserter in the service where he could spread the Marxist gospel of anti-Americanism and anti-militarism.

Toward this end, Schwaetzer, and such colleagues as French author and pro-Communist Jean Paul Sarte, arranged to bring out a single-page weekly newspaper titled *ACT*—the RITA's newsletter. It, like its New York counterpart, *The Bond*, was a protest tract, written by U.S. deserters attempting to spread dissension within the ranks.

Until his deportation to Austria, Schwaetzer was busily engaged in attempting to arrange distribution of his propaganda effort at U.S. NATO bases in Holland and West Germany. That his efforts apparently had negligible results is beside the point. His intent would no doubt have attracted the attention not only of the CIA but also of the CIA. U.S. citizens were involved, and as a matter of normal procedure files would be opened on them.

In March 1968 two American banks in Paris and the TWA office were bombed. So was the American Express building. The French police and intelligence, *Direction de la Sécurité du Territoire (DST)* were unable to apprehend the saboteurs.

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