

0 2 2 5

SECRET

*Information #41
Policy*

TO: Information Officers
FROM: Roscoe Drummond
SUBJ: Information Officers' Conference

Attached is a paper setting forth ideas on new guidelines for ECA's Information Program in Western Europe, with particular reference to objectives and themes affecting defense and security. It is circulated to serve as a basis for a full discussion at the meeting of the Information Officers in Paris - Monday, February 12.

Encl.
2/2/51

SECRET

0 2 2 6

PROPAGANDA AND WESTERN SECURITY

- Chapter One The Big Truth vs. the Big Lie
- Chapter Two On European Morale
- Chapter Three Three Years of Marshall Plan Publicity
- Chapter Four New Themes

0 2 2 7

CHAPTER ONE

The Big Truth vs. The Big Lie

0 2 2 8

I-1

I.

The apparent diversity of Communist propaganda tends to disguise its basic simplicity. Yet all of it is a development or variant of two themes. Stated to arouse love for Communism, they are:

1. The Communist Party is the party of peace.
2. The Communist Party is the party of social progress.

Stated to arouse hatred for their enemies, they are:

1. The democratic parties are the war parties.
2. The democratic parties are the parties of social repression.

The targets change, the "evidence" changes, the labels change, the emphasis changes: but these two themes underlie the entire Communist propaganda strategy.

It thus becomes immediately apparent why Communist propaganda has been so successful and why it constitutes a threat to the survival of the free world and especially to the internal security of Western Europe. The Communists know what people want. The fact that the Communist sales campaign is cynical and fraudulent has nothing to do with the immediate point. The immediate point is that Communist propaganda is based firmly on the only two generalizations that can be made about the politico-social ambitions of a vast majority of all people everywhere in the world:

1. They want to live in peace.

0 2 2 9

I-2

2. They want to improve their material conditions of life. This is the first thing to be taken into account in devising an effective counter-propaganda.

II.

It is natural that the first American instinct would be to go out and sell the virtues of our own institutions. This leads to the effort to articulate our concepts of "democracy", "liberty", "freedom", "the dignity of the individual", and "Western civilization" to counter the onslaught of Communist propaganda against us.

Our chosen policy is to oppose the Big Lie with the Big Truth. This is a commitment from which we cannot retire without running the risk of selling out our own cause. But the question remains: the Big Truth about what? If we were to base our major propaganda effort on spreading the truth about democratic-liberal concepts and institutions as such we would be hopelessly handicapped for a number of reasons:

1. Those who are prepared to fight and die for freedom will fight and die for it whatever the odds. They need no persuasion.

2. Those who prefer freedom provided that it doesn't cost them too much will decide whether to fight on the basis of other considerations -- their chances of winning, their prospects for work and personal improvement, their chances of keeping a family together, the danger of retaliation, etc. They need to be persuaded that the things that go with freedom are worth the risk

0 2 3 0

I-3

of fighting on its side.

3. Those who feel they have nothing to lose will support the side that more persuasively offers them plausible prospects of improving their well being. To the ignorant and economically depressed our concepts of freedom and democracy are abstractions of little or no real meaning. They are interested first and foremost in bread, land, work, and a vision of progress.

4. There is nothing to support an implied assumption that democratic concepts are at all analagous to products or facts that can be "sold." On the contrary, the evidence suggests that the capacity of propaganda alone to induce firm faith in rather sophisticated political principles must be very limited. Slogans can be used to stir primitive emotions. But the love of liberty appears to be a process that requires every steadfast adherent to come to a conviction within himself which no one else can do for him.

5. It would be risky to assume that our own institutions and our own forms are considered by everyone else to be perfect or even preferable to any other institutions or forms. Such an assumption is reflected in the frequent American propaganda error of talking about "defending," "safeguarding," or "preserving" our freedoms. This is all right for people who feel they have freedom and are devoted to it. But there is nothing to indicate that appeals to defend American institutions would exercise any controlling influence over those populations whose allegiance is at stake.

0231

6. The strategy of the Big Truth, especially when applied to partially-abstract concepts, has important inherent limitations:

(A) Sometimes we don't even know what the Big Truth is.

(B) Much more often the Big Truth is composed of both positive and negative factors: the Big Truth here is that most things are not black or white; most things are some shade of grey.

(C) The truth is often very complex - much too complex to explain to great masses of people - even when the net is near-white or near-black.

(D) All too often the Big Lie is much more dramatic than the Big Truth - no small point in the propaganda field.

The Communists are using the two most effective appeals in all the world. They have a propaganda machine which we cannot and, in some ways, never will equal. To try to do battle with less effective appeals would be to guarantee our own defeat in the propaganda vs. propaganda part of the struggle. And the concept of democracy by itself is a less effective appeal to large segments of the world population than peace and bread.

III.

There is only one basis for democratic propaganda that offers any real prospect for success: it is to clash head-on with Communist propaganda on the issues of peace and social progress.