

**ON THE RIGHT:****'Artists Protest'--  
A Familiar Sound**

By WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

WE ARE SEEING the revival, God help us, of the Communist front type of organization, that sneaky device by which the gullible were gulled during 1930's and the 1940's into lending their influence to help the Communists conceal a truth.

It was primarily through front organizations that the Communists protested the innocence of Stalin's purge trials, alleging that attacks on them were Fascist-inspired; that they opposed the Marshall Plan, suggesting it was the creation of warmongers; that they sought to destroy investigating committees of Congress, denouncing them as instruments for the harassment of innocent people.

One would have thought that the publicity given during the 50's to the operations of front groups would have made wise men wary.

Perhaps wise men ARE now wary—in which case we must deduce the unwisdom of the poor preposterous souls who have given their names to an organization called "Artists Protest," which is taking newspaper ads around the country, urging a denunciation of President Johnson's foreign policy.

How does one identify a Communist front? By definition, the job is not easy. If it were instantly recognizable as such, the whole point of the thing would be lost. By definition, a front desires respectability; desires to conceal the truth it is engaged in concealing by leeching on to the prestige of people whose integrity is taken for granted.

Apart from the obvious fact that the goals will be in accord with Communist objectives, the first thing to look for in political manifestoes that touch on points of friction between East and West is any trace of anti-communism. It is almost uniformly the case that no Communist front will criticize any word, thought, or deed of another Communist, not even in the high cause of plausibility.

"Artists Protest" did not begin its manifesto by saying: "There is no doubting that the peace of Southeast Asia is primarily threatened by Communist imperialism, and that unspeakable atrocities have been committed by Communist-armed and Communist-guided guerrillas in South Viet Nam—however, the United States cannot fight a successful war in that part of the world . . ." etc., etc.

Not a word—not a single word in the manifesto of "Artists Protest" denouncing the foreign policy of the Communists—but our own foreign policy is "grown more nakedly inhuman each passing day."

Then, secondly, one looks to see who are the signers of the manifesto. My eye is by now unpracticed at remembering anything like the names of everyone identified after painful and exhaustive investigation, by sworn witnesses, as Communist Party members. Even so, I spotted instantly about 25 such persons.



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Then there was the usual tier of old timers, a dozen-odd who used to do the same kind of thing way back in the 30's, presenting excuses for every act of Communist aggression. Finally, the fresh bunch of nafs. Including some very surprising names, for instance that of the critic Dwight Macdonald, who wrote a book on the practices of "the Stallhoids" when he denounced the candidacy of Henry Wallace back in 1947; and falls into exactly the same ambush he used to criticize others so scorchingly for falling into. The organizing secretary of the committee has been identified under oath as a Communist.

One of the signers of this travesty, Mr. Victor Perlo, was, according to sworn testimony, the active leader, at one point in American history, of a Communist espionage ring. Another, Professor Paul Sweezy, announced at a public debate a week or so ago that he considered Mao Tse-tung and Fidel Castro as among the greatest men alive.

All in all quite a gathering — of Communists, dupes and eccentrics whose present activity is justifiably interpreted, both abroad and at home, as representative of the underside of the American soul.

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