

Yankee Imperialist Cultural Aggression In Asia and Africa

by CHEN YAO-KUANG

Cultural infiltration is an important part of the U.S. strategic plan for world domination. The U.S. imperialists variously call it "ideological offensive," "psychological warfare," "cultural diplomacy," etc. Whatever the term, it is a means to facilitate Washington's political control and economic plunder and serves to promote its policies of war and aggression.

SINCE World War II, U.S. imperialism has become the last fortress for world reaction while the vast intermediate zone in Asia and Africa has become the stormy centre of world revolution. In its attempt to cope with the mounting revolutionary movement in these areas, U.S. imperialism has used counter-revolutionary dual tactics with increasing vigour. While carrying out its economic control, political intimidation and armed intervention, it has stepped up cultural aggression, trying to capture and enslave the oppressed nations and peoples ideologically and make them meekly accept its domination.

The "Fulbright Act" and the "U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act" passed under the Truman Administration marked a new stage in direct government participation and control of U.S. cultural activities overseas. The setting up of the United States Information Agency and the "People-to-People Programme" under the Eisenhower Administration introduced new methods in this respect. The Kennedy Administration threw more money and manpower into propaganda, "education" and "technical aid." In addition, it formed the "peace corps" and launched the "kinsmanship campaign" in Africa. The Johnson Administration took over the heritage of Kennedy and stepped up activities in these fields.

Counter-Revolutionary Aims

In a nutshell, the aims of U.S. cultural aggression in Asia and Africa are: to whitewash the U.S. imperialist policies of war and aggression, prettify decaying American society and the monopoly capitalist system, plant reactionary ideas in the minds of other peoples, advertise the "American way of life," and undermine the national culture and national consciousness of other countries: in a word, to lead the people of these countries

away from revolution, and from the battle against imperialism and colonialism, and finally make them obediently acquiesce to U.S. economic plunder and political enslavement.

"Cultural Diplomacy." Robert H. Thayer, former head of the U.S. Bureau of International Cultural Relations, reveals the all-pervading activities of so-called cultural diplomacy in the following terms: "When I refer to cultural diplomacy, I am using the word 'culture' in a very broad and very simple sense. I am using it to mean every possible facet of the way people live their everyday lives: the things they do, the way they dress, what they produce, how they react, what they aspire to, as well as the way they think and express their thoughts by words or song or story. The culture of a people in the sense I am using it is the life of a people, and cultural diplomacy is the act of successfully communicating to others a complete comprehension of the culture of a people. The objective of American cultural diplomacy is to create among the peoples of the world a perfect understanding of the life and culture of America."¹ Former U.S. Under-Secretary of State Chester Bowles was more outspoken. He said in 1963: "As long as ideas influence the minds of men, and as long as men and their aspirations are a major component of power, ideas—both good and evil—will continue to upset nations, defy armies, and write history."² This explains why Washington is making huge investments in cultural aggression.

At present, more than 20 federal agencies and tens of thousands of people are working in this field. Government expenditure for this purpose in fiscal 1965 amounted to U.S. \$1,000 million. Besides, much U.S. cultural infiltration is carried out by "non-governmental organizations." The scale of their activities is even larger than that of the government agencies.

Educational Infiltration: Many Ways

"Educational Exchange" Programme. Education is one of the oldest forms of U.S. ideological infiltration. Since World War II, the U.S. Government has

¹ Department of State Bulletin, October 12, 1959, p. 510.

² Department of State Bulletin, May 27, 1963, p. 822.

made great efforts to strengthen the "educational exchange" programme. The "Fulbright Act" in 1946 and the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act in 1948 gave the programme big financial support. In April 1960, the State Department set up a Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to take charge of it. The 1961 Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act gave the government still more power to carry out educational penetration abroad.

Of course, Washington is not doing all this for nothing. As the former director of the Office of Educational Exchange in the State Department, William C. Johnstone, puts it, "It is basically a political job, for this programme is an effective arm or instrument of American foreign policy. In its simplest form, the job of this programme is to implant a set of ideas or facts in the mind of a person. When this is done effectively, it results in action favourable to the achievement of American foreign policy."³ In plain language, the programme is intended to indoctrinate foreign students with American ideas, train pro-American intellectuals and recruit from among them agents for U.S. imperialism.

The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act shifted the emphasis of the "educational exchange" programme to Asia, Africa and Latin America. Since World War II, the number of foreign students in the United States has increased by 300 per cent. Early in 1963, some 64,000 foreign students were studying there and more than 70 per cent of them came from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

At present Asia accounts for the largest number of foreign students in the United States, but African students have been increasing the fastest in recent years. The reason for this was given by the former Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Philip H. Coombs. "When you're dealing with an African student," he said, "you may be dealing with a fellow who will be prime minister in five years."⁴

Strategic and Political Bargain. The U.S. Government has also brought many intellectuals, scholars, lecturers and specialists in various fields from Asian and African countries to do "advanced studies" in the United States. Calling for more government funds to win over foreign students, an American propaganda official said: "Using these funds to bring a new generation of Asian, African and Latin American leadership to America for part of their education could be the strategic and political bargain of the 1960s."⁵

Another form of U.S. educational penetration is to set up schools in Afro-Asian countries, where local

students are taught by American teachers using American textbooks.

Still another form is to send American "professors" and "specialists" to "help" develop education in Asian and African countries. They seize every opportunity to poison the minds of the local youth with reactionary ideas, and to gather information. More than 2,200 were sent to 92 countries and regions in the academic year 1960-61, and 3,000 in the following one. By the spring of 1964, 20,000 Americans had been sent abroad to engage in these so-called educational activities.

The Agency for International Development and a host of "non-governmental organizations" including the Ford Foundation are also taking part in educational infiltration. In 1963, through 103 government "foreign aid" contracts, the agency made it possible for 62 American universities to participate in the U.S. government's educational penetration overseas, and appropriated U.S. \$120 million for the purpose. At present, it spends \$25 million a year in giving technological and vocational training to more than 6,000 people from various countries, 55 per cent of them coming from Asia and Africa.

The United States has managed to train a handful of pro-American leaders and Right-wing intellectuals from among Asian and African students. For example, according to statistics of the U.S. Institute of International Education for 1963, among Japanese diplomats, 40 have been educated in the United States under its sponsorship alone. However, sometimes the scheme backfires. The U.S. press has admitted that a lot of the students return home with a feeling of resentment and a bad impression of the United States.

Hypocrisy of Missionary Activities

Another weapon in the U.S. "ideological offensive" is missionary activities. According to statistics for 1958, out of the 29,000 American missionaries abroad, more than 15,000 were in Asia and Africa. In 1961, those sent to Africa by Protestant denominations totalled 8,500, or 11 times as many as American diplomats there. There were 3,800 in India and Japan, the two major targets of U.S. ideological infiltration. Out of the 1,100 American citizens in Southern Rhodesia, 700 were missionaries. By 1963, American missionaries overseas had increased to 33,000.

In the past, in the name of philanthropy, American missionaries have run schools and hospitals in the hinterlands of many Asian and African countries in order to poison the minds of the local people. They also used this means to gather local information and carry out subversion in co-ordination with the political, economic and military needs of the U.S. Government. But now, the mounting struggle for liberation in Asia and Africa has compelled U.S. imperialism to modify its tactics and adopt more hypocritical and covert methods in its missionary activities overseas.

American missionaries today profess support for national independence and sympathy towards social progress so that they can worm their way into local

³ Charles A. Thomson and Walter H.C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Indiana University Press, 1963, p. 84.

⁴ *Time*, September 8, 1961.

⁵ Wilson P. Dizard, *The Strategy of Truth*, Public Affairs Press, Washington D.C., 1961, p. 173.

mass movements, and side-track them into a path of "reformism" and away from anti-imperialism and revolution.

They have evolved a whole set of cunning stratagems to trap different types of local believers. Churches are deliberately given an indigenous character and religious rites a national form. Local churchmen are encouraged to take the limelight while American missionaries act behind the scenes. Ceremonies which are not easy for local believers to grasp no longer receive the usual attention, and a host of activities outside the churches are organized. Meetings are arranged and lectures on special subjects given to spread the virus of reactionary ideas.

These missionaries also use modern means of communication to put across imperialist ideas and the "American way of life." In Africa, American churches in recent years have made greater efforts to set up broadcasting and book distribution networks. What they are trying to sell goes far beyond the province of religion. By running schools, medical and health services, they try to sneak their way into the local trade union and youth movements so as to increase their influences.

Recently American missionaries have been advised by their church headquarters to preach "love" and "forgiveness" as a means to calm the anti-imperialist temper of the Afro-Asian people. Actually they miss no opportunity to engage in criminal underhand activities. The execution of the American missionary doctor-cum-special agent Paul Carlson by the Congolese (L) people in 1964 shows what is up the sleeve of U.S. imperialism in its foreign missionary operations.

Myth of the "Peace Corps"

A new type of American missionaries is the so-called "Peace Corps." The "Peace Corps" was set up under the Kennedy Administration in 1961. In fiscal 1966, its expenditure amounts to U.S. \$115 million, and it has a 13,500-man force. The "Peace Corpsmen" are to be seen in some 48 countries and regions.

These "Peace Corpsmen" mask themselves as teachers, physicians, surveyors, irrigation technicians, agro-technicians, sports coaches and what not. Not all of them know their professed trades. On the other hand, they are carefully hand-picked and have to undergo special training. They are in fact a "cover" for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. An article in the *New Republic* (December 11, 1965) under the title "Containing Central Intelligence" said: "Secret warriors and intelligence agents must often shield their true identity, purpose and operations. . . . One shocking example of how far the C.I.A. has got into the habit of infiltrating other American overseas agencies for the purpose of

'cover' is the Peace Corps." An American reporter has suggested that 2 million "Peace Corps Volunteers" . . . "could conquer the world for democracy."⁶ Sargent Shriver, ex-director of the Peace Corps, declared that the sending of 25,000 "Peace Corps Volunteers" to Panama could change its attitude towards America.

War by Words

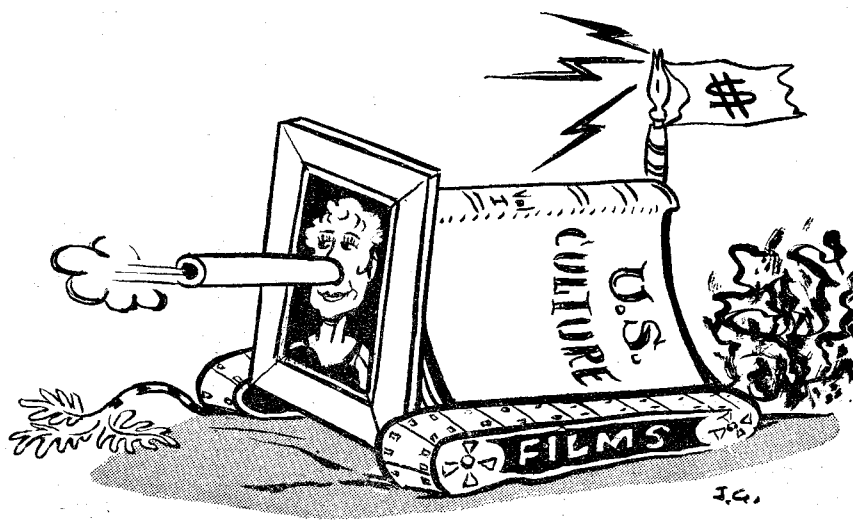
Coupled with disguised ideological penetration in Asia and Africa is the more obvious method of influencing the minds of men, i.e., war by words through government-controlled propaganda agencies.

Dante B. Fascell, chairman of a subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said: "Words and ideas are as important as bread and guns. . . . In my opinion, the struggle which goes on in the world today will be resolved, ultimately, in the minds of men." Hence the all-out efforts of the United States to use every medium of propaganda at its disposal to deceive world opinion.

U.S.I.A. — Agency for Psychological Strategic Operations. U.S.I.A. is the major propaganda agency of the U.S. Government. As a U.S. propaganda official said of it, "U.S.I.A. is the planning and logistic bureau for the government's overall psychological strategy operations." Its weapons include radio, television, films, press, books, exhibitions and exchange of personnel.

In its 19th report to the U.S. Congress, the United States Advisory Commission on Information defined the task of U.S.I.A. as: to promote "understanding of the American economy; appreciation of American culture; confidence in American military strength; interest in American education; recognition of America's peace efforts; appreciation of American economic assistance; respect for America's scientific progress; awareness of America's agricultural abundance as well as bounty: balanced understanding of America's racial

⁶ *Nation*, July 27, 1964.



problems and progress; recognition of America's space achievements." All this boils down to one purpose, that is, to deceive the peoples of other countries, convert them into loyal worshippers and followers of the United States, and make them meekly accept its policies of aggression and war.

U.S.I.S. Spies on Local Leaders. U.S.I.A. overseas activities are carried out mainly through its branches known as the United States Information Service and the U.S. cultural centres abroad. In its routine work, the U.S.I.S. distributes official news bulletins and books and pamphlets in the English language, holds exhibitions on the "American way of life," shows American films and gives cocktail parties to win over local notables and intellectuals. But the main task of the U.S.I.S. is to pick up local information, particularly information about local leaders, their attitudes and reactions to U.S. policy. It has gone so far as to organize public opinion polls in violation of the sovereignty of the countries concerned. In this way, American spies penetrate the various social strata of local communities to cajole, foment division or sow discord. It also engages in subversive activities by working in cooperation with the State Department, C.I.A., and the U.S. military intelligence departments.

V.O.A. — "Rumour-Mongering Factory." The Voice of America forms an important part of the U.S.I.A. Using 38 languages, it makes round-the-clock broadcasts of 800 hours a week, spreading lies and rumours. More and more people, however, have come to understand its true character. It is now widely denounced by Afro-Asian opinion as a "rumour-mongering factory." Even the bourgeois American press is disquieted by the crudeness of its work and the tall lies it manufactures. A *New York Times* editorial (August 1, 1965) said: "The credibility of its [V.O.A.'s] news reports has been brought increasingly into question."

Hollywood Films — Falsehood, Folly and Fiddle-Faddle. Films are also a major weapon in the U.S. "ideological offensive." Hollywood films take up 53 per cent of the total showing time of the cinemas in Asia, and 63 per cent in Africa. In Japan, the Philippines and Thailand, the figure is 70-80 per cent. Falsehood, folly, and fiddle-faddle are the outstanding features of these films. In recent years, to dovetail in with the U.S. policies of war and aggression, Hollywood has produced more and more films which publicize war, play up nuclear horrors, vilify the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations and whitewash U.S. aggressive policies. Of course, pornography, murder, mental perversion and all kinds of human absurdities — which are the old familiar hallmarks of Hollywood — are still there and these films are mass-produced as of old. They are poison to the minds of men, particularly to the younger generation.

American Books to Corrupt Afro-Asian People's National Consciousness. Large quantities of American books have been exported to Asia and Africa for the

same purpose of apologizing for the U.S. policies of war and aggression, prettifying the decaying American social system and planting pro-American ideas in the minds of Afro-Asian readers.

These books cover a wide range of subjects: sex perversion, murder, commercialized avant-garde theatre and pop art, Rock'n Roll music, etc. Other themes range from anti-communism, fascism, nuclear blackmail to reformism, pacifism, bourgeois humanitarianism, "affluent society," "welfare state," "people's capitalism," "whiteman's supremacy," and so on. Whatever the subject, the goal is the same: to corrupt the national consciousness of the Afro-Asian peoples and blunt their revolutionary will so as to facilitate the realization of U.S. imperialism's ambitions for world conquest.

Afro-Asian People's Resistance

Whatever tactics U.S. imperialism uses in its cultural aggression, Afro-Asian public opinion is not to be taken in. A U.S.I.S. official has had to admit: "Theoretically we should be winning the struggle for world opinion hands down. The unpleasant fact is that we are not."⁷ And the "unpleasant fact" is that the Afro-Asian people, from their experience of anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggle, have come to realize that every film and book exported by the U.S.I.A., every scholarship granted by the U.S. State Department, every expert or adviser sent by the Agency for International Development, and every "Peace Corpsman" serves the interests of Washington's counter-revolutionary "ideological offensive."

As a matter of fact, U.S. ideological infiltration in Asia and Africa has come up against stiff resistance.

The "Peace Corps," which is regarded by Washington as a most "successful" experiment, is strongly condemned by public opinion in many Afro-Asian countries as an instrument of neo-colonialism, a "cold-war corps," and its members as C.I.A. agents. In some places, it is simply ordered to "pack up and go home!"

American missionaries in some African countries have been expelled because they carried out subversive activities.

Broad sections of Afro-Asian opinion condemn the penetration of American reactionary and gutter culture. The closing down of U.S. agencies for cultural aggression and the expulsion of American personnel engaging in this activity have been frequently reported. U.S.I.S. offices have become the targets for attacks in many places, its libraries raided and books burnt.

All this shows that, contrary to the wishes of U.S. imperialism, its attempt to use ideological infiltration as a means to facilitate its political control and economic plunder will only hasten the awakening of the Afro-Asian people.

⁷ *The Strategy of Truth*, op. cit., p. 6.