



DIPLOMATS, DUPES, AND TRAITORS

by Thomas Fleming

Election '88 has been so far a political flea circus in which the issues are as microscopic as the candidates. The one interesting candidate has been the Rev. Jesse Jackson. If you have seen his very effective commercials, you will remember the pictures of Jackson meeting with President Assad of Syria, and the voice-over reminding us that of all the candidates Jackson is the only one who has carried out top-level discussions with foreign heads of state.

Jesse Jackson is hardly alone in playing the role of ambassador to the world. There are many others: Dr. Bernard Lown, for example. In 1985 Dr. Lown, along with Dr. Yevgeny Chazov of the Soviet Union, received a Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts on behalf of nuclear disarmament. Chazov and Lown were co-founders of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (or IPPNW). Dr. Chazov was equally well-known in the West for signing a statement that bitterly attacked Andrei Sakharov, the Nobel prize-winning nuclear physicist. Sakharov at that time was in forced internal exile and, by all accounts, was being held in a hospital and undergoing a compulsory treatment of psychotropic drugs.

Critics of IPPNW like Edward Lozansky have made the obvious objection to their struggle for world peace: "There's a fundamental link," says Lozansky, "between preservation of world peace and human rights. . . . Only when Soviet people like Sakharov have the opportunity to speak free can we talk about trust, about stopping the arms race, about nuclear disarmament."

One citizen diplomat who has earned the trust of Soviet leaders is Armand Hammer. Hammer was the feature of a recent Soviet television show, entitled *Comrade Capitalist*, that honors him for a lifetime of service to the USSR. Hammer claims to be on friendly terms with most of the world's leaders and carries messages back and forth between President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev. Jesse Jackson is a comparative newcomer to citizen diplomacy, but Hammer has been at it since 1921, when he cut his first deal with the USSR—he still treasures his personally autographed picture of Lenin.

It is hard to tell where Hammer stands politically. As a very rich capitalist he supported Richard Nixon to the point of making an illegal contribution to his campaign, but he has never repudiated his father's activities in support of the Communist Party. More than one liberal publication—*Harper's* and *The New York Times*, for example—have



suggested that Hammer's unflagging support for US-Soviet trade has benefited the USSR far more than the US.

Private diplomacy is not confined to the visible celebrities who actively enter into practical negotiations with high-level representatives of foreign governments. More typical are the political idealists who go to the USSR on citizen diplomacy tours, hoping to make personal contact with the Russian people. A recent special issue of *New Age* magazine listed page after page of tours run by such organizations as Citizen Exchange Council, Continuing the Peace Dialogue, and Earth Stewards Network. Imagine the fun you could have on a New Age tour, eating tofu and bean sprouts and listening to space-age elevator music. At least they'd let you smoke on the plane—anything, that is, but tobacco. I recently heard the ultimate New Age justification for these efforts. You see, I was told, some monkeys were taught by scientists to wash sandy bananas off in the ocean. Later, when the scientists went to another island, they discovered that its monkeys already had learned how to wash off their food. The message? Just like the monkeys, we humans also have a cosmic consciousness, and what we talk about in Kiev or Dubuque is communicated to all of humanity. (Of course, they got the monkey story wrong. The valuable skill was learned by a young monkey and communicated to the group, who passed it down to future generations as a cultural tradition. The real story has a rather different moral.)

A typical example of an ordinary citizen diplomat is Nurse Sharon Tennison, who has been going to the USSR since 1983. According to the authors of *Citizen Diplomats*, her eyes brim with tears when she speaks of Russia and the people she has met on her trips. Her best friend is an American woman who chose to live in Moscow, because—as she says—they have better day care. Congress had better hurry up and pass a national child-care plan before there is a mass exodus of working mothers to the USSR. When Nurse Tennison is asked about all the human rights violations in the Soviet Union—not to mention the tens of millions of fatalities—she responds with the example of a native American doing time for murder. You see, there's right and wrong on both sides.

Perhaps the most well-known American tourist to fall in love with the USSR was Samantha Smith. While little Samantha may well have been used as a "pawn in a propaganda war"—as Nicholas Daniloff described her—she had a good excuse: she was only 10 years old when she wrote Mr. Andropov her famous letter. I have no doubt of the sincerity of her motives, by the way. At the age of 10 she recognized that Yuri Andropov wanted to conquer the world. Would it be uncharitable to point out that when the girl died in a plane wreck, she was being sent around by her liberal parents to stir up opposition to the national defense of the United States? It is a great pity when the young must die as a sacrifice to the ideology of an older generation.

Even more famous than Samantha Smith is the radical actress-turned-workout capitalist, Jane Fonda. Miss Fonda's forays in the cause of World Peace were back in the news on Memorial Day, when various veterans' groups decided either to forgive or not to forgive the half-repentant actress. (Like Scarlett O'Hara, she's not sorry for what she did as much as for the trouble it has brought her. The best excuse she can come up with is that she was on drugs at the time.

What's Jim Wright smoking?)

In fact, most of her actions amounted to little more than a harmless publicity stunt, the sort of thing we expect from actresses who display more skin than talent in their films. Other American peace activists went farther and collaborated openly with the North Vietnamese. Admiral James Stockdale, in his book *In Love and War*, recounts the story of an American POW who had been tortured into making a phoney list of pilots who refused to serve in an immoral war. However, he had the presence of mind to insert enough ridiculous names, like Clark Kent, into his radio broadcasts that any sensible American would know he was acting under duress. He got away with it until a group of American radicals tipped off the North Vietnamese. The torturers were not amused.

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Even when they are not openly collaborating with an enemy or profiting from Soviet slave labor, even when their purpose is as honorable as Jesse Jackson's when he attempted to secure the release of an American serviceman being held hostage, it is not the interest of the United States they represent, but the interests of party, faction, social class, or ethnic group. Jesse Jackson went to Syria, remember, as the self-proclaimed spokesman for *black* Americans, just as Russell Banks—the American Indian movement leader—went to Nicaragua for the sole purpose of checking on the Miskito Indians.

Even when private diplomacy efforts are patriotic gestures, most Americans are so ill-educated in the languages, histories, and customs of foreign countries that the stereotype of the ugly American abroad comes close to the truth. Even our professional diplomats—to say nothing of politically appointed ambassadors—rarely match European standards. In the specific case of the USSR, it is a very alien culture that Europeans and Americans have always had trouble understanding. There is a famous story about the British poet laureate Lord Tennyson and his encounter with Russian culture. As the story goes, Tennyson was at a shooting party on the Isle of Wight with a group that included a number of Russian aristocrats. He met one of them returning from a day's hunting and asked him how he had done. "I shot two peasants," replied the Russian. "You mean pheasants, don't you?" asked the poet. "No, peasants," insisted the Russian; "They were insolent, so I shot them."

This may be one of those stories one nation makes up about another, but the potential for misunderstanding is real and dangerous. When private citizens go to the Soviet Union, with little or no knowledge of the Russian language or the communist system, they are inevitably given a Potemkin village tour. If they are important enough, they may happen to meet attractive Russian girls, who happen to fall in love with them. It is not the girls' fault if they work for

the KGB. One of the first Americans to visit the USSR after the Revolution was the journalist Lincoln Steffens, who, after a brief formal tour, felt confident enough to declare, "I have seen the future, and it works." Steffens was no more gullible than the hundreds of journalists and travelers who return with heartwarming stories about their experiences. During Stalin's purge trials, when protest from the West might have halted the massacres, or later on, when the US and Great Britain were sending back thousands of Russians and East Europeans to certain death in Operation Keelhaul, friends of the Soviets were reassuring Americans about the justice of the Soviet system and the good intentions of Joseph Stalin.

Consider this more recent example of American gullibility. In April of 1984 former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter held a two-day consultation on very sensitive topics in foreign affairs, including arms control. The sponsors included Ford Motor, Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, and the Southern Armand Hammer, Ted Turner. Among those present were Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, Evgeny Velikov (the leading Soviet ABM expert), Lt. General Konstantin Mikhailov, and Sergei Tarasenko, deputy chief of the USA Department in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. As Richard Staar reported in *Chronicles*, on point after crucial point, the former US Presidents sided with the Soviets in blaming the Reagan administration for blocking progress in arms control. When Navy Secretary John Lehman attempted to present the record of Soviet violations, both Carter and Ford rebuked him. Now, while we can appreciate the pathetic need of former Presidents to recapture the limelight, such public shenanigans are hardly a service to the security of the American people.

The Constitution is very clear in assigning foreign policy responsibilities to the executive and legislative branches of the national government. So far as I know, those powers

were only openly challenged once in our history, during the Hartford Convention of 1814. Even before the War of 1812, prominent New England politicians had been disloyally intriguing with the British, and during the war disgruntled federalists like Timothy Pickering were in favor of making an immediate separate peace with the British. The leaders of the convention were more cautious and contented themselves with sketching out a New England Confederation in which the states could withhold troops and supplies in the case of war and demanding the right to control the federal taxes collected within their states. Not all New Englanders were disloyal in 1814, and in the Massachusetts Senate John Holmes of Maine made his reputation in a speech attacking the convention. Fortunately, these deliberations were interrupted by the news of General Jackson's victory at the Battle of New Orleans and the signing of the treaty of Ghent. Even the Civil War, which threatened the existence of the Union, did not challenge the national government's exclusive right to conduct foreign policy.

The past 100 years have witnessed a growing confusion over the roles of the citizen and the various governments to which he is subject. For a number of reasons, we have seen fit to whittle away at the powers of the states, counties, and city governments to regulate their own affairs. At the same time individuals, organizations, and local governments have increasingly begun to arrogate unto themselves the powers of the federal government in matters of foreign policy and defense.

A few examples: Our neighboring state of Wisconsin, the best socialist state this side of Sweden, decided a few years ago to adopt Nicaragua as a "sister state" (the capitol, Madison, is also a "sister city" of Managua). You can imagine what sort of fools the leftist governor and his staff made of themselves as they consulted on matters of trade and foreign policy with the Sandinistas. As you drive into Madison, you can breathe a sigh of relief, because it is a nuclear-free zone. (So is Chicago, by the way, the home of nuclear weapons research.) I hope the Soviets know about Madison, because what Edward Rozek says of Boulder, Colorado is true of most university towns: the Russians would not want to destroy a place with so many of their friends on the faculty. In Madison, you also don't have to worry about the rules of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, because a number of churches have declared themselves sanctuary churches for any illegal alien who is willing to brave the cold winters.

An even more interesting challenge to the INS and to the Congress was mounted by the State of New York recently, when the state sued for an extension of the amnesty deadline for registration. I stand second to no one in my advocacy of the rights of state and local governments in areas that concern them, but it is hard to justify the actions of cities and states that claim the right to interfere in affairs of state and national defense by encouraging the violation of our immigration laws and by threatening to prevent the transportation of weapons and materials vital to the protection of the United States. If I were the President, I'd forget about the threat in the Persian Gulf and concentrate on the nuclear-free cities in the United States. Who knows what good might be done by sending the troops into Madison and Cambridge?

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:
America: As Others See Us

"The American character is a complicated one. Contrary to the generally accepted assumption (especially in Europe), Americans are not a simple people. Nor are American manners simple. One of the problems is the American confusion of publicity and privacy. It is because of the invasion of the former into the domains of the latter that in many places and in many ways celebrity has replaced society in America; it is therefore also one of the remnant habits of the old American upper class to observe and respect privacy."

—from "American Manners" by John Lukacs

A Writer in Exile
Ovid's Epistulae Ex Ponto, II.7

rendered by David R. Slavitt

*The Roman poet, Publius Ovidius Naso, was exiled to Tomis on the Black Sea by
the Emperor Augustus in 8 A.D.*

To Atticus

From the Getan badlands, my letter comes to you with good wishes, Atticus: How goes life for you? And I wonder how it goes for me with you—do I keep a place, still, in your heart? I ought not doubt, but I take nothing for granted and dread at every step the treacherous footing. I pray you will indulge me. Even unruffled waters can scare a shipwreck survivor; a fish that has once felt the hook is wary of the bronze barb that every morsel thereafter may hide; the lamb, afraid of the wolf, may even flee the protecting sheepdog . . . Or better, think of a man with a wound who can't help but shrink from the doctor's touch. It doesn't make any sense: one understands but can't help flinching. What's happened to me has changed me, made me gun-shy, turned me jumpy, turned my mental landscape ghastly. Every random shadow is quick with menace. The world has changed, turned inimical, inhospitable, the gods are implacable. Even Fortune, no longer fickle, has steadied to hold me fast in her malign regard. It sounds implausible? Yes, I agree, it does, for the long string of my woes and losses breaks all rules, defies reason itself so that calculation is pointless, as it is in a field of wheat, each ear, each grain a blur no eye can accommodate, no mind take in. Instead, by the blooms in a rolling meadow of thyme, by the birds in a wheeling flock, the fish in a gleaming school, reckon my hurts of land and air and sea. Nowhere in all the world is there a more savage and brutish tribe than the Getans, my neighbors, but even they are pained to hear my misfortunes, a full accounting of which would run on, hypnotic, grand, my catalogue of the ships, every one of them wrecked, foundered, sunk. If I fear to hear how you think of me these days, it's nothing you've done or failed to do, but only me and my terrible luck. Whatever bad can happen, will. And it looms. And I fear it. I cannot remember what carelessness was, or joy. Grief is my habit, my keeper, the only mirror in which I can recognize my face, care-worn and scarred as a rock water has pock-marked so that there's no space left for any new blow's bruise. I'm worn thin as an old

plowshare some poor peasant leaves to his eldest son.

My heart is an Appian Way for the wagon wheels and hoofs to pound with one burden after another.

In the hope of renown, men devote their lives to art; my gifts brought me only disgrace and ruin.

My life was blameless—much good has that done me. It's hardly a comfort to think of my unrewarded virtues.

Serious sinners are pardoned—because their friends have prayed for them; my friends are all of a sudden mutes.

Some have managed to plead in their own behalf—in order to manage that, you have to be there at the ear of power: I was away at the critical time and could say nothing to help myself. The silent displeasure of Caesar is fearsome enough, but what he said of me aloud, aroused, was everywhere reported.

It was terrible, ill luck piled upon ill luck: the dead of winter, storms, rough seas, and bitter cold; no friend in sight but only a ravening horde eager to take advantage, to profit from my misfortunes; the worst possible venue, the most dismal, the farthest from Rome, the least protected, the most barren . . .

The abraded soul can sometimes find some solace in tending a garden: I look out on a barren, stony field, its poor stalks stunted by icy Sarmatian winds and broken by hostile raiders' horses' hoofs that have crossed and then swept back again. The nervous, the near mad can take a kind of comfort in the gentle purling of streams and the play of light on running water; here the rivers are dun and dull or brackish when the tide runs. Everything stinks or is broken, or they are fresh out of it, or they never heard of it . . . All I'm going on here is nerve, courage, more than I thought I had. I am not mad;

I hang on; I do exercise; I keep my chin up and my head comparatively high—to let go even a little is to fall completely apart. It's stupid, and yet I continue to hope, imagining how one day the prince's ire may yet melt. To give up on that would be to give up absolutely. You and a few friends have held fast, as I hold fast to you, believing in your belief, without which I would drown.