



Written by **John Rees**

Reprinted with permission from The Review of the News, November 1977

K.G.B. Agent Wilfred Burchett Tours U.S. Campuses

More than a thousand revolutionaries, radicals, and Communists jammed the Washington Irving High School auditorium in New York City on October 21st to hear a 66-year-old alien named (Peter) Wilfred Burchett detail his latest assignment for the International Communist Conspiracy. The assignment: to organize an agit-prop network on behalf of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as support for an intensified campaign demanding U.S. economic aid. Comrade Burchett had arrived at Kennedy International Airport in New York on October 19th to commence a two-month series of lectures and fundraising engagements on behalf of the Communists. We are told that, before obtaining his visa, Burchett informed the U.S. Embassy in Paris he would not receive fees for his lecture tour. Apparently the Embassy staff did not ask who would be putting up the thousands of dollars for travel expenses and promotion.

Of special interest is the fact that Wilfred Burchett was named as a K.G.B. agent in sworn Senate testimony eight years ago by the very Soviet official who had recruited him into that spy agency before defecting to the West. For years Burchett has been assigned to countries in which Communist forces have been actively conducting campaigns of terrorism and subversion, serving as both propagandist and advisor. His activities in the United States, however, had been limited. While he had earlier been granted highly restricted visas so that he could cover the United Nations in New York City, this time he was given a "McGovern waiver" – an automatic recommendation for entry now being granted persons unqualified for U.S. visas because of their Communist affiliations.

In a report to the House of Representatives on October 18th, Congressman Lawrence Patton McDonald (D.Georgia) revealed: "The public evidence of Burchett's vicious activities on behalf of the Communists includes proposing to the K.G.B. that he blackmail his former mistress who had later married a U.S. Air Force general; identifying Western newsmen to the K.G.B. as possible targets for subversion; identifying to the K.G.B. possible anti-Communist intelligence agents among Western correspondents in Soviet-controlled territory; participating as a member of Communist Chinese and North Korean interrogation teams who were brutally extracting false germ-warfare confessions from captured U.S. airmen in Korea; performing similar services as an interrogator and coordinator of interrogations for the Vietnamese Communists; and, serving as a propagandist and covert political agent for Ho chi Minh and Chou En-lai."

In 1971, while in the United States as a United Nations correspondent on a restricted visa, Burchett illegally visited Washington, D.C., at the instigation of then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to discuss the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. According to Burchett, he had been in contact with Kissinger since 1967 when a third party who had met Kissinger at a 1966 Pugwash conference in Poland introduced them. This contact was made four years after (Peter) Burchett had been identified to Western intelligence services as a K.G.B. agent by George Karlin,



born Yuri Visilevich Krotkov, who from 1946 until his defection to Great Britain in 1963 was a K.G.B. officer assigned to subverting Western journalists and (later) to entrapping Western diplomats in Moscow.

In November 1969, Karlin described in his testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee how shortly after his own “cooptation” into the K.G.B. he was assigned to Berlin under cover of being a writer for the Soviet Informational Bureau (now called Novesty). George Karlin reported that he had been assigned to act as a “coat-trailer” in hopes of being recruited by the British intelligence service so he might start a career as a K.G.B. double agent.

Burchett, whom Karlin described as a highly intelligent man, surmised Karlin’s role as an espionage agent of the Soviet secret police. George Karlin testified that, after a visit to the East German rocket center at Peenemünde on a tour for Western journalists Karlin had conducted, Burchett made a point of telling Karlin that a British Government official had asked him what he had seen at Peenemünde. Karlin said he realized: “That’s a man who wants to sell himself. He was looking for a buyer too.” Karlin promptly reported Burchett’s overtures to his superiors in the K.G.B.- overtures that soon involved Burchett’s father, then visiting Berlin from Australia, proclaiming his own Communist views to Karlin so that “it would be easier for Peter.”

Burchett was soon covering the show trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary, ostensibly as a correspondent for Western newspapers. Looking back on his “free lance” work there, he later boasted: “It completely knocked out the rubbish about tortures, drug a and extracted confessions and showed the Cardinal for the miserable, intriguing, ambitious little man he was.”

After his service to the Reds in Budapest, Burchett returned to Australia, where he did a little disarmament propaganda for the Soviet Union’s international psychological warfare apparatus, the World Peace Council. He then turned up in Peking and later in North Korea. In 1952, he was a member of a Communist interrogation team (containing both Red Chinese and North Koreans) which extracted phony germ-warfare confessions from American P.O.W.s. In fact there are indications that the lies about U.S. germ warfare in Korea’ originated with Burchett, who got his idea from an early work of science fiction by socialist Jack London.

In 1956, Wilfred Burchett again met with K.G.B. agent Karlin, this time in Moscow. His Australian passport had been withdrawn because of his traitorous activities in North Korea and he was traveling on documents provided by the North Vietnamese Communists.* According to George Karlin’s sworn testimony, Burchett informed Karlin that he was a member of the secret Communist Party underground of Australia. And he further informed the K.G.B. official that when he had been in the People’s Republic of China and North Korea as a “free lance” writer: “He was supplied, he was paid, by the Chinese Communist Party all that period. Then when he came to Vietnam...all his expenses were paid by the Vietnamese Communist Party, by Ho Chi Minh.”

Burchett boasted of his close personal relationships with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai and with Vietnamese Communist boss Ho chi Minh, stating “that Ho gave him a house in Hanoi, and a car, a secretary, that he was ‘equipped’ very beautifully by the Vietnamese Communist Party.”

Wilfred Burchett now proposed that he move to Moscow and act “in the same position as he was in



China and in Vietnam. In other words, to be a free-lance correspondent, representing the American newspaper, 'National Guardian.' " That journal still carries Burchett as its principal foreign correspondent and is coordinating his U.S. lecture tour from its offices. It was described in 1966 by the former House Committee on Un-American Activities as having "manifested itself from the beginning as a virtual official propaganda arm of Soviet Russia." Now renamed *The Guardian*, it declares that its purpose is "to assist in bringing to birth a new revolutionary political party, based on the working class, armed with the science of Marxism-Leninism, committed to socialist revolution." A national political organization as well as a publication, The Guardian specializes in endorsing and publicizing Marxist-Leninist terrorist movements.

Burchett told Karlin that even with "accreditation" from this U.S. Communist newspaper, money would still be a problem, and asked to be paid by the Soviet Communist Party. Representatives of the Australian Communist Party then in Moscow for the Soviet Communist Party Congress were asked by Burchett to intervene on his behalf with Soviet officials. The K.G.B. then supplied Burchett with a large luxury apartment during his Moscow residency. Former K.G.B. official Karlin further testified that, in Moscow, Burchett maintained a close relationship with Colonel Borodin Barsegov, then head of the special K.G.B. department responsible for subverting foreign correspondents in Moscow. Karlin identified Burchett's "case officer" in Moscow as a "top-rank K.G.B. man" named Victor Alexandrevich Kartzev, who was for security purposes using the alias Victor Karev.

The incredible part, however, is that all of this is well known. In November 1974, Wilfred Burchett lost a libel suit he brought in Australia challenging Karlin's sworn charges that he was a K.G.B. agent. It resulted when George Karlin's testimony before a Committee of the U.S. Senate was brought to the attention of the Australian Senate and republished in a magazine there. During the 10-day trial, the defense produced dramatic evidence from former Korean War P.O.W.s that Wilfred Burchett was a Communist agent who had participated in extorting germ-warfare confessions. A number of former P.O.W.s, both British and American, traveled to Australia to describe their firsthand experiences with the traitor Burchett. Karlin restated his charges in an affidavit. And additional damning testimony was provided by a former North Vietnamese officer and by a South Vietnamese former Vietcong officer, as to their personal knowledge of Burchett's activities as an advisor to the Communists in propaganda and psychological warfare.

Amidst his denials of having participated in brainwashing, torture, or interrogations of allied prisoners, Burchett's evidence proved contradictory and in several instances obviously false. He denied that he had ever been paid by the Soviet, Red Chinese, or North Vietnamese governments, or that he had acted as an espionage agent; but the defense lawyers were cautious about asking Burchett whether he was paid by the Communist parties of the U.S.S.R., Red China, North Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, or the Iron Curtain countries. Nor is there any indication Burchett was asked about his acting as a propaganda agent or "agent of influence" for either the Communist parties of those countries or for their official governmental agencies.

Nevertheless, the evidence was so overwhelming that the Australian jury took less than four hours to find against K.G.B. agent Wilfred Burchett and to order him to pay the \$100,000 costs of the



trial.

It should be noted that, at the time Comrade Burchett brought suit in Australia, the Government there was controlled by a Marxist and anti-U.S. party among whose leaders Burchett had friends. It was this radical Australian Government which returned Burchett's passport, and it was suggested that if he won his libel action he could become the Government's "roving ambassador in the Communist world" in an effort to heal whatever ideological split exists between Peking and Moscow. But Burchett could not clear his name; the radical Government in Australia was defeated in subsequent elections; and, any such ambassadorship for Burchett is now totally out of the question as Australia has returned to its senses.

Wilfred Burchett's ambition to front the reconciliation of Moscow and Peking nonetheless remains and is reflected in the composition of the "Support Committee" formed to sponsor his American tour. It embraces the full ideological spectrum of the Left from identified members of the Communist Party, U.S.A., Castroites and Maoists, through the ranks of assorted willing dupes.

The cosponsors of the Wilfred Burchett Support Committee, 33 West 17th Street, New York City 10011 (212/691-0404), include Mia Adjeli, Frances Beal, Norma Becker, Noam Chomsky, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Dave Dellinger, Dick Gregory, William Kunstler, Corliss Lamont, Erwin Salk, Sidney Lens, Ruth Meyers, Beatrice Milwe, Sidney Milwe, Sidney Peck, Irwin Silber, Jack D. Spiegel, Amy Swerdlow, Cora Weiss, and Howard Zinn. The coordinators of the committee are *Guardian* staffers Abe Weisburd and Naseem Jamali.

With identified K.G.B. agent Burchett free to travel in the U.S. it was no problem to organize an extensive U.S. and Canadian tour. His schedule opened with the aforementioned speech October 21st in New York City, followed by an October 23rd interview on ABC television by Marxist attorney Robert Van Lierop, an activist supporter of the bloody Mozembican FRELIMO Communists, and a speaking engagement at SUNY Buffalo. On October 26th the K.G.B. operative was at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University in the Canadian national capital. His schedule is very impressive. Ask yourself as you review it how an identified K.G.B. agent posing as a journalist could be invited to address the following academic audiences:

- October 31: **Iowa State**, Ames, Iowa, 8:00 p.m., Pioneer Room.
- November 1: **Ripon College**, Ripon, Wisconsin, 7:30 p.m.
- November 2: **Willamette University**, Portland, Oregon, 1:30 p.m.; University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 8:00 p.m.
- November 7: **University of California (Davis) Law School**, noon.
- November 9: **San Diego State University**, 7:30 p.m.;
- November 14: **Atlanta University**, afternoon.
- November 17: **Hampshire College**, Amherst, Massachusetts, 12:30 p.m.
- November 18: **Harvard University**, Nieman Journalism Society, 4 p.m.
- November 20: **Trinity College**, Hartford, Connecticut, 4 p.m.
- November 21: **SUNY Binghamton**. New York. 7:30 p.m.
- November 23: **Howard University**, Washington, D.C., 4 p.m.
- November 28: **Columbia University**, Institute of African Studies, 7:30 p.m.



- November 30: **Yale University**, New Haven, Connecticut, 12:30 p.m.
- December 1: **University of Maine**, Orono, Maine, noon.
- December 3: **SUNY Old Westbury**, Long Island, New York, 11:00 a.m.
- December 7: **University of Michigan**, Ann Arbor, 8:00 p.m.
- December 8: **Michigan University**, Ypsilanti, 7:00 p.m.

For his triumphal venture onto the American collegiate lecture circuit, Burchett is being acclaimed by his Support Committee publicists as “one of the world’s most respected and most knowledgeable journalists.” Apparently this version of his career is behind the White House intervention that made his tour possible. According to Support Committee coordinator Nassem Jamali, there were initial delays in obtaining a visa for Comrade Burchett; but then “we went to the White House, and when they heard of the roadblocks they went out of their way to help.” The Support Committee would not say who went to the White House, or who in the White House “went out of their way” to help the identified K.G.B. agent tour American colleges under cover of being a journalist. The State Department denied any official White House involvement, a spokesman stating “There is nothing on file to show that the White House intervened.” Of course there wouldn’t be.

Wilfred Burchett’s first public engagement on his U.S. tour, as we have noted, was the evening of Friday, October 21st, at a New York City high school auditorium. The evening turned out to be another reunion of those who had worked for the victory of the North Vietnamese Communists and their Vietcong terrorists. David Dellinger, the self-styled “small c” Communist, introduced Communist Vietnam’s U.N. Ambassador Dinh ba Thi, who for the next 33 minutes recited the virtues of Red rule in Vietnam, the problems of “socialist reconstruction,” the evils and “moral guilt” of the “U.S. imperialists and neocolonialists,” and commended Burchett and The Guardian for the “important role” they had played in “winning the war.” The Communist Ambassador stressed the importance of Burchett’s new assignment, which he said is “to ensure that the U.S. delivers on the promises (of reconstruction aid) it made during the Paris Peace talks.” The Ambassador received a standing ovation.

Greeted by the prolonged ovation which had followed the speech by Communist Vietnam’s U.N. Ambassador, Burchett spoke for one and a half hours, giving a polemical overview of the “struggle against imperialism” in Southeast Asia, Korea, and Southern Africa. He revealed that he had recently met with North Korean dictator Kim n Sung sad had found him in “excellent health.” He also revealed that he had viewed many unpublished documents that originated in the United States-possibly from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon which reportedly did not destroy its files and archives before the North Vietnamese took control of the city. Among these documents, Burchett said, were some by General Westmoreland complaining that he had not been “allowed to win the war.” Said Comrade Burchett, “The war was un-winnable from the start; it was a people’s war and the masses involved prevented U.S. victory.”

The identified K.G.B. agent reiterated the strategy of people’s war for his audience and did his best to promote his soon-to-be-published book, *Catapult To Freedom*. But the audience seemed nonplussed by Burchett’s speech. They had expected a more relaxed presentation full of personal



anecdotes about being a reporter in North Vietnam, Angola, Korea, and elsewhere, while accompanying the “national liberation fighters.” Instead they were subjected to an evening of hardline Leninist dialectics on the “nature of the struggle” that was almost incomprehensible to any but a handful of the most sophisticated ideologues.

Following his diatribe, Comrade Wilfred appeared to be exhausted. So much so that his presence at a subsequent *Guardian* fundraising party had to be cancelled. That (alas) forestalled private questioning of the touring K.G.B. agent by our investigative reporters. For the moment.

*In 1971 it was the Communist Government of Cuba that provided Burchett with his passport.