

Part 5/13/23

Election '72: Another Propaganda Letter

A public attack on Greek exile leader Elias Demetracopoulos as "an obscure, Greek Communist journalist" at the height of the presidential campaign last fall has now been linked to an anti-McGovern letter-writing campaign inspired by John B. Connally's Democrats-for-Nixon organization.

Federal investigators digging into the black propaganda primary campaign attacks on Sens. Edmund Muskie, Hubert H. Humphrey and Henry M. Jackson in Florida, New Hampshire and elsewhere have now uncovered evidence linking the attack on Demetracopoulos to Democrats-for-Nixon.

Shortly after his nomination last summer, Sen. George McGovern gave a statement to Demetracopoulos, a Greek exile leader, pledging to cut off all U.S. military aid to Greece if elected. On Aug. 18, Mayor John P. Rousakis of Savannah, Ga., wrote McGovern that he was "shocked and appalled" both by this policy and by McGovern's irresponsibility in choosing "an obscure Greek communist journalist" as his mouthpiece.

That "obscure Greek Communist journalist" could only be Demetracopoulos, a respected editor and writer in pre-1967 Greece who has been lobbying against Greek strongman George Papadopoulos and Mr. Nixon's support for him ever since.

The attack on Demetracopoulos via Rousakis's private letter to McGovern was then published throughout the United States in the Greek-American press—not at the time it was written but just three weeks before the election. On Nov. 28, lawyers for Demetra-

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copoulos formally asked the mayor to retract what looked like an "intention to defame" the exile Greek leader.

But it was not until Jan. 8 that the mayor found time to reply, and his reply stated that he had been wrong. It also stated that his original use of the word "Communist" to describe Demetracopoulos "was based on a report that was given to me."

When we called the mayor to ask the source of this "report," he was evasive but finally said he had "read it" in a newspaper column. When we asked him to quote from that column, he said the column had reported that Demetracopoulos, upon leaving Greece after the coup d'etat in 1967, stopped off in Poland for a few days.

This was the entire basis for his labelling Demetracopoulos "Communist." He insisted to us, "No one prompted me on this," the mayor said.

But according to federal investigators, the essence of the mayor's letter to McGovern was originally drafted on Democrats-for-Nixon letterhead and

sent to Rousakis. The mayor's own letter became a principal exhibit in the anti-McGovern campaign of Sam Nafis, named vice chairman of Democrats-for-Nixon in September to attract the large Greek ethnic vote to Mr. Nixon.

For the first time in his career, Republican National Chairman George Bush is seriously considering a race for governor of Texas in the 1974 Texas election.

Bush is under growing pressure from such old-line Republican power in Texas as former national committeeman and state chairman Peter O'Donnell and such new party grantees as John B. Connally.

Moreover, some top Connally-style Democrats have let it be known that if Bush runs for governor they will follow Connally into the Republican Party.

But perhaps more important than these pressures on Bush is the fact, known to political intimates, that the

Washington scene as viewed from GOP headquarters holds few charms for him. He feels each new Watergate revelation further damages his party even though the scandal was caused not by traditional party regulars but by what one party leader calls the White House "carpetbaggers."

Bush could easily beat conservative Republican Henry (Hank) Grover in the primary and might go into the election as a 50-50 even shot for governor, far better odds than he faced in his two losing attempts for the senate.

A fund-raising tea party in the attractive Georgetown house of Mrs. Dean G. Acheson should raise several thousand dollars for the infant Committee for a Democratic Majority (CDM), a political brainchild of Democratic operative Ben J. Wattenberg.

Wattenberg, an intellectual out of Lyndon Johnson's White House and co-author of the bestselling "The Real Majority" (with Richard Scammon), has arranged for Sens. Hubert H. Humphrey and Henry M. Jackson to be honor guests at the May 21, \$50-a-head party, with 250 invitations ready for mailing.

The symbolism of the Acheson house is stark. A key principle behind CDM is to keep the U.S. strong and active as a world power and to battle the new isolationism now rising on the Democratic left. The home of Alice Acheson, widow of the Secretary of State for Harry S. Truman who molded the Democratic Party's whole postwar foreign policy, is the ideal place to advertise the similar foreign policies of the CDM.