The Soviet hate campaign against the United States is going full blast. The campaign, which is conducted in an authoritarian manner, started about a half year ago and has increased in violence ever since. The accusation that the Americans conduct bacteriological warfare in Korea was only one of its highlights. This heavy artillery was not designed to be effective only in the Soviet sphere of power. It is at the same time a weapon in the Cold War.

Moscow knows very well that everywhere in Europe there is such a thing as anti-Americanism. This anti-Americanism has various causes and various shades. It definitely is a soft spot in the unity of the West. And the Soviets have an eye for soft spots. They make use of the European anti-Americanism, although they know perfectly well that this anti-Americanism has hardly anything to do with pro-Soviet sympathies.

Anti-Americanism

Naturally, there are Communists west of the Iron Curtain, too. Naturally, it is their job to agitate against America. This is the well-known “fifth column.” But much more interesting and in some respects much more dangerous is the still hardly known “sixth column” of “good” Europeans who are anti-Communist and anti-American at the same time.

The resentment against America is deeply rooted. This resentment can be found in all western European countries, from England to Greece. It can be found at all levels of society, from the man-in-the-street to the parliaments and the governments. Any close observer of this development cannot doubt that the anti-American feelings and trends in public opinion have increased in volume and intensity during the last year. For Europeans from different nations it has even become a favored basis of approach and mutual understanding to criticize jointly “the” Americans.

Mr. Friedlaender, who is one of the foremost political writers in Germany, presented this commentary in his column “As I See It” Aug. 16 in the Hamburger Abendblatt and Stuttgart Nachrichten. The translation, which is by Robert Lochner, chief of the Press Branch, Information Division, HICOG, is printed in the Information Bulletin by special permission of Mr. Friedlaender and cannot be reprinted without specific authorization of the author. The views expressed in the commentary are those of the writer and their presentation here does not necessarily imply concurrence by US authorities.

Fear and Weakness

Many factors join together to produce this reaction—anti-capitalist ire as well as capitalist envy. Europe has grown poor and weak and, with a queer logic, Europe begrudges America its wealth and power. Many Europeans are very touchy about their benefactors from beyond the sea and at the same time angry when US aid is reduced. They seek refuge in a false beggar’s pride and in an equally false cultural snobbery. They are eager to detect the “barbarians” in the Americans so that they may look down upon them.

And if present-day European reality is obviously not such as to prove its superiority over that of the Americans, consolation is sought in European museums and archives. There is plenty of room for contradictions in the gap between today’s inferiority complex and yesterday’s claim of superiority. Europe is afraid of too great an alien influence. Europe is afraid of being taken in tow by America. Its actual resistance against the Americanization of large parts of its civilization is really weak, but it protests all the same. In the same way it has let itself be protected by America for years while dreaming of being the “third force” or dreaming of an idyllic neutrality.

Oh, how wonderful it would be to believe that this is only an American-Soviet conflict which really does not concern the Europeans! How wonderful it would be to transfer into a lifeboat reserved for Europeans from the boat in which one sits together with the Americans—and not even at the helm! Yes, the helm! For too long a time one has been at the helm oneself to be able to hand it to somebody else ungrudgingly. For centuries Europe was the focus of world history. That is a thing of the past. And now one views the new world power beyond the Atlantic with the displeasure of the weak.

America is a world power against its own will. It is a world power suffering growing pains. America’s best friends in Europe are aware of this. There is the well-known haphazardness of its policies which does not permit predictions of what will come tomorrow. There is the naive joy of one’s own success which misleads one to believe in panacea. But the “American way of life” cannot readily be exported, certainly not by shirt sleeve missionaries. The oversimplification of problems is not a way to their solution.

Who Is Dangerous?

If America perhaps has too little experience, Europe certainly has too much. One cannot claim that the British policy in the Near East or the French policy in Indo-China or Tunisia was more successful than the American policy in China. The American policy sometimes is too unpredictably flexible, the European policy tends to become rigidly inflexible. In Europe we make our problems so complicated that they become insoluble.

There is sufficient occasion here for mutual criticism between friends; such criticism could be very construc-