

SHOULD THE COMMUNIST PARTY BE OUTLAWED?

YES!

Col. John Thomas Taylor

NO!

William H. Chamberlin

ADMITTING the evil of Communism, what is the best means to combat it? One means proposed is to ban the Communist Party in the U. S. by legislation. This proposal is at present under consideration by Congress.

In favor of such legislation is Col. John Thomas Taylor, director of the national legislative committee of the American Legion. Opposed to it is William Henry Chamberlin, foreign correspondent, author, and lecturer. In the present article they answer the following questions proposed to them by the editors of **THE SIGN**:

1. Do you think legislation to outlaw the Communist Party is an effective way to meet the Communist threat?

2. Would a law outlawing the Communist Party be an invasion of constitutional rights?

3. Would legislation outlawing the Communist Party prejudice our relations with countries where the Communist Party is predominant or influential?

1. *Do you think legislation to outlaw the Communist Party is an effective way to meet the Communist threat?*

Col. Taylor

YES. Communism is an organized and fanatical world movement. Its ideology holds that the opposition between Communism and private enterprise is complete

and unalterable. As a result of their ideology, Communists believe that capitalism must die in the throes of bloody revolution.

I advocate the enactment of legislation embracing a seven-point domestic security plan designed to:

1) Outlaw the Communist Party in the United States.

- 2) Ban the use of mails to Communist publications.
- 3) Provide universal fingerprinting and identification.
- 4) Continue the registration of all aliens and authorize a check of their activities.
- 5) Deport all aliens advocating overthrow of the Government by force.
- 6) Deny admission to the United States of nationals from any country refusing to receive those aliens ordered deported from the United States.
- 7) Discontinue Federal aid to institutions of learning which refuse to purge their faculties of Communists and fellow travelers.

The Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, has just published its report of the investigation which it has been conducting. It is the unanimous opinion of this Committee that the Communist Party of the United States is, in fact, the agent of a foreign government. It is important that the Government and the people recognize this fact. If the Communist Party is to be properly dealt with, it is essential that the legislation of Congress and the thinking

of the people be predicated upon this fundamental fact.

Communists in the United States, exclusive of sympathizers and fellow travelers, number at least 100,000. Here are cadres for ten foreign divisions already on American soil. To them this country is but a theater of operations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, their motherland. They are agents of a foreign power; their allegiance is to a country other than America.

Objection has been raised to this legislation on the supposition that it will drive C o m m u n i s t s underground. The fact of the matter is, they have achieved their present standing as underminers of our Government by underground operations. Can they get any lower underground? They do not run around spreading their poison against this Government by wearing big, red label buttons bearing the Communist Party insignia. Twelve states in the United States have laws denying a place on the ballot to those organizations whose program includes overthrow of our form of government. They are: Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Oklahoma, Ohio, Oregon, Penn-

sylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Steps should be taken immediately to outlaw the Communist Party in the United States through the enactment of legislation. Unless this is done, America will again be living in a fool's paradise, the awakening from which will again cost millions of American lives and again cost billions of American dollars. If ever invasion comes to our shores, our cherished liberties will be its first victim. The rights of free speech, free press, public assembly, and freedom of worship as conscience dictates, will disappear under an enemy invader's hobnailed force, and the same thing will happen here as happened overseas in World War II. Industries, homes, and churches will be battered into heaps of dust and rubble, and ministers of the gospel and teachers of religion will be tortured and slain, for religion, which is the mainstay of a free democracy, is anathema to those who would destroy it as a primary step toward conquest.

Mr. Chamberlin

NO. I am keenly aware of the Communist threat to American security and the American way of life. But I

do not believe the outlawry of the American Communist Party would be an effective countermeasure.

The Communist threat does not lie in the fact that some seventy or eighty thousand people in this country belong to the Communist Party, nor in the fact that some two or three hundred thousand votes might be cast Communist candidates in national elections. There is no danger, within any predictable future, that the Communists could capture our Government by legal means, nor that they would be numerous enough or strong enough to launch a serious uprising against it.

Where, then, is the threat? It is to be found in the fact that American Communists, like Communists in all countries, are the organized fifth column of a powerful foreign nation, the Soviet Union, whose leaders are avowedly committed to a program of world domination through world revolution. The experience of our neighbor, Canada, shows that even a few Communists can do a good deal of harm as spies.

The infiltration of Communists into leading positions in certain trade unions and their skill in manipulating

"front" organizations into which they entice numbers of credulous non-Communists are dangerous mainly because these activities are part of an international conspiracy, directed from Moscow.

Would it not, then, be a good idea to outlaw these agents of a foreign power? My answer is in the negative because I think any bill making the Communist Party illegal would be very much like shooting off an old-fashioned blunderbuss in an attempt to kill a very agile mosquito.

Suppose the Communist Party were declared illegal by act of Congress, and that this act was upheld by the Supreme Court. Communists in every country are experts in protective camouflage. They are specifically instructed to play a continual double game, to lie, to cheat, to deceive, to conceal their identity when circumstances require it. If they were forbidden to function as Communists they would quickly form another party, giving it some nice-sounding name like "Jefferson Democrats" or "Lincoln Progressives."

What is not always understood is that the Communist in America is not very dangerous when he avows him-

self a Communist. To the vast majority of our people Communism is an alien and abhorrent doctrine. The dangerous advocate of Communist subversive ideas is the man or woman who regularly says: "I'm not a Communist, but..."

The best way to combat Communism is not to suppress it officially, to drive it underground, but rather to pin the Communist label plainly and unmistakably where it belongs, on Communist-dominated organizations. We must remember that Communism was suppressed with a ruthlessness which a free country like America could never match in Czarist Russia, and in Germany, Italy, and France during the war. Yet it remains powerful in these countries. It seems reasonable to assume that the effective answer to Communism here is not suppression, but rather a combination of two things: making our own democracy constantly more real and effective and carrying on a constant, relentless campaign of education and exposure, calculated to discredit Communists and Communist-front organizations, no matter what camouflage they may try to employ.

2. *Would a law outlawing the Communist Party be an invasion of constitutional rights?*

Col. Taylor

NO. There is question of outlawing the Communist conspiracy, which seeks to destroy our system of free enterprise—a conspiracy to overthrow our Government. This is treason, and in no place in our Constitution is one who commits treason guaranteed protection. The basis of Communist action in the world, whether in the United States or any other country, is the Communist creed, and this must never be lost sight of. It is their belief that there will be no peace on earth until all nations of the world are Communist. This is a very genuine belief held by a number of people, and in the furtherance of that belief they have developed a doctrine that the end justifies the means and that any means are justified in order to achieve this domination of the world by Communism.

If an American citizen wants to believe in the theory of Communism, he has a right to do so, but when he joins a party like the Communist Party of the United States, controlled and direc-

ted by a foreign government, then he has renounced his loyalty to the American Government and he has become the agent of a foreign government. As the agent of a foreign government he has no rights under our Constitution.

Mr. Chamberlin

YES, in my opinion an attempt to outlaw any political party would be contrary to the letter and spirit of the American Constitution. This, of course, does not mean that individual Communists who transgress laws against sedition, espionage, perjury, and commit other offenses, cannot and should not be called to account before the courts.

But our constitutional law and practice emphasize two points rather strongly. Expression of ideas, however wrong-headed and subversive they may seem to the majority of the people, has^o been left free, insofar as there is no direct incitation to commit a specific illegal act. And responsibility is conceived as an individual, rather than a group concern.

The Communist Party in this country as in every country, is a foreign fifth column. There is an abundance of evidence in the testimony of

disillusioned ex-Communists, in the very record of the Communist Party, with its abrupt switches of attitude to suit every change in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, that this is the case. But the threads which link the Party to Moscow are in the hands of a small number of trusted leaders, or of agents who are sent here directly from Moscow.

It would be difficult and probably impossible to convict the majority of rank-and-file American Communists of specific offenses against the law. The proscription of a whole party is alien to our tradition. It would set a precedent which might be dangerous to our basic philosophy of free discussion and government by consent.

To outlaw Communists as Communists would involve a grave risk of giving them a chance to pose as martyrs, to invoke the protection of the very Constitution which they would certainly abrogate the day after they came into power. I am not discussing now the measures which would be necessary for our security in the event of armed conflict between this country and the Soviet Union. In such an eventual-

ty every proved member of the Communist Party would be properly subject to internment, just as members of the German-American Bund, of Nazi-inspired and Japanese militarist organizations were liable to internment for the duration of the last war.

But so long as we are at peace, I think the following measures would be adequate to safeguard us against Communist fifth column aggression. These measures could all be taken without raising any reasonable question of violating constitutional rights.

There should be a careful screening of government employees for subversive affiliations. Laws against espionage and unwarranted betrayal of military and industrial secrets should be examined and plugged against loopholes. The FBI should be given all the funds and personnel it may need to track down foreign agents and spy rings such as the one which developed in Canada.

3. *Would legislation outlawing the Communist Party prejudice our relations with countries where the Communist Party is predominant or influential?*

Col. Taylor

NO. I say this because
Even in countries in the

Soviet sphere of influence the majority of people are anti-Communist. In those countries now occupied by armed forces of the Soviet Government, we find Communists entrenched in the labor movement, the government, the political parties, the schools and colleges, the press, the radio and films, churches and social organizations. Their influence is far out of proportion to their discipline, their control of strategic posts in mass organizations, and their ties with the Soviet Government, which has demonstrated its ability to transform insignificant Communist minorities into ruling parties.

The number of Communists in proportion to the population is relatively small in China, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Communist minority is struggling for power in Belgium, Italy, France, and Denmark. Even in Russia, with its 187 millions of people, the Communists admit only a membership of 6 million, but in all these countries the independent peoples struggling for freedom look to the United States to lead them out of the morass of their misery and poverty. If

we outlawed the Communist Party of the United States, it would be an inspiration to the peoples of the world who seek freedom but who are under the domination and control of a small minority of Communists within their borders.

Mr. Chamberlin

DOUBT whether it would have much real effect, one way or the other. No doubt there would be a hue and cry in the government-controlled press of the Soviet Union and its satellite states about what would be called an unparalleled suppression of liberty in the United States.

But the governing groups in Communist and Communist-dominated lands hate America anyway and will continue to hate it as the main obstacle to their dream of world domination, regardless of what we may do or refrain from doing. It is absurd to imagine that we can appease totalitarian Communism. Communist thinking, in Russia and outside of Russia, is dominated by Lenin's assertion, repeated with approval by Stalin in his book, *Problems of Leninism*.

"It is inconceivable that the Soviet Republic should continue to exist for a long period side by side with im-

perialist states — ultimately one or the other must conquer. Meanwhile, a number of terrible clashes between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states are inevitable.”

Imperialist states, bourgeois states — these terms, by any recognizable Communist definition, mean us.

Whatever steps may be necessary and effective in dealing with the Communist fifth column in this country should be taken, in my opinion, without regard for any reactions that may be excited in Communist-dominated or Communist-influenced states abroad. I oppose the proposal to outlaw the Communist Party not because of any fear of repercussion in Moscow, Warsaw, or Belgrade, but because I think it would be ineffective and unwise. It would not stop any phase of really dangerous underground Communist activity. It would divide public opinion on the issue of civil liberties and would excite for

the Communists a sympathy of which they are completely unworthy.

The easiest thing to do about any abuse is to pass a law against it. But this is not necessarily the wisest course, especially if the law is difficult or impossible to enforce. Passing repressive laws which the Communists, in all probability, can easily evade is no substitute for the good citizenship obligation of opposing and exposing Communism on the basis of reasoned understanding.

No regime in which the people who live under it have lost faith was ever saved by repressive legislation. But Communism will cease to be a serious threat to our American way of life when a sufficiently large number of Americans know with their minds and feel with their hearts that our system, with all its faults, is infinitely superior morally, politically, and economically, to anything totalitarian Communism can offer. — From *The Sign*.

IF...

When Barnum toured Europe with his circus, he went to pay his respects to the Bishop of London before sailing.

“I hope to see you in heaven,” said the venerable cleric.

“You’ll see me, if you’re there,” replied Barnum.