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Perspective

Outlaw American Communism

by RAYMOND MOLEY

San Francisco—Since the days of Denis Kearney, the State of California has seen the rise and fall of many radical movements. Under their stimulus and despite their agitation, the state has moved ahead in economic power and political enlightenment. But California's 8,553 enrolled Communists comprise a group which is no gentle irritant. It is a malign growth.

More disturbing than numerical strength is the fact that a single Communist can probably create more mischief here than in any other state. There are more uplift and reform organizations to infiltrate, and there are more restless migrants to indoctrinate. He can burrow into the vitals of movie production, labor unions, shipping and agriculture.

But here, as elsewhere, there is confused thinking about what to do about Communism.

It has become evident since the recent testimony of J. Edgar Hoover that diagnosis is completed, prognosis is fairly clear, and treatment is the next order of business. To clarify our thinking about Communism, we should draw a distinction between our dealings with Soviet Russia and our procedure with American Communism. The first is a problem of diplomacy. The second is a domestic police problem. In diplomacy, the course is in what Secretary Byrnes called firmness and patience. But patience should have no part in dealing with the Communists in the United States.

Much of what needs to be done lies within the province of Congress. But under the Constitution there should be supplementary action by the states mainly concerned. Abundant evidence is in the record. Legislation is now in order. Mere exposure is not enough. Continuous exposure and interminable publicity beget hysteria, and hysteria leads to persecution, injustice and private vengeance. When specific definition and clear law are lacking, Judge Lynch-law mounts his sinister bench. If everybody can make his own definition of Communism, almost everybody will use the term to define anything he doesn't like.

What do we want to do about Communism? First, we want no legalized party, organization or activity which advocates the overthrow of our insti-

tutions, now or at any other time, by sabotage, calculated deceit or any form of violence. Second, we want no political party which is directed or materially supported by a foreign government or by any agency of a foreign government. Let us use either or both of these criteria in defining illegal or criminal activity. Organizations or parties which fall within this definition

should be outlawed.

Besides, persons who subscribe to the views expressed above and are subject to foreign direction should be excluded from office or membership in organizations operating under the law. For example, labor unions should be required to purge themselves of Communists or be subject to punitive proceedings under

punitive proceedings under the law. It goes without saying that no Communist should hold public office or position.

There are those who object to outlawing the Communist party because, they say, we would merely drive it underground. But the Communist party is in part underground now. Its widespread connections are hidden, and its public professions are false. To give it legal status does not make it honest.

There is a profoundly important historical reason why we should rid our nation of Communism. Arnold Toynbee, in his great book, "A Study of History," has shown by abundant proof how nations and civilizations disintegrate. They are not destroyed by attacks from without. They die from what is within. Economically, they breed poverty and confusion. Politically, they lack unity in fundamental faiths. Spiritually, they lose creative hinking, science, art and religion. Dr. Toynbee sums up his philosophy of history in lines from Meredith:

In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin
the plot:

We are betrayed by what is false within.

It is hard for a true liberal to advocate the outlawing of domestic Communism. But while liberalism is a mighty creed, it can destroy its foundations through its very tolerance. The tenets of Communism are inimical to liberal institutions.



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