2637

ORGANIZATION TO COMBAT SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

6 June 1949

CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION--Colonel J. F. Stamm, USMC, Faculty, ICAF 1

SPEAKER--Mr. Robert E. Stripling 1

GENERAL DISCUSSION.....10

Publication No. L49-135

THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D. C.

It is my opinion that the tactics of the Communists are new under the sun. At least they are new under our Constitution. And in 1787, when our Constitution was drawn up, I do not believe that the drafters envisioned the Communist conspiracy. The very soul of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights is to protect and safeguard the rights and liberties of the individual. It was never intended to serve as an instrument of protection or immunity to the individual comprising a foreign-directed conspiracy. Nevertheless, Moscow has exploited our Constitution. It has made our Constitution serve its purposes. We, on the other hand, as a cautious people who did not wish in any wise to infringe upon or destroy any of our cherished liberties, have sat complacently by and permitted the very violators of our freedom to cloak themselves in this very Constitution which they would utterly destroy.

As a classic example of what I am talking about, let us take the case of Gerhardt Eisler. I had the pleasure of being the one to first expose this Soviet agent.

Eisler had been in the United States off and on ever since 1928, when he came here with his first of three wives and went to Houston, Texas. There, according to his first wife, he engaged in passing out counterfeit money, which was manufactured by a Communist ring and used to finance Communist operations. He frequently went back to Russia, and in 1933 and 1934 was trained at the Lenin Institute to come to the United States and take over as the Cominform's representative, in other words, to come here and be the boss over the entire Communist Party. He came to the United States, and while he was here he was known only to the top people in the Communist Party, to Earl Browder, William Foster, and a couple of others. He laid down the law to them as to what they could or could not do, as to what line the Party would take. He was known to them only as "Edwards."

It was necessary for Eisler to travel back and forth to Moscow. To do this he had to have a false passport, which he obtained under the name of Samuel Liptzen. When he traveled there, he traveled on that passport. He was also on the pay roll of a Communist front organization, for $150 a month, under the name of Julius Eisman.

It was necessary for him to write articles in the "Communist," which is the official organ of the party, in which he would lay down the law as to what was to be the official Communist Party line. That was the theoretical publication of the party. They no longer had to do it through secret codes. This publication was their guide. In other words, when a Communist writes officially, he writes an article which will appear in the "Communist." Certain things that he says there would mean an awful lot to a party functionary, whereas it might not mean anything to the casual reader. Eisler wrote for this publication under the name of Hans Berger. There is no question in my mind that Gerhard Eisler engaged in every form of so called peacetime treason, against our Government.

He made a mockery of our whole system of government. As you know he was cited for contempt of Congress and was convicted. He was then tried for a false statement violation and was convicted. The money for Eisler's bond was put up by the Communist defense organization known as the Civil Rights Congress. The fact that Eisler got away is to my way of thinking serious in that I feel it gives the Soviet Union and the satellite countries a terrific propaganda advantage over the United States, because the world can now see him as a refugee, a hero, from the long arm of the United States Government.

Furthermore, here is a man who through his experience and first-hand knowledge is now well able to pass on all the information that he has learned to other agents who will be sent to this country by the Soviet Union.

If you want more information about Eisler, I will be glad to give it to you.

Then we have the case of William Z. Foster, who is now on trial, and who is the nominal head of the Communist Party. Last year, when he was before the Senate Judiciary Committee appearing against the Mundt-Nixon Bill, Senator Ferguson, I think it was, asked him the question, in the event of war between the Soviet Union and the United States which country he would defend--the United States or the Soviet Union. Mr. Foster beating his fist on the table, said in effect that he would not support the United States, nor would any Communist support the United States. His reply in my opinion was treasonable. Such a statement should convince anyone of the treasonable nature of the Communist Party. But why would Foster make such a statement? He did so because he and his party and fellow travelers had over a period of years conditioned millions of our citizens into believing that to challenge their assertions or their actions, even though they be treasonable, amounted to a trespass upon the rights of every American citizen.

The serious implications of this "psychological advantage" which the Communists have achieved are not lost on any of you, I am sure. When we fought Germany and Japan, our people, almost as one, were spurred by an instinctive animosity or animus toward the twin devils of the totalitarian right. Yet today as we find ourselves engaged in another conflict, unofficially this time, with the predatory totalitarianism of the left, we are confronted with a sizable segment of our population which view communism as the savior of humanity, and an even larger segment which, while not complete endorsers of communism, are nevertheless quite willing to tolerate it.

We have only ourselves to blame for this. We have allowed the Communists to build up their glorious illusion among our population almost uninterruptedly over a period of 30 years. And perhaps the biggest shot in the arm for the local Communists came during World War II, when everybody was expected to think well of the Reds--then, as a matter of expediency, our fighting allies.

RESTRICTED 2547

... Some of our most prominent, and I have no doubt basically loyal,

RESTRICTED 2530

ORGANIZATION TO COMBAT SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

6 June 1949

COLONEL STAMM: In our present course we are studying the interrelationships of all the basic elements, functions, and controls which must be provided for in a war economy. We have never made any attempt to classify these basic elements, functions, or controls as to their relative importance. There are several reasons for this, but the main one is that we must provide for all of them if the war economy is to function satisfactorily. However, in these days of modern warfare, mass bombing and so forth, we do have certain controls which may be more important than others and which may play a key role in the success of a war effort; we think one of these is internal security.

Although the scope of the course at the Industrial College is too limited to permit us to spend a great deal of time on it, we do feel that there should be a comprehensive understanding of the importance of this vital subject. For that reason we have with us this morning Mr. Robert Stripling, who will talk to us on the subject of "Organization to Combat Subversive Activities."

We feel that Mr. Stripling is eminently qualified to talk to us on this subject, because in 1938, when the House Committee on Un-American Activities was first organized, he became a member of the technical staff of that committee, and stayed with that committee until he went into the Army during the war. When the committee was reconstituted in 1947 he was made head of the technical staff and held that position until early in 1949. Since that time he has returned to private life.

Gentlemen, I take great pleasure in presenting to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the National War College Mr. Robert E. Stripling.

MR. STRIPLING: Colonel Stamm and gentlemen: There are 2,264,409,447 people in the world. Two hundred million of them are under the absolute rule of communism. Two hundred million more are indirectly ruled by communism, and over 250 million others are under daily Communist pressure to surrender. The objective of the Kremlin is to communize the world. Thus, just as it was a year ago when I last appeared here, the 64-dollar question at home and abroad is what to do about communism.

I am delighted to appear here before the representatives of our Armed Forces, who have dedicated themselves to the protection of their country. I should like to discuss very frankly with you this morning the subject of communism in the United States.

to me that we should continue to reserve wide freedoms for the Communist Party, USA--an arm of the very conspiracy which has brought us into a state of war and national emergency.

On my previous visit to the Industrial College I outlined some of the subversive Communist activities which I am certain will confront our Nation in the event of a shooting war between the United States and the USSR. I described the avowed intentions of Communists in America to use force and violence against our Government in such an eventuality. Many of our key Communists have been trained in Moscow in such arts as partisan warfare, street rioting, sabotage, and the conducting of general strikes, in line with this plan. As a result, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I presume, is prepared to pick up thousands of key American Communists under Presidential warrant in the event of open hostilities with the Soviet Union.

But I say to you now that if we are going to put off taking strict measures against the Communist fifth column in our country until a shooting war develops, we will begin under a terrific handicap.

Let me give you a hypothetical case to show you what I mean. Under the Atlantic Pact, as you know, we shall be committed to come to the aid of any of the other pact signatories which may be the object of Soviet aggression. Suppose that Soviet Russia intended to attack Norway. An advance directive to the Communist Party in the United States could well serve to set off a series of strikes which at the time of the attack on Norway could cripple this country and thus give the Soviet Union a definite advantage from the military standpoint.

This same dictatorial control by the Communist Party was demonstrated during the Stalin-Hitler Pact. There were several strikes against North American and International Harvester and many other plants, which were directed out of Moscow for the purpose of creating as much chaos and confusion, delay, and unrest as possible. And don't think that the Communist operations in the labor field were not effective, because through labor unions in countries in eastern Europe they succeeded in laying the basis which brought about domination by Communists in France and Italy.

To me the need for an immediate crackdown on our Communist fifth column is even more startlingly demonstrated by the proven Communist resort to espionage in our Government. As I have said, we don't know how extensive it has been or what it is now.

For many years I have been advocating a three-way approach to the problem of Communist subversion in America, and I think it is still valid today. It calls for (1) the detection of Communists wherever they may be; (2) their exposure as Communists, and their prompt removal, whether in Government, private industry, or what; and, (3) their prosecution.

In view of the dangerous situation created by the Red fascist conspiracy throughout the world today, I would lay particular stress on bringing Communists to their long-overdue accounting in courts of justice. There are numerous laws already on the statute books under which Communists can be prosecuted right now--laws entirely apart from that which has led to the trial of the 12 leaders in New York City.

But we should have new legislation on the subject, too, in order to make certain that there is a legal approach to combatting communism. I believe the Army has the power within itself not only to eliminate Communists, but to keep them out. I don't think the Army should be concerned with what the American Civil Liberties Union thinks or what the Civil Rights Congress thinks about it, or a few other fronts, which you can always count upon to yelp the moment this Government attempts to protect or defend itself against the Communists. Strange indeed that you never hear any outcry when you attack other groups. It is just the Communists. When you step on the Communists' toes, you can hear the squeals from Hollywood to Moscow.

I emphasize this because I see the Army as one of our most important bulwarks against communism, not only abroad, but at home. This is a national emergency, at least I think so. Should it develop into open hostilities, and the FBI is forced to pick up thousands of Communist ring-leaders in this country, where do you think the problem of these Communists will land? Right in the lap of the Army, sooner or later, I would imagine.

I have long advocated a central agency in our Government to coordinate and serve as a clearing house for Communist information from the Army, Navy, FBI, Committee on Un-American Activities, and other possible sources. Since such an organization is not available, I believe it is important for the Army in these critical days to coordinate its efforts with the FBI and other pertinent agencies in working on the problem of Communist subversion in the United States.

In connection with Communist subversion I think the Army and all proper agencies of the Armed Services should be completely briefed on the question of communism. I think it should know where the Communists are and who they are. Furthermore, I think steps should be taken to eliminate them. It is time to quit being so sensitive to the criticism of the so-called liberal groups, which are under the direction of the Communist Party or certainly influenced by the Communist Party. I think it is time that our Army and our Government completely mobilize through individual action, through legislation, and through executive action in the form of Executive orders and so forth, because this menace is not going to abate until a showdown occurs. There is no question in my mind that the lines are drawn. The world is going to go Communist unless the democracies prevail.

As Colonel Starm said, I was with the Committee on Un-American Activities for almost 10 years, and I don't suppose any other committee or any agency connected with this subject ever created as much controversy as that committee did. People are very emotional about the Committee on Un-American Activities. They either like it or they hate it. During those 10 years I acquired a rather thick skin. And wherever I go, I find people who want to ask questions about the subject of un-American activities. A lot of people want to ask questions about the Committee. I should be glad to submit myself to any questions which you want to ask about the Committee's work during the 10 years that I was with it, with the exception of cases which are now before the courts. I am not at liberty, naturally, to discuss a case which is now being tried. But if you have any questions on this subject or pertaining to the Committee on Un-American Activities, or any other questions that you think should be answered, I will be glad to answer them. Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Would you comment upon the progress made by the Communis with the Negro minorities?

MR. STRIPLING: It is an interesting point, as to the appeal of communism to the Negro. While the Communists are able to draw a lot of Negroes into the party, the Negroes do not remain in the party very long. I think the principal reason is that Negro people are fundamentally very religious, and, of course, there is no room for religion in communism. So their efforts among the Negroes have been bad business.

QUESTION: Can you describe the influence of the Communists in the United States merchant marine and what dislocations they might effect in time of war?

MR. STRIPLING: Yes. The National Maritime Union was set up by the Communist Party many years ago. Joe Curran was and is the head of that union. In the last two years Joe Curran did a complete flip-flop. He has had a knockdown and drag-out fight with the Communists. From his own confession, up until two years ago that union was run by the Communist Party. All the top officials of that union were Communists. We had Curran before our committee. Whether or not he had been an actual member of the Communist Party I am not sure, but he was a captive of the Communists. During that period the National Maritime Union followed the party line.

Now, in conjunction with the National Maritime Union, which furnishes all our sailors, we have the International Longshoremans and Warehousemans Union, headed by Harry Bridges, who is a known Communist. No question about that. His top officials in that union were likewise Communists. So in this maritime industry, the longshoremen and the

sailors both being under the control of the Communist Party, I think we had a most dangerous situation, from the standpoint of direct sabotage and slowdowns, from Communist efforts.

Now, the extent to which the Maritime Service ties in with the National Maritime Union I am not fully aware. But I do know that members of the National Maritime Union were under the complete supervision of the Communists up until recently. I don't mean to say that all sailors were Communists, but their union was Communist dominated.

QUESTION: Is there a good housecleaning going on there?

MR. STRIPLING: I don't take too much encouragement from the fight that Curran had with the Communists. As you know, they kicked the Communist out by a very slim vote. I think it was really just an internal struggle for control of the union. In other words, the Communist members were tired of Curran and wanted to throw him out. Instead of taking orders, he just flip-flopped on them. He refused to go, so he fought them and won out. But I don't think there was any great effort by Curran to throw out the whole Communist bunch.

QUESTION: Do you advocate the abolition of the Communist Party in the United States either by law or by executive action of some sort?

MR. STRIPLING: Yes, sir; I do. Up until last year I was opposed to the so-called outlawing of the Communist Party. I worked for three or four months with the legislative service of Congress in trying to devise legislation which would cope with the Communists. We came up with the Mundt-Nixon Bill, which passed the House by a ten to one vote and then it was tied up in the Senate because of the adjournment of Congress.

Now, I say this: It would be unwise to pick out a particular group and say that we are going to pass a law of attainder against it. Bills of attainder are forbidden under the Constitution. I am opposed to that. But we have to find one way or another so far as the Communists are concerned, either by passing fifty laws which in effect will outlaw them, or we must pass one bill if we can get one that will be constitutional. But the namby-pamby attitude must go—such as dealing with the Communists with kid gloves on the pretext that we are going to infringe upon their liberty. Otherwise we are just being duped by the Communists themselves. And I don't think that in striking at the Communists you are infringing on the liberty of the American people, any more than when we got after Fritz Kuhn in World War II.

QUESTION: You have pointed out that we have something like 65,000 Communists and perhaps a million fellow travelers in this country, most of whom are probably Americans of the same origin as the rest of us, and some of them apparently pretty capable people. Can you give us some idea what gets those people into the Communist Party and what might be done to prevent it?

MR. STRIPLING: Yes. I would like to say this: As to this figure of one million Mr. J. Edgar Hoover knows more about that than anybody else in the United States. He said that for every Communist there are 10 people who go along. At that time the membership of the Communist Party was 100,000. That has been the reason we have used the one million figure.

But I should like to say this as to why a person becomes a Communist: My theory is that he is seeking power. It is a lust for power. He sees in communism a vehicle by which he can get to a place where he doesn't think he can get ordinarily. Now, of course, that doesn't answer people's wonderment about it. But in studying different Communists that is the conclusion I have come to as to the appeal of communism.

If we could get this one fact over to the American people that a member of the Communist Party, USA is in fact a Soviet Agent and not just an American citizen seeking to exercise his constitutional rights, then we would have won a large part of our battle. For example if there was a professor at Yale who believed sincerely that under the Communist system we could operate our Government and our country better, and he went out on the street corner and said, "I believe we ought to have the Communist system because our Government would operate better under it. But I believe in bringing it about in a democratic way through the ballot and not by force or violence then he has a right to say that, absolutely. But when that professor joins what is known as the Communist Party USA he then and there affiliates himself with a foreign government and becomes a Communist agent of that government, which has said: "We are seeking to destroy the United States Government by any means. It doesn't make any difference--bombs, violence, or what." Then he becomes a subversive.

That is the difference between being a Communist intellectually and being a Communist agent of the Soviet union. It is not a question of a person being liberal in his thinking it is a question of affiliation and allegiance. The minute you talk about communism, a lot of people say: "I don't see why a person doesn't have a right to believe what he wants and practice what he wants to." He does have a right so long as it doesn't involve treason against the Government of the United States.

QUESTION: It would seem that one of the most effective points of infiltration of the Communists is into industrial plants, and it would seem to me that an employer in his free employment would be hampered by th Fair Employment Practice Law. Isn't that true?

MR. STRIPLING: Technically I think he would; yes.

ADMIRAL SABIN: I would like to pursue that question a little further. A couple of months ago I read with a great deal of interest that in wartime practically 100 percent of our manufacturing plants employ electrical power for their war production machinery. In peacetime I should say it is maybe 40 percent. Now, someone told me that the controlling union in this country in that field is the United Electrical Workers Union, which is controlled by the Communists. He made a rather alarming statement--that in less than 30 minutes they could completely cripple the electric power industry. He asked me if I knew whether the FBI is prepared to step in and prevent that 30-minute plant loss of the country. Do you know whether there is any machinery by which such a thing could be prevented?

MR. STRIPLING: No, sir; I don't. You have called attention to what I think is now our number one problem; that is, the United Electrical Workers Union, because it is absolutely under the control of the Communists. I don't mean the rank and file, but the leaders of that union. It is absolutely under the control of Communists, more completely than any other that I know of. It is a disgrace to this country.

Don't think the United Electrical Workers Union won't pull a strike if we get into a conflict with the Soviet Union. If we do, you will see how quick it will act and how far it will go. The strike won't be ostensible because the union has Communist leadership. It will be because of a complaint about working conditions or something like that. But, nevertheless, I think the union could do that. I think it would do that.

QUESTION: Can you give us any information on the number of Communist agents in the Armed Services? Also can you give us any information on how to eliminate them?

MR. STRIPLING: That is a big order, because I don't think there is much information on that. I don't know how many there are. But I think that you could determine what percent are Communists if you were given sufficient funds to make an investigation. I say it is an honorable privilege to be in the Army; therefore, these Communists should not be permitted to get in.

I think the Army ought to be made up at least of people who are loyal to the country. I am glad you made that point, because last year I had a man before the committee who now holds a commission as major in the United States Army. Next day I had another one who holds a commission in the United States Army as a major. The following day I had a man who holds a commission as a captain in the United States Army. They were asked the question, "Are you a member of the Communist Party?"

"I refuse to answer, on the ground that I might incriminate myself." Have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" "I refuse to answer, on the ground that I might incriminate myself." They are still holding their commissions.

Now, do you think people like that, men who refuse to say whether they are Communists, should hold commissions in the United States Army? I don't. And we just happened upon them.

COLONEL STAMM: Mr. Stripling, would you mind expanding a little on the Eisler case, particularly on his trial here in Washington?

MR. STRIPLING: When Eisler's trial was scheduled to come up, which involved the Communist Party, the attorneys for Eisler approached a man who was the former president of the District Bar and offered him a large fee, I think, one hundred thousand dollars, if he could obtain a three-month postponement of Eisler's trial. He called the U. S. Attorney, I believe it was, in an attempt to postpone it. It was not postponed.

I think it was significant that they would offer $100,000 just to postpone this trial. His bail was set at only $20,000, and as you can now see he did not hesitate to jump it. Couple that with the fact that he and his wife had been taken off a ship in New York harbor in 1946 trying to get out under a phoney name, and it seems to me that we should not have let Eisler get out of the country. I think Eisler should not only have been prosecuted for making false statements, but also for failing to register as a foreign agent.

In other words, we have to give these Communists to understand that we are not going to continue to travel in an ox cart in the age of supersonic planes, so to speak, in dealing with them. Eisler was convicted two years ago, and during these two years while he was out on bail the Communists were raising funds for his defense. The Communist Party received tremendous support from those efforts. We covered some of these meetings. I recall one meeting in Chicago where they raised about $800.

Earl Browder was not so happy when he was sent to jail on the false passport charge. Once they get someone in jail, they continue to raise funds for their alleged release. It is an old Communist trick for raising funds for party activities.

QUESTION: In your opinion, Mr. Stripling, how extensive is communism among scientists?

MR. STRIPLING: I don't think it is any more extensive there than in any other field. But I don't think scientists should enjoy any special state or license to be Communists. I don't know just how to go about it,

but this idea of treating scientists with kid gloves, putting them over and above everybody else on the idea that if you question them about their loyalty, they will sulk off in a corner and won't give you the benefit of their scientific knowledge, is just a lot of hooey.

Any scientist who would take such a position is not worthy of working for the defense of the United States anyway. I had the great pleasure of hearing that one man, whom I consider to be the top scientist of the country, say that that whole idea is just a lot of bunk; and that if we continue to appease that kind of thinking, we would in the event of a war be at the mercy of the scientists. In other words, they will say, "If you don't do so-and-so, we won't do this, that, and the other." I just don't agree with that kind of loyalty.

QUESTION: After you identify the Communists in the Armed Forces, what basic evidence is required of the Government to get rid of them? I understand that after you have identified them, there is nothing you can do about it.

MR. STRIPLING: I don't agree with that. We have a trial going on in New York of 12 Communist leaders. They are being tried under the Smith Act. If they are convicted, there is no reason in the world why you can't try them for conspiracy, whether they be from the rank and file or a member of the National Committee, because all of them are part and parcel of one conspiracy. You can prosecute them under that. You can prosecute them for failing to register as foreign agents under the McCormack Act or the Voorhis Act.

Furthermore, I don't see why it would hurt anyone to make them sign a non-Communist affidavit when they go into the Army or into any position in the Government. Of course, I don't say that just signing a non-Communist affidavit will keep them out, but it certainly will help.

QUESTION: How close would this failure to register act get to the Russian Embassy?

MR. STRIPLING: It would go right into it. No question about that.

QUESTION: In addition to the question about the McCormack Act and the Voorhis Act, have we ever tried to prosecute any American Communists for failing to register?

MR STRIPLING: No.

QUESTION: I suppose you have to finish that trial in New York and label them as such before you have a precedent. I was with the State Department and I never heard of any Communists being prosecuted for that.

MR. STRIPLING: No. I don't think they ever tried any Communists under that. But I would like to see one tried. I would like to see a test case brought up. If we did that the Communists probably would defend themselves by saying that we can't point to any precedent in court. Nevertheless I think we ought to try it. We are not getting anywhere at all by not doing anything about it.

QUESTION: Does this Mundt-Nixon Bill cover them on the registering?

MR. STRIPLING: It says that any person in the United States who enters into a conspiracy which is directed by a foreign totalitarian power to set up a totalitarian state in the United States shall be guilty of etc., and punished by 10 years of imprisonment. In addition, all members of the Communist Party would be required to register with the Attorney General--that is the gist of the Bill.

COLONEL STAAM: Are there any further questions? If not, on behalf of the Commandants of the National War College and of the Industrial College and the students of both colleges I thank you very much for a most interesting lecture.

(20 July 1949--450)S.