

Communist Dispute

Second of Two Articles on Positions Taken by the Major Political Parties with Respect to Reds



MARCUS IN NEW YORK TIMES

NARROW AND PARTISAN politics cannot do an effective job of combating the evil effects of communism and disloyalty within our own country. Statesmanship and unity of action on the part of true Americans are needed to carry out this all-important task in the months and years ahead of us.

REPUBLICANS claim that the communists secured a strong foothold in various U. S. agencies during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, and thus were able (a) to obtain important secrets for Russia and (b) in many cases to influence American foreign policy in the wrong direction. It is charged that the Democratic administrations, despite constant warnings as to the presence of communist agents in high places, failed to take vigorous enough action against this menace.

It is a fact that some spies and other subversives *did* obtain positions of trust and responsibility in our federal government during the last dozen years or so. The big question is: How many did? The Democrats contend that Republican spokesmen have exaggerated and distorted the situation for partisan reasons. It is argued that Senator Joseph McCarthy and other GOP leaders have sought to gain political advantage by creating a "communist scare."

This subject is not something that we can afford to brush aside and ignore. *If* there was as much

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Political Parties with Respect to Reds disloyalty and carelessness in the Roosevelt and Truman administrations as Republicans contend, such facts should be made unquestionably clear. On the other hand, *if* the Republicans are making unjustified charges for political gain, this too should be exposed—because such tactics can interfere with the working of democracy.

The communists-in-government conflict is practically certain to be a major political topic in this country for a long time to come, despite President Eisenhower's recently expressed hope that we might avoid a lengthy fight over it. Leonard Hall, chairman of the Republican National Committee, says "communism is going to be one of the main issues" in the 1954 congressional election campaign.

In view of the controversy's continuing importance, we review here the main arguments presented on each side.

The Democrats contend that they have, on the whole, done a capable job of handling communists inside our borders, and of meeting the Soviet threat abroad. Those who support the previous administrations argue as follows:

"It's not surprising that the Republicans are making a tremendous effort to keep the public's attention focused on mistakes which Democratic officials are said to have made several years ago. The Republicans don't have any program of their own that can win widespread support. Lacking constructive achievements, they pin their hopes on trying to smear the Democrats.

"In order properly to understand the Democratic side of this dispute, one must look at the attitudes that prevailed 10 years ago in our country at large. During World War II, America and Russia were in partnership against Germany.

"Today, of course, it is easy to point out that the first warnings about Soviet agents within our government weren't taken seriously

Political Parties with Respect to Reds enough; but, during the war and early postwar years, our nation *couldn't* adequately foresee the coming struggle against Moscow.

“It is to the credit of Roosevelt and Truman that they did not turn against Russia—didn't stir up a wave of anti-communist feeling—so long as there was a *reasonable hope* that we and the Soviets could stay on friendly terms. If Roosevelt or Truman had taken a vigorously anti-Soviet stand *before* Russia clearly showed her hostile and aggressive intentions, the Democrats today could be held responsible for starting the great U.S.-Soviet struggle that now divides the world.

“But, in view of our government's attitude toward Russia for some time after the war, no individual, group, or nation can rightfully say that our government is to blame for what happened. We went more than halfway in our relations with Moscow.

“Finally Russia became so uncooperative that continued friendship was impossible. She refused to permit the establishment of free governments in the small nations of eastern Europe. With her troops, she tried to secure permanent control over northern Iran. She blocked agreement on any workable system of international curbs on atomic weapons.

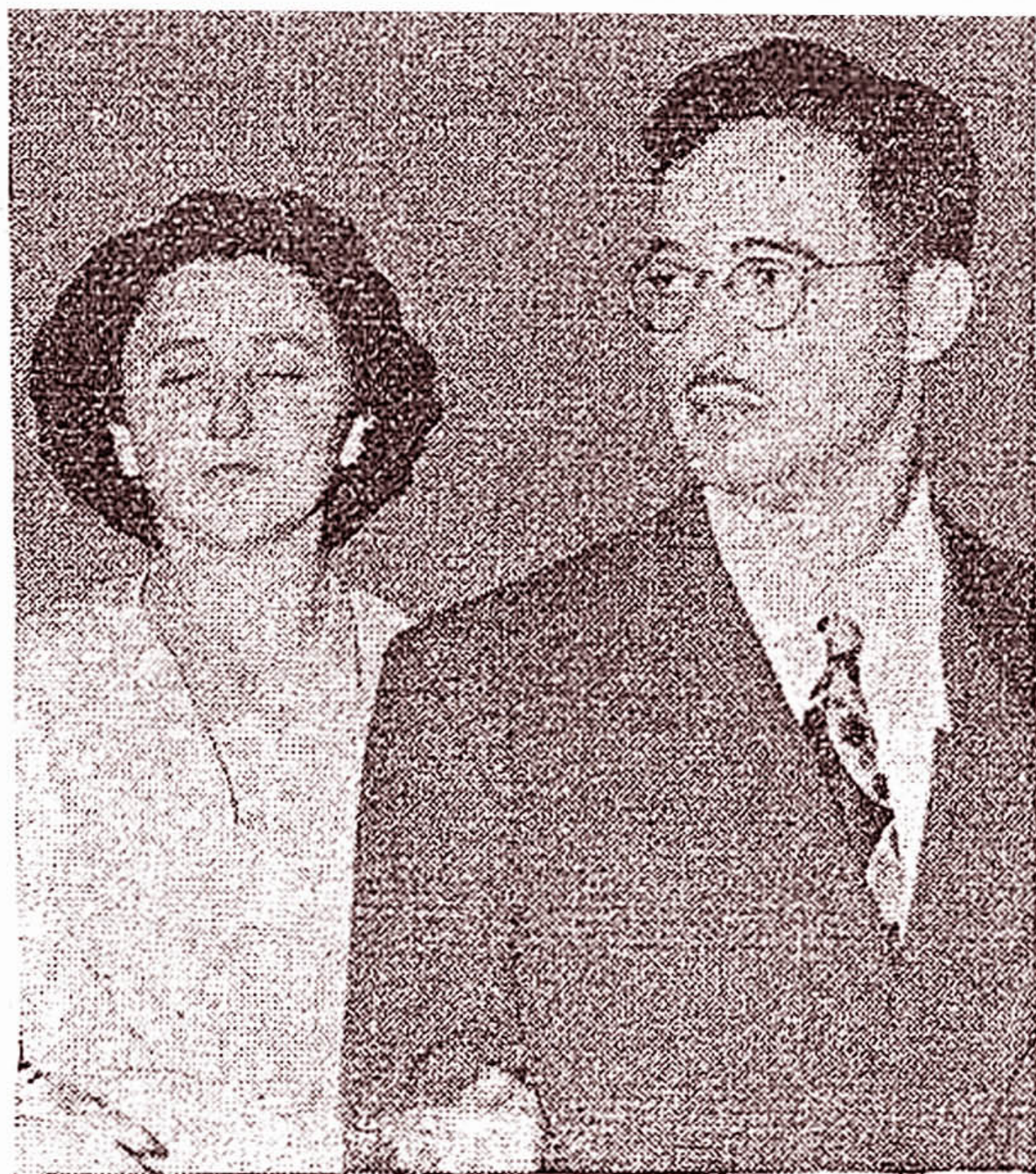
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“It became clear that our nation would have to oppose Moscow. In 1946, under Truman's leadership, we supported Turkey in a dispute with the Soviet Union. During 1947 we started helping Greece fight the communist rebels inside her borders. In 1948 we launched the European Recovery Program, which helped democratic nations resist the Reds.

“America has played a major role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, set up in 1949 as a defense alliance against the threat

Political Parties with Respect to Reds
of Soviet attack. In 1950 President Truman sent U. S. troops to help check communist aggression in Korea. Throughout the free world, Truman is remembered as an outstanding leader in the struggle against Soviet expansion. At times, his measures to combat communism abroad have been opposed by numerous Republicans.

“Within our own government, in 1947, President Truman launched a loyalty program designed to weed communist sympathizers and other “bad security risks” out of federal jobs. About 450 such persons were fired during his administration, and several thousand suspects resigned under pressure. Many communists and pro-communists—including atom spies Julius and Ethel Rosen-



UNITED PRESS

THE ROSENBERGS, Julius and Ethel, were executed for espionage berg—were convicted on criminal charges during the Truman administration.

“Republicans emphasize the point that Truman supported Alger Hiss, who is now in prison in connection with spy charges, long after the man was first accused. But many Americans, Republicans as well as Democrats, sided with Hiss for a considerable length of time. One of these was John Foster Dulles, now Secretary of State under Presi-

Political Parties with Respect to President Eisenhower.

“Wild attacks were being made against large numbers of people during Truman’s administration. Truman had a hard time deciding which were true and which were false. President Eisenhower has faced the same problem. James Bryant Conant, whom he named U. S. High Commissioner to West Germany, was attacked for ‘radicalism’ and for favoring policies that Russia had supported. Republican extremists made similar charges against Charles Bohlen—Eisenhower’s choice for U. S. Ambassador to Moscow.

“Certain Republicans have even sought to cast suspicion on so loyal an American as General George Marshall.

“At times they have relied *solely* on the testimony of ex-communists in efforts to blacken the reputations of certain Americans who have always been loyal. Democrats, on the other hand, have fought subversives without smearing innocent people and without starting waves of hysteria.

“Even certain Republicans, such as Senator James Duff of Pennsylvania, say that civil liberties must not be endangered in the fight against communism. President Eisenhower recently said the same thing, and also expressed the view that Americans could not live in ‘fear’ of one another forever.

“Democratic Senator George Smathers of Florida has made a comment which the GOP should take seriously. He says: ‘The Republicans can’t ride on this [communist] issue into next November’s campaign. They are going to have to produce some results on some of the pressing problems that confront the country.’ Statements by President Eisenhower seem to indicate that he agrees with this viewpoint.

“Finally, it should be pointed out that the communist issue is one which might backfire on the Repub-

Political Parties with Respect to Reds

licans. They may be working themselves into an embarrassing spot with respect to Senator Joseph McCarthy's spy probe at Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. .

"McCarthy gives the impression that the Army Signal Corps laboratories at Ft. Monmouth are teeming with Red spies. Yet a number of his 'suspects,' after having been suspended from work for a while, are now back on their jobs. Either those who have been returned to work were carelessly accused in the first place, or else the Eisenhower administration is disregarding serious spy charges—just as it accuses Truman of doing."

"To show how far extremist attacks can be carried, Senator McCarthy is now criticizing his own party for being too easy on suspected communists in government."

Republican critics of Truman's policies toward communists reply to these various arguments as follows:

"Our Democratic opponents are wholly unjustified in claiming that America had little reason for being suspicious of Soviet intentions during most of World War II. The Democratic administration has no good excuse for having waited until 1946 or 1947 before taking its so-called 'firm' stand against the Reds.

"The evil nature of the Moscow-led communist movement has for many years been clearly visible. Nobody should have been misled by the fact that we and Russia found ourselves fighting on the same side for a while in World War II. The Soviet Union wasn't interested in helping us; she was looking out for herself.

"*Even before the conflict ended*, Russia was backing out on promises she had made regarding the post-war government that was to be set up in Poland. The Soviet dictator Stalin was already sending insulting messages to President Roosevelt, accusing America and Britain

Political Parties with Respect to Reds enemy behind Russia's back. Recent writings by Winston Churchill prove that *he* foresaw serious trouble with Russia. Why couldn't Truman see it too?

"While the war was still in progress, many people tried to give warning about the communist movement within our own country. One of these was Alexander Barmine, a former Soviet official. In a *Reader's Digest* article dated October 1944 he wrote: 'The [Roosevelt] administration . . . consciously or unconsciously protects in numberless ways the success of the [communist] conspiracy. . . . Communists are worming into government agencies in growing numbers.'

"Even if we *did* want to stay on the best possible terms with Russia during World War II, that was no excuse for permitting Soviet stooges to operate within our government. We maintain close friendship with such nations as Britain and Canada today, but we don't permit federal officials to put British or Canadian interests ahead of our own.

"A government worker's job is to serve his own country. If it becomes evident that his first loyalty is to some other nation—even to an ally or partner—he should be thrown out.

"The Democratic administrations never did look facts in the face with respect to the communist menace. After the war, President Truman ridiculed anybody who tried to give warning of the existing danger. He *never* would have done much to weed communists out of the government if it hadn't been for Republican prodding—by such men as Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin.

"Look at Truman's attitude on the Alger Hiss case. Hiss was mentioned as a subversive in the same 1945 and 1946 reports that put the finger on Harry Dexter White. In 1948, committees of the Republican-controlled 80th Congress publicized the information

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Political Parties with Respect to Reds of the Hiss charges came *after* Russia had broken countless wartime promises, *after* our government had seen the need for helping resist communist forces in Greece, *after* Russia had demonstrated her absolute unwillingness to work out plans for international control of atomic energy, and *after* the Soviet Union had seized full power in Czechoslovakia. By that time, Mr. Truman should have been alert to the danger of communism at home as well as abroad, but he wasn't.

Truman's Comment

"It is interesting to remember a comment that former President Truman made about the late Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin on June 11, 1948. 'I like old Joe,' he said. He went on to explain, of course, that he did *not* like the actions of Stalin's government. Nevertheless, his remark demonstrates that he wasn't really taking the Soviet threat very seriously, even in 1948.

"Because the Democratic administrations didn't look facts in the face, and because they allowed pro-communists to hold responsible government positions, our country has suffered numerous setbacks in world affairs. If it hadn't been for communist influence in Washington, we might have been able to help Chiang Kai-shek prevent the Reds from taking China.

"Whenever we Republicans try to remind America of the terrible damage that communists within our government did during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, the Democrats accuse us of digging up the past for political reasons. Nobody, however, is more adept at digging up the past than are the Democrats themselves. They are still trying to smear the Republicans by talking about the great depression that began during President Hoover's administration back in

Political Parties with Respect to Reds

1930—even though informed people know that Hoover wasn't really to blame for it.

“Republicans found many communist sympathizers and other bad security risks still in government jobs when the new administration took office last January. Since Eisenhower became President, more than 800 such employes have been fired and many others have been forced to resign. The dismissal campaign is still going on.

“How can the Democrats justify keeping large numbers of communist sympathizers in federal jobs *long after we had started fighting an actual war against the communists in Korea?* How can Truman ever explain the mess that his administration left for Eisenhower to clean up?”

Thus the fight goes on. Meanwhile, certain political observers are calling upon leaders of both parties to work out a method of dealing with this problem on a *nonpartisan* basis, so that there can be unity of action instead of bitter controversy.