

My Own View of the CP

This seems as good a place as any ~~to~~ to go into my own relationship with the Communist Party, and my present view of myself and that party. I joined in 1943 for what I considered good and sufficient reasons. I was still a Communist in 1947 when the first hearings were held. What my status was ~~in~~ IN the seven years that followed no one but the FBI really knows. During that considerable hiatus I attended no meetings, paid no dues, and have no recollection of once being registered.

I returned to Los Angeles from a two-year stay in Mexico in 1954, and some time during the spring of that year I re-affiliated. I did so mainly because of the Smith Act convictions of the fourteen California communist officials. They were leaders of a party I had belonged to, and they had been sentenced to savage prison terms in a phony trial because of that leadership, and I felt a personal obligation to support them in every possible way. I felt the Communist Party was finished, AND that all ~~that~~ remained to do was clean up the wreckage, try to save those victims still buried in its rubble, and close shop.

THAT

THE OTHERS,

I do not regret that decision. I identified myself thereafter in every possible public way with the fourteen convicted persons. I wrote a pamphlet in their behalf. Now that five of the fourteen have been set free by the Supreme Court, now that ~~all~~ all charges have been dropped against ~~them~~, now that the judge ~~of~~ of that phony trial has been reversed sixteen times by ~~the~~ higher courts, I look on ~~that~~ that pamphlet with ~~some~~ pride. Changing times, generally so fatal to political polemics, have not touched it. Not one word needs changing.

MY

A CERTAIN

In the spring of 1956 I left the party for good. My reasons were various, some of long standing, others more recent. I am convinced that no organization can base its claims to respect, or even to life, upon the annual recitation of last year's error. In leaving, I chose no quarrel with anyone, and made no announcement. I told a few close friends, as I have always done. My reasons for a quiet departure are obvious: (1) the long-standing rule of silence amongst blacklistees, and (2) a desire not to add to the tribulations or violate the secrecy of those who chose to remain.

About a month ago a mimeographed circular signed by nineteen prominent California Communists was sent through the mails to me and eight hundred other persons. Its signators were announcing their resignations from the party and giving ~~their~~ reasons therefor. Among them I found such names as Oleta Yates, H. Steinberg, F. Carlson, C. Stack, D. Wheeldon, a Mrs. Lima, etc., etc. Eight hundred copies of a mimeographed document ~~was~~ sent through the mails can scarcely be called a private resignation. Reading that letter I came to the (perhaps naive) conclusion that for years I have at a certain cost maintained a secrecy I found loathesome, on behalf and at the behest of at least nineteen theoreticians who

had no respect for it at all. The behavior of hundreds of other leading Communists in the last two years only confirms that jaundiced view.

I thought of scores of Hollywood blacklistees who have resigned, and whose resignations, if made known, would have hastened the day of their open return to professional careers. I thought of all the others, previously mentioned, who have publicly stated their affiliations or lack of them. And, frankly, I began to wonder if the blacklisted Hollywood community, after eleven years of straight defeat, after abandonment by every section of the national community, was not behaving somewhat quixotically in its stout hope for unqualified victory. I began to ponder whether changing objective conditions did not justify a second look at a position assumed by blacklistees in other times under startlingly different circumstances.

Let me make it perfectly clear that I do not feel any loyalty or obligation to the Communist Party. I have left it and shall not return to it and feel no ties to it. I gave to it as much as it gave to me, and possibly a little more. The score is even. I do, however, feel loyalty to the principle that any political party has the right to unharrassed existence and activity. So long as there remain two persons in the United States who wish to call themselves a Communist Party, so long must I defend their right to do so.

Neither do I feel any compulsion to apologize to anyone for twice having joined that party. I wasn't tricked into it. I wasn't duped by the party or its members. I joined both times as a mature and presumably intelligent man, on my own responsibility and for my own reasons. If the cost to me has been high, if there are regrets in my heart for what has gone before, I have paid the bill in full, and payment gives me the right to ~~show~~ a little arrogance in the house of the inquisitor.

I cannot imagine pleading my loyalty before a handful of Congressmen who have no right to challenge it. Neither do I fancy appearing before a select committee of ~~producers~~ producers to assure them my politics agree with theirs, for they do not. The course of mea culpa, ~~which is so popular with some, which consists in informing the press that for a certain number of years they were idiots, is foreclosed to me by the fact I'm not an idiot and never was.~~

Sir Winston Churchill's biography of his father, Lord Randolph, recommends that all persons confronted with the problem of public explanation of past acts employ the formula the elder Churchill once used and passed on to his son: "I neither withdraw nor apologize for anything that I have said at any time, believing as I do that anything which I may have said at any time was perfectly justified by the special circumstances of the time and by the amount of information I may have had in my possession." That is as far as I choose to go.

Just so, I don't consider myself at all compromised by the Communist Party's most glaring stupidity, which was its thralldom to the Soviet Union, and the mystique that arose there-

The most damning ~~blame~~ in the American Communist Party is its
thrall to the Soviet Union, and the mystique of its
from. ~~Thrall~~ Thrallidom to the Kremlin was not a defect unique to
the Communist Party. The American State Department was equally
hypnotized by Russia, and equally in bond to a resultant mystique.
This mutual obsession with the Soviet Union quite simply drove them
mad. Bewitched by the far vision that had seized control of their
imaginings, both of them, by suspension of rational thought, ab-
dicated all power of independent judgment. Having fallen togeth-
er into the delusion that every act must be predicated on a prior
Russian act, both were rendered incapable of perceiving their own
best interests, much less of formulating policies to advance them.
All subsequent action became mere reaction to the Soviet stimulus.
When Russia moved the State Department and the American CP turn-
ed lively as crickets. When silence enveloped the Kremlin they
were paralyzed. They had surrendered their intellects in a fit
of voluntary self-immolation so insanely wonderful that only meta-
physicians dare dwell on it.

The State Department, gazing with unblinking stare at the object
of its obsession, saw the most terrible form of slavery yet de-
vised ~~by man~~; the Communists, entranced with the same object, be-
held the most glorious state of human freedom in all ~~recorded~~ history.
The State Department saw military Caesarism; the Communists saw
Socialist liberation. The State Department ~~discovered~~ millions
of Stalin's victims; the Communists ~~discovered~~ millions of Hitler's
victims. The State Department beheld the implacable enemy of
world peace; the Communist Party perceived the focal point of all
efforts to avoid war. And each saw only these things, and nothing
of what the other saw, and neither saw the truth.

The same malady afflicts them whenever they fall into contemplation
of Red China. The American CP yearns toward Peking as the new dis-
pensation---a kind of socialist Jesus come to ameliorate the jeal-
ous wrath of his ~~father~~ father, the great Jehovah in Moscow. (A
deal more nostalgia for primitive Christianity sneaked into the
American Communist Party than it ever cared to admit.) The State
Department, fixedly regarding the same phenomenon from the same dis-
tance, confronts a blood-stained monster of such horrid appetites
that it pretends he doesn't exist at all. Neither of them sees em-
ergent in that nation the most awesome power on earth, nor ponders
the consequences of the event, as one can be sure the Russians do al-
most incessantly. Our vision of China begins and ends with a bowed
head; the Russians have always been cannily aware of elbows.

This ability to see an object not as it is, but as it is thought
or wished to be, is a derangement of the intellect for which doc-
tors have a name but rarely a cure. It is mysticism applied to
analysis of the material world. The odium that attended the American
Communists' mystique derived not from the fact that it was more or
less valid than the mystique of the State Department, but from the
fact that it was less popular. The sanctity of the State Depart-
ment's mystique related not to its quality but to its overwhelming
acceptance. Mystiques are madness. While the
Communist Party deluded tens of thousands, the State Department
triumphantly infected ~~millions~~ scores of mil-
lions. If those who embraced the Communist mystique could tear
themselves from the mourning wall for a glance at the visible world,
they would ~~take~~ solace ~~from~~ the fact that though they were not more
innocent of evil than their opponents, their efforts at least pro-
duced immeasurably less of it.

Ironically, it was an objective truth in the State Department's mystique that brought about the moral collapse of the American Communist Party: i.e., the expose of Stalin's tyranny before the Twentieth Congress. But since mysticism produces a tat for tit, a similarly objective truth in the Communist mystique destroyed the doctrine of American supremacy and set the State Department to babbling like frightened schoolboys: i.e., the stunning advance of Soviet technology as dramatized by Sputnik. Whether good will come of these mutual discoveries of falsehood in official truth is not yet clear. Mystiques are often bolstered by such lucky accident, which accounts, I presume, for their persistence, and certainly for their attractiveness. The process will continue as long as the mystiques survive. It will stop when perception of objective reality ceases to be heretical.

Even as I write, the Los Angeles Times on its front page gives proof of the mystique in action, the fatal obsession triumphant. Read!

(herewith replica of Times box)

(And then for an accident)

(~~Equally~~ also modulations)

accidents
Behaviors
Pans
Caracas
Sputnik