

Speeches and messages: 1961-1963: Commission on Subversive Activities

Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers

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letter which was sent March 13, 1963.
Page 3 was incorrect. Enclosed copy
corrected.

Senator Inouye's Office

March 13, 1963

Commission on Subversive Activities
Department of the Attorney General
State of Hawaii
P.O. Box 3918
Honolulu 12, Hawaii

Gentlemen:

I feel compelled to state the following. I must do so as a responsible citizen. I must do so as one deeply committed to the sense of justice characteristic of our country. I must do so if only to remind ourselves that there are differences of thought and the right to differ must always be protected.

I have read the Wednesday, March 6 story on the biennial report of the State Commission on Subversive Activities in both the Star-Bulletin and the Advertiser. It is quite possible that the formal report of the Commission may clarify certain points. However, I feel that no more than one percent of our population will ever get to read that report. Meanwhile, it has been made to appear that it is somehow evil to think certain thoughts and suggest alternative courses of policy action. The Commission itself has, so far, not seen fit to revise the general impression conveyed in the newspaper account to the public. The following, therefore, are my comments on that account.

I find myself in fundamental disagreement with the manner in which the Commission chooses to adjudge the communist tendencies of particular groups. It appears that the Commission uses the technique of guilt by association of thought. That is, it arrays selected portions from drafted ILWU resolutions, for example, alongside the so-called objectives of the U.S. Communist Party. Because of a general similarity of positions, the labor union is then charged with following the Red line. It is quite conceivable to me that these same identification of thoughts would ensue should the selection have been organizations other than the ILWU. The question then would be, are these organizations also subversive?

Let us take up these points of comparison one by one.

1. Universal Disarmament. The Commission states that the U.S. Communist Party is for universal disarmament. The Commission then quotes an ILWU resolution which states that : "We will do all in our power to bring about mutual world disarmament. Similarly, universal disarmament under a strengthened United Nations may be difficult but it can be done."

In other words, the U.S. Communists are for disarmament. The ILWU is for disarmament too. Therefore, the ILWU must be communist. So goes the Commission's form of elementary syllogism. But what the Commission leaves out of their peculiar form of reasoning is as important as what it chooses to put in. There are many other responsible organizations both religious and civic who have urged world disarmament. They argue from a strong moral and humanitarian position. To call such individuals communist backers, however, is quite another thing.

Speaking for myself, although I am opposed to unilateral disarmament, I am for universal disarmament. In this session of Congress, we will be voting for a record peacetime appropriation of approximately 98 billion dollars. 75 percent or 73 billion dollars will be earmarked for defense spending, mutual security funds, and the development of a space program. All of us must agree that this is an extremely heavy burden for us to bear.

There are many who question whether or not the United States can forever bear the burden. Then, too, we have reached a stage where the annihilation of mankind is not just a possibility but a probability. In view of these factors, the leaders of the world must get together to find this elusive solution to alleviate world tensions as a step towards permanent peace. My hope is that they succeed and that generations to follow will live in an atmosphere free from the threat of thermonuclear war. Perhaps it is a bit naive to discuss disarmament in these days of tension and anxiety, but we must remember always the reasons for our dedication to defense. Disarmament may not be a possibility today, or tomorrow, but we must continuously remember that we have got to work towards that goal. We have got to remember that the U.S. is deeply committed to that goal by word and by deeds and by the establishment of the U.S. Disarmament Agency.

Are these thoughts and actions then to be labeled communist? I think not.

2. Complete Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Testing. The Commission then compares relative positions on the complete abolition of nuclear weapons testing. It claims the labor union guilty of backing the communist line because it has resolved that: "We will do all in our power to bring about a ban on A and H bomb tests and productions." The Communists, too, have called for a ban on the thermonuclear tests and production. Therefore, according to the Commission report, the union is guilty of similarity of thought, which means similarity of political commitment. By this type of reasoning, anyone who has opposed continued A-bomb testing is automatically suspect. It does not matter whether he has opposed such testings on the part of both the United States and the Soviet

Union. The various religious denominations, including the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the United American Hebrew Congregation automatically become suspect because they, too, have opposed continued nuclear testing.

Let me emphasize that I support the idea of an international accord on banning nuclear tests which has been one of the major foreign policy objectives of this country. So long as there are adequate safeguards so that no nuclear power can clandestinely carry out experiments, I feel that we should strive towards the banning of further nuclear bomb testing. But supporting such a position does not make me a communist, nor the United States a communistic country.

3. Dismantling of all U.S. Overseas Bases. The Commission's quote of the ILWU resolution has been repeated many times over by other organizations. The labor union is not calling for unilateral dismantling but dismantling of all bases by all countries.

Speaking for myself, at this precise moment in history, I feel that it is rather foolish for the United States to take the initiative in dismantling of our bases. However, if and when we achieve universal disarmament, I am sure the next logical step would be to seek ways in which overseas bases not necessary to the ensuring of the national defense can be dismantled. But until such time, I feel that any initiative on our part is foolhardy. Nevertheless, I feel that the union was free to express its opinions in calling for alternative courses of action.

4. Dissolution of NATO, SEATO, and Other Free World Defense Alliances. I find the Commission's quotes from the ILWU not particularly enlightening. I do not know that there is something insidiously communistic about the statement: "The existence of aggressive military alliances and foreign military bases increases the war danger." Not only has the ILWU said this but, again, other groups have voiced similar views. Are they all communistic? I do not think so.

I do disagree with the ILWU statement that these military alliances such as NATO are necessarily "aggressive." I think the ILWU had better state the reasons why these defensive alliances grew up in the first place. They developed as a result of the need to cope with rising Soviet threats to the peace all over the globe. But as soon as we can arrive at some solution to the problem of the Cold War, I, too, look towards dissolving some of these alliances.

5. An End to the Cold War. Another objective of the U.S. Communist Party, it seems, is an end to the Cold War. It apparently does not matter to the Commission that most Americans would like an end to the Cold War too. Nevertheless, the Commission goes on to say that because the ILWU had the effrontery to say that: "There can be no real solution to the many problems besetting the American and all other working people today until the Cold War is ended and the enormous burden of the arms expenditure is lifted from their backs," therefore, the labor union is guilty of backing the Red line. This, of course, borders on the ridiculous.

If man's longing for an end to the kind of international tension which has marked the world ever since 1947 is somehow subversive talk, then we should abolish the First Amendment to the Constitution's Bill of Rights, and we should then review the loyalty qualifications of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy who have repeatedly called for a lessening of Cold War tensions. Finally, we should forget the Preamble to the Federal Constitution which calls for the insuring of the domestic tranquility and the promotion of the general welfare and securing of the blessings of liberty to ourselves and to our posterity.

6. Re-Establishment of Friendly Relations with Cuba. I agree with the President that the existence of Russian troops in Cuba and the use of Cuba as a base for communist infiltration and subversion in Western Hemisphere countries is a threat to continued peace. However, this does not mean that we should have no desire eventually to try to re-establish friendly relations. Nor does it mean that anyone who calls for eventual re-establishment of friendly relations with Cuba is a communist. It should be noted that although we are at odds with the Castro regime, the people of the United States have a great love for the freedom loving people of Cuba.

7. Recognition of Red China and its Admission to the United Nations. I know of many responsible academicians and other groups who have called for a realistic re-appraisal prior to a recognition of the Peoples Republic of China. There are many member countries of the Western Allies in the Cold War who have chosen the path of recognition of Red China. Are we to call Great Britain communist, for example? Definitely not. Are we to call Sweden, Norway, and Denmark communist? Certainly not.

I am myself presently opposed to the admission of Red China to the United Nations and its consequent diplomatic recognition. However, I hope that some day the peoples of Red China will seek to institute democratic procedures and government. And when that day comes, I am certain our nation will support its admission to the U.N. As long as the government of mainland China insists on carrying out its aggressive policy, I do not see how we can conscientiously recognize and thus place a stamp of approval upon its aggressive policies.

But I most certainly would hesitate in calling anyone who argues for recognition of Red China as necessarily a communist or a communist dupe. Sincere and loyal people and groups ask for recognition because they honestly believe that this is the best way to realistically treat the existence of one of the largest land and population concentrations in the world. It should be noted that our diplomats do confer with officials of Red China. International disarmament procedures would have to recognize China's existence.

8. Demilitarization of Berlin. Again, I happen to disagree with the ILWU but I think that this is a legitimate difference of points of view. I also think that the ILWU does not recognize the fact that the United States has offered negotiated troop withdrawals from the area on the part of all countries prior to discussions on how to lessen the Cold War tensions. I think that the ILWU is incorrect when it assumes that our troops are stationed in Europe because we want it that way and not because we are forced to do so as a result of past actions and present intransigence on the part of the Soviet Union.

But, however wrong they might be, I certainly would not conclude that the ILWU was communistically oriented.

I am certain that upon receipt of conclusive evidence to the effect that the Soviets have no intention of world conquest and subversion, negotiations on troop withdrawals and other related actions calculated to reduce Cold War tensions can be successfully concluded. In that eventuality I am sure that the demilitarization of Berlin will loom large on the agenda. But so long as the Soviets pursue their present policies and courses of action the United States is obligated to protect that city.

9. The Ending of Colonialism Everywhere. The Commission also sees a conspiracy in the call to end colonialism everywhere. The U.S. Communist Party advocates it. The ILWU supports it. Therefore, concludes the Commission, the ILWU is communist. It does not seem to matter to the Commission that the United States policy position has repeatedly been characterized by championing the cause of underdeveloped countries everywhere for more national sovereignty and independence. Our own actions in Southeast Asia and Africa in supporting the desires of those people for independence from their former colonial countries, our actions in the Philippines in granting that country full independence, give a measure of truth to the claim that we would like to see colonialism ended wherever possible.

Does this make us communist or communist sympathizers? Definitely not.

The most that can be said of the ILWU on this point is that they should be more careful in their factual statements. They are woefully off base when they say that the United States is committed to a policy which "finds us lined up with the colonial powers against the new nations." It neglects to take into account the four billion dollars annual budget for foreign aid to underdeveloped countries. It neglects to take into account our position in Indonesia right after World War II, our position in Indo-China, in the Suez Crisis, and most certainly in the Congo affair. In each one of these crises, we took a position with the emergent nation against the colonial mother country even at the risk of antagonizing our allies in the Cold War. It neglects to mention the colonialism of the Soviet Union itself in Poland, Hungary and Eastern Germany.

10. Abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Finally, the ILWU is accused of backing the U.S. Communist Party line "to the hilt" because like the latter, it has called for the abolition of the House Un-American Activities Committee as well as the Senate Internal Security Committee. First of all, let me assure you that I have never voted against appropriations for these committees. In spite of certain grave abuses of traditional American practices pertaining to individual rights which I, as a Senator, will continuously try to correct, I still feel that these committees must perform an essential job of legislative fact-finding. Nevertheless, I have never, and never will take the position that any Congressman or Senator voting against appropriations for these committees is pushing the communist line "to the hilt." I think this is absurd. I think you would have to call twenty Congressmen in the present 88th Congress, backers of the communist line. And this is equally absurd. There are honest differences of opinion here. There are many who feel that these committees have overstepped the proper bounds of Congressional investigatory bodies. But these include not only the U.S. Communist Party and the ILWU but numerous other responsible and loyal American organizations.

I also take issue with the manner in which the Commission has distorted the truth concerning so-called "Red Propagandists" on the University of Hawaii campus. The Commission has resorted to a tactic not unknown in the Communist world of withholding a portion of the truth so as to sensationalize that portion which is released.

For example, it is true that John Melville Kelly, Jr., David Thompson, and others have been asked to speak before student groups. But what the report does not mention is even more important and damaging to the integrity and sincere intentions of the Commission itself. Various student groups have sponsored speeches

and lectures by well-known "right wing" personalities. These student groups, like the Political Affairs Club, have made it an organization policy to represent the views not only of one political segment but of the entire spectrum of ideological commitments. On October 17, 1961, the Political Affairs Club presented Mr. Larry Cott of IMUA in a speech entitled "Communism on College Campuses." On November 16, 1961, Mr. Cott again spoke in a debate with the Reverend Delwyn Rayson on the film, "Operation Abolition." Rear Admiral Chester Ward spoke on "Victory in the Cold War," in a talk sponsored by the Political Affairs Club on December 19, 1961. Dr. Fred Schwartz, Executive Director of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade spoke on "Communist Appeal to the Intellectual," on February 20, 1962, again sponsored by the Political Affairs Club. Mr. William Buckley, the spokesman for conservatism in many quarters spoke on the "Aimlessness of American Education," in a speech sponsored by the ASUH and the campus Young Americans for Freedom on January 14, 1963. But nowhere does the Commission report list these speakers in its attempt to paint a scare-picture of "Red Propagandists" on the University campus. I think the methods of the Commission report calls for immediate scrutiny.

The Commission has also resorted to an interesting device in listing and emphasizing such speakers as Kelly and Thompson. Nowhere does the report mention that John Kelly, Jr., spoke on October 24, 1961, on a symposium which also listed Mr. Hardy Hutchinson, certainly not by any stretch of the imagination a "left-wing" speaker. David Thompson spoke on December 5, 1961, at a symposium which also listed Dr. James Shoemaker, economist of the Bank of Hawaii, definitely not a "left-wing" speaker.

Generally speaking, I am somewhat dismayed by certain underlying premises of the Commission report with regard to our students and our higher educational system in Hawaii.

The Commission report seems to have a very low appreciation of the ability of our students, as well as our professors, to sift through communist propaganda and to be able to weigh facts and evidence for themselves.

I am also disappointed to learn that the Commission apparently does not think it fit for students to expose themselves to thinking processes of the "left-wing."

One of the great evils in my collegiate days was to be caught reading a volume from Lenin's writings. But how else can one come to grapple intellectually with one's adversary except to read his thoughts carefully and critically?

If we are taught to be afraid to listen to people who harbor thoughts different from ours, won't our thoughts be held more in the nature of prejudices rather than convictions? If we are afraid that our thoughts cannot hold their own in the marketplace of ideas, then something must be wrong with our own ideas.

It is often said in medical science that the best way to fight off disease is to expose oneself to invading bacteria, thereby building up immunity through the development of antibodies.

If the argument of the Commission be correct, then we ought not to reprint speeches in our newspapers given by members of the Communist world. Khrushchev ought to be banned. Mao ought to be censored.

I would suppose that this letter may indicate to some that I am also guilty of following the Red line if we are to abide by the Commission's method of judgement. But I am certain there are many thousands of people who feel the same way as I do. Let me assure you that these are extremely loyal and patriotic Americans all.

Please do not interpret this letter as constituting a defense of either the ILWU or the University of Hawaii. I am sure that these organizations can adequately defend themselves. As stated before, I am writing as a citizen deeply committed to the sense of justice which has characterized our country.

Sincerely,

DANIEL K. INOUE
United States Senator