

HENRY WALLACE'S COLUMN

The Tyrant's Doctrine

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from my first 1948 swing through the Middle West and now I am preparing to leave on a three-week tour of seven states in the West Coast and Rocky Mountain areas.

As I traveled through the industrial centers and farm lands of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri, the prime theme of all my speeches was peace.

As long as we have a war economy, I told my audiences, it is impossible to broaden social security, establish a real housing program or develop a medical-aid plan which the people in all sections of our nation need and deserve.

When we stopped at Topeka, Kansas, I began to talk about the Mundt bill. Unfortunately, the fight against this bill is primarily a negative fight. We are struggling to stop something vicious rather than move ahead toward new horizons.

But I am firmly convinced that unless all progressives work toward the defeat of this bill during the next few weeks, America runs the danger of losing freedom of speech.

In Topeka, I told my audience of 600, who braved a sudden downpour to jam a small auditorium near an athletic field, that if and when the House Un-American Activities Committee obtains passage of the legislation it is now proposing, we shall move up the street still farther toward fascism.

While the proposed unconstitutional legislation cannot be considered the final step to fascism, it may provide the means for that final step before a test case ever reaches the Supreme Court of the United States.

Ostensibly—and for propaganda purposes—the bill is directed against the American Communists. But its purpose goes far beyond the stupid,

dangerous and undemocratic objective of silencing the few thousand members of the Communist Party.

The bill encompasses all those who fight for progressive legislation, whether they are Communists, non-Communists or anti-Communists.

The definition of "Communist" which will be used in administering the act will come, as does the legislation, from the House Un-American Activities Committee.

That committee has judged as "Communist" almost every positive, constructive proposal to the Left of the Republican Party platform.

The fight against Jim Crow; the fight against the poll tax and lynching; the fight for public housing, health and education programs have all been judged as Communist or Communist-inspired by the authors of this legislation.

The Mundt bill establishes the tyrant's doctrine of guilt by association. If the Communists are against Jim Crow and you are against Jim Crow, you can either give up fighting Jim Crow or be judged as part of a Communist conspiracy.

And like the House committee hearings, the purpose of the bill is less to gag a few individuals than it is to frighten millions of Americans into silent acceptance of the policies of the self-proclaimed protectors of "Western civilization."

Under the new bill it is conceivable that the advocates of a Jewish state in Palestine might be judged international conspirators, because the State Department has abandoned the United Nations decision for partition and the Russians still support it.

Under the reasoning of the bill, any position which might coincide with that of the Communists or the Russians is evidence of "subverting

the interests of the United States to that of a foreign Communist power."

Representative Nixon of California, in discussing this bill, said that Henry Wallace was a "fellow traveler" and an "unconscious follower of the party line." Representative Nixon meant that I advocate peace with Russia and that I, along with millions of others, am, therefore, a fellow traveler of the Communists.

If Representative Nixon or others think they can frighten me with their threats of imprisonment for fighting for peace, justice and the preservation of American democracy, they are utter idiots.

And if they think that invoking their unconstitutional, undemocratic legislation against the New Party or members of the New Party will stop the fight for peace, they have grossly underestimated the strength of the resistance to the bipartisans' utterly criminal foreign policy.

They haven't underestimated our numbers. On the contrary, the bill is a reflection of their desperate efforts to choke democracy because they fear our numbers. But they have underestimated the courage and the devotion to democracy of their fellow Americans, members of the New Party as well as opponents of the New Party, who will fight every attempt to choke off free expression in the United States.

The test of every Representative's devotion to democratic principles will be his open, forthright opposition to the Mundt bill.

I think the Mundt bill must be fought all the way. It must be defeated. The people of America must tell their congressmen in plain, simple words, and by large, impressive demonstrations, that they won't go for any such law.

Henry A. Wallace

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