

P-2T 4/30/40

Bishop Claimed High Friends, Plot Trial Told

Name Mentioned, Rep. Thorkelson Denies Connection

By the Associated Press

New York, April 29.—William Gerald Bishop, one of 16 men on trial for conspiring to overthrow the Government, was represented today as having named Representative J. Thorkelson, a Montana Republican, as among the members of his "action committee."

(In Washington, Thorkelson denounced as "pure fabrication" the statement attributed to Bishop concerning him. "I don't know anything about this action committee," said Thorkelson, "and I don't care anything about it. I'd like to see anybody prove any such statement.")

The accusation was made indirectly, and not at first hand, in this manner:

The Government offered in evidence a statement attributed to Macklin Boettger in which that defendant was quoted as having said of his alleged coconspirator:

"Bishop stated that (certain) members of the action committee, because of their being an integral part of the Army, would necessarily assist the Army in quelling any Communist revolution; that after quelling the Communist revolution they put action committee men into Congress and the Senate.

Claims High Friendships

"And he claimed that Congressman Thorkelson is already an action committeeman whom he stumped for in Montana. And he also claimed a personal friendship with Senator Reynolds; (claimed that) he knows Senator Vandenberg very intimately and that he is on intimate terms with Senator Burton K. Wheeler, of Montana."

In the manuscript, Bishop likewise was represented as having sought to "inspire" Brooklyn members of the action committee by stating to them these things:

That Boulder Dam once had been "taken over by the Communist-controlled C. I. O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and that

here . . . groups of citizen-soldiery formed an A. C. unit and forced the C. I. O. men at gun point to reopen the water supply dam for the city and held the C. I. O. men until the National Guard arrived to take over."

That a strike at Hershey, Pa. (nature not identified), was a "Communist strike" which was "broken up by a group of A. C. citizen soldiers."

The testimony concerning Thorkelson recalled that on February 2 he denounced their arrest as a "childish attempt to shield the Communists."

Calls Case Laughable

Thorkelson declared today the Boettger statement was a "pure fabrication" and challenged anyone to prove it. He added, however, that he thought the notion that the 16 defendants would overthrow the Government was "laughable."

"Thirteen rifles!" he explained, referring to the weapons allegedly seized from the defendants. "Why, I've got more rifles than that at home."

Saying that the Government was "wasting its time" prosecuting alleged Christian Front members, he referred to this statement which he put into the Congressional Record February 2:

"The recent fiasco in New York, where 17 young men were arrested for the possession of obsolete rifles, which they used for target practice, is a childish attempt to shield the Communists, who operate openly with the utmost freedom in their attempted destruction of our Government . . ."

Praises Moseley, Pelley

Thorkelson declared that "the recent attempt in smearing the Christian Front and the Dies Committee" was Communist-inspired, and added:

"It was this kind of ridicule that was heaped on Gen. Moseley, Messrs. Deatherage, Pelley, True and others because of having exposed and identified the Communists. These gentlemen are 100 per cent patriotic American citizens . . ."

Thorkelson said orally today that he opposed Communism, Nazism and Fascism, but thought the latter two milder than Communism and felt "the Justice Department should go after the Communists."

Dam Incident Denied

Carson City, Nev., April 29 (AP).—Gov. E. P. Carville, of Nevada, said today he "had no knowledge of any incident at any time" at Boulder Dam which would support a statement the dam was "taken over by the Communist-controlled C. I. O."