

Letter to Members of House Appropriations
Committee

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. JERRY VOORHIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 1939

LETTER BY HON. JERRY VOORHIS OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. VOORHIS of California. Mr. Speaker, as I stated on the first day of this session, it is my earnest conviction that something should be done toward the repeal of the 18-month provision contained in the Relief Appropriation Act of 1939, which was passed by the Congress.

It seems to me that since we have experienced a sharp increase in the cost of living, an adjustment should be made also in the "security wage" to make it more in accord with the rising cost of living.

I am, therefore, asking permission to include with my remarks the following letter to the Honorable EDWARD T. TAYLOR, chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, copy of which was sent to all members of that committee, asking their earnest consideration of proposals which seek to bring about adjustments in the Relief Appropriation Act immediately after the passage of the neutrality bill.

HON. EDWARD T. TAYLOR,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: When the House passed the Relief Appropriation Act for 1939 last spring, it contained one provision against which there were most serious objections. This was the provision requiring that anyone who had been employed by the W. P. A. for 18 months must thereafter be summarily dismissed for a period of 30 days.

I realize that there was nothing in the law to prevent the reemployment of these people at the end of that time. As a practical matter, however, in view of the large number of people certified and in need of employment in certain areas, the 30-day lay-offs have actually turned out to be permanent dismissals. Furthermore, the people who have suffered from this provision have, I am certain, not been people who were unwilling to try to find jobs in private industry or so-called "chiselers." Rather, they have been women employed on sewing projects, attempting to support their children, and older men who have passed the age where industry will offer them employment. For these two groups, W. P. A. is more important perhaps than for any other group in the country.

I have received a very large number of communications, not only from my own district, but from all over the Nation, pointing out the difficulties to which this provision has led and expressing the earnest hope that it could be modified. In Southern California, there have been a great many protests from sponsors of projects to the effect that persons in very great need of W. P. A. employment, who were competent to perform the work of given projects, have been laid off and other persons absolutely unqualified placed in key positions out of necessity due to this requirement of law. The result has been not only great suffering on the part of individuals and their families, but also a decided reduction in the effectiveness of the W. P. A. program itself.

I believe I am not the only one who has introduced bills to change this provision. I believe also that a very large number of Members of Congress, even among those who voted in favor of this provision originally, would be very glad if it could be eliminated. I can see no good reason why action should not be taken on this matter at once.

In addition to this, we find that all people in the Nation are up against the problem of a sharply increased cost of living. The price of foodstuffs in particular has sharply increased. Since the W. P. A. wage is supposed to be a "security wage," it seems to me that some adjustment of this wage in accordance with the rising cost of living would be entirely necessary and proper at this time.

Of course, we all hope that the time will come when the fundamental solution for unemployment will be worked out and put into effect. Until that time comes, however, I think it is evidently true that the strength of our democracy depends in large measure upon the provision in the best and most effective way at our command

for keeping people who would otherwise be compelled to subsist upon some form of dole busy at constructive work.

I am writing to ask most earnestly if the Appropriations Committee would not be willing to consider these matters immediately after the conclusion of the vote on the neutrality measure.

Sincerely yours,

JERRY VOORHIS.

Dies Committee

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. JOHN M. COFFEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 1939

EDITORIAL FROM BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT OF OCTOBER 26, 1939, AND ARTICLE BY JAY FRANKLIN FROM THE WASHINGTON EVENING STAR

Mr. COFFEE of Washington. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include herein an editorial and an article by Jay Franklin. The editorial is from the Boston Evening Transcript of October 26, 1939, and the Franklin article is from the Washington Evening Star. I commend their reading to the Members of Congress and to the readers of the RECORD as indicative of common-sense views on the publication of a mailing list of a left-wing organization and the consequent harm and injustice visited upon innocent people.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that by the same logic and by analogy, it can be charged that every Member of Congress belongs to the Silver Shirts because we are on the mailing list of Mr. Pelley's magazine Liberation, published at Asheville, N. C., and the official organ of his pro-Nazi and Jew-baiting organization. We are likewise all affiliated with Father Coughlin because we are on his mailing list, and there is regularly sent to us issues of the weekly magazine Social Justice through the columns of which one may be regaled by startling and mysterious stories about Jew mendacities, international bankers contemplating the destruction of mankind in their own interests, "red" Communists with and without beards and with and without bombs in either hand, lurking under every bed or office desk.

So, Mr. Speaker, if one is to be adjudged guilty of complete subservience to and membership in an organization by the fact that his name has been placed upon the mailing list of such organization, I very much fear that the Members of the Congress are lost to all patriotism and hope of salvation. It is a crisis which must give us all pause. Let us take drastic steps now to anticipate the dread future which impends with all of these "reds" running around loose, all plotting dire things against the whites! It amazes me that the membership of this body is so complacent and contains men who are still able to show a sense of humor and crack jokes occasionally, and who manage somehow to heed Caesar's plea in Shakespeare's Julius Casear:

Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.

So, accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I submit these two editorials in the interests of general enlightenment. They are fair samples of many others which might be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as an indication of a viewpoint entertained by writers throughout this country. No one can accuse the Boston Evening Transcript of being a Communist-front newspaper. As for me, Mr. Speaker, I am most delighted that the President of the United States and his charming and talented wife have each individually expressed their disagreement with the publication of the mailing list of the Washington, D. C., branch of the American League for Peace and Democracy in no uncertain terms.

The articles are as follows:

[From the Boston Evening Transcript]

SUICIDAL POLICIES

The Dies committee in one action may have torn down much of the respect and support it had been building up for its work during its second series of hearings. When it published the names of 536 Government employees yesterday on the grounds that they were either members or on the mailing list of the allegedly Communist-dominated American League for Peace and Democracy, it has unquestionably revived most of the charges that were first made against it.

During the first year of its hearings this committee was charged with fomenting "red" scares, with striving to embarrass the Roosevelt administration, and particularly with endeavoring to smear the National Labor Relations Board and thus to fortify a resurgent open-shop drive. When the committee buckled down to its second session it seemed that it would give the lie to most of these accusations. Its procedure was improved; it had added a liberal member, it balanced its investigations better as between Communist and Fascist groups, and it had abandoned its policy of providing anyone with names to call with a national rostrum.

But its latest action must make its recent converts draw back. Mr. Dies has admitted that all members of the League for Peace and Democracy are not Communist. Yet he knows that the odor of radicalism will stick to those whom he names. Moreover, he has presumably released the names of those who were merely on the mailing list and whose contact with the league may have been merely the donation of funds to the Spanish Republic.

Special suspicion will be aroused, in view of earlier charges against the Dies committee, by the inclusion of Edwin S. Smith's name. Mr. Smith is one of the more vigorous members of the National Labor Relations Board, presiding over the act which Dies has been accused of wanting to impair and weaken. One must wonder what good reason can possibly be accomplished by the publication of these names.

The spontaneous anger of Representative DEMPSEY, one of the committee's own members, and his denunciation of the action as a smear campaign furnishes further doubt of the committee's wisdom in this instance.

The publication of these names followed another rash outburst from the Dies committee, this time exclusively from its chairman, Mr. Dies. The indictment of Earl Browder, American Communist leader, apparently went to his head, for he promptly proclaimed that:

"There isn't a leader of any of these organizations (Fascist or Communist) who hasn't violated some penal law." He said there was ample evidence to prove this.

Well, if that is so, there seems slight need for continuing the Dies committee. We doubt, however, if Mr. Dies wants to end his work now.

With the outbreak of the European war, there was special need to walk quietly and to speak calmly. It is easy to convert the tense and hysterical emotions of wartime into witch hunts and "red" scares. The "red" hunt conducted by A. Mitchell Palmer at the close of the World War swept this Nation with such winds of intolerance that the Bill of Rights was all but uprooted. It would be easy, with rumors of espionage and sabotage rife, to whip up those same winds today.

All in all, we think the Dies committee has some fence mending to do if it is to continue its potentially useful work.

[From the Washington Evening Star, October 27, 1939]

WE, THE PEOPLE—WATCH YOUR STEP BROTHER ELK, YOURS MAY BE A COMMUNIST GROUP FRONT

(By Jay Franklin)

After consulting the precepts of the political bible, I am seriously considering having my Phi Beta Kappa key beaten into an ornamental gold toothpick for presentation to Representative MARTIN L. DIES, of Texas. For I have no desire to find myself in jail because I left my car parked eight inches from the curb.

Here's how it works. Mr. Dies has just made public a long list of Government employees who were members of the League for Peace and Democracy. It used to be the League Against War and Fascism, but changed its name when it seemed likely that there might be a war against fascism. Now it seems that some American Communists were members of the League for Peace and Democracy, so Mr. Dies announces that it is a Communist "front" organization and singles out its members in Government service for the uneasy honor of publication—as though a desire to prevent war and preserve democracy were an "un-American activity." And at the same time Mr. Earl Browder, a native-born Kansas boy who ran for President on the ticket of an American political party in '36, is arrested for being leader of the Communist Party. Sure, the charge is some money business with passports but everybody knows that he was arrested because he was a Communist leader, just as everybody knows that Mr. Fritz Kuhn was arrested for being the leader of the German-American Bund and not because Mr. Thomas E. Dewey (and not the bund members) believed that he had embezzled the bund's funds.

PHI BETA KAPPA—SH-H

So I am worried about my membership in Phi Beta Kappa. It is entirely possible that I have been misled in assuming that my possession of the little gold key is the reward for getting a flock of "A's" at Yale twenty-odd years ago. It is possible that the

society's proclaimed belief—that "love of wisdom is the guiding power of life"—is a front for the Illuminati, the Jacobins, the Know-Nothings, or the Elders of Zion. After all, the letters "Phi Beta Kappa" are Greek and Greeks are foreigners, aren't they? And foreigners are aliens and aliens are suspects and suspects are agitators and agitators are "reds" and "reds" are Communists.

For that matter, how can I feel whether some of these desperate members of the League for Peace and Democracy are not also members of Phi Beta Kappa? They might be. Wheels within wheels, and the red star of Moscow dangling in masquerade on my unsuspecting abdomen all these years. Why not? If there are Communists in the League for Peace and Democracy that make the league a Communist "front," and if members of that "front" are also members of Phi Beta Kappa, that makes Phi Beta Kappa another Communist "front." And that makes me a Communist. Q. E. D.

PRACTICALLY IN JAIL

So I am worried. For if I am a Communist, as defined by Mr. MARTIN L. DIES, of Texas, in his efforts to perpetuate his House Committee on Un-American Activities, then I am exposed to the rigors of the law which punishes gangsters for rum running by sending them to prison on income-tax charges; that punishes Kuhn for leading the bund by charging him with the theft of his own organization's money; that lacks the courage to arrest Earl Browder for being a Communist—which is entirely legal—but indicts him because of what he allegedly did with his passport application. If it is to be open season on me, I am vulnerable on a thousand fronts. Sometimes I cross a street before the lights change. Sometimes I park overtime. I don't always pay my bills on time. Perhaps my chimney smokes; perhaps my income-tax return was not precise to the last decimal point. Perhaps I have been lacking in respect for some of our elected officials.

The rest of you can take your chances—Elks, Red Men, C. I. O., Masons, Knights of Columbus, Ladies' Aid Society, Father Mathew Society, and Epworth League. But I'm worried. I think I stood near a Communist in the New York subway last winter and, since communism is the scarlet fever of congressional politics, I may have contracted the "red" rash without even knowing that I had accidentally become un-American.

Neutrality

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. WILL M. WHITTINGTON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 2, 1939

Mr. WHITTINGTON. Mr. Speaker, the most satisfactory neutrality legislation is based on international law. I have thought about neutrality from every angle. The causes of all wars are different. The nations of Europe are armed camps; armaments inevitably make for war. Every country should be free to deal with the crisis resulting from each war as it arises.

My whole thought with respect to neutrality is to promote the interests of the United States and to keep the United States out of war. There is much misunderstanding in the country and there have been many loose and unsound statements made on the floors of Congress respecting neutrality. The United States should continue its policy of good neighbor among the nations of the world. We accord to other nations the form of government under which they desire to live. At the same time we assert our right to maintain the form of government under which we live. Other nations are entitled to their forms of government and to foster their political ideals and ideologies so long as their attitude does not undermine American ideals.

We stand for freedom in religion and in government. We believe in the right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. We stand for freedom of the press. We accord to other nations similar rights, but we oppose all efforts to undermine the freedom for which we stand. It has been asserted that if we retain the existing embargo, England and France will stop the war. The implication is that England and France are responsible for the war. Who started this war? If England had not supported Poland, the world would have had no respect for the British Empire. Whatever may be the ideologies of Great Britain and Europe, the world knows that Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great