

Inquiry Hears U. S. Liberals Called Dupes Of Red Front

Writer Says Communists
Rule League for Peace
and Democracy, Youth
Congress, Many Others
Present Goal Held
Democratic Schism

'Fellow Traveler' for 10
Years, He Says Radical
Tactics Aim at Farmer-
Labor Victory in 1940

Aug 21 1938
From the Herald Tribune Bureau
WASHINGTON, Aug. 20.—Emphasizing that the "new tactics of the Communist party was to widen the breach between the conservatives and the liberals in the Democratic party and to dupe many prominent Americans into aiding the Communist cause, J. B. Matthews, former organizer and head of numerous Communist Front organizations, took the House committee investigating un-American activities on a personally conducted tour today of the radical movement in the United States.

The committee assigned a body-guard to accompany him, after he had told of receiving threats of harm if he persisted in testifying. He will resume his testimony Monday.

Mr. Matthews had the committee members and spectators sitting on the edges of their chairs as he detailed his intimate knowledge of such organizations as the American League for Peace and Democracy, of which he was head at one time, and the World Youth Congress, which has been going on at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., under auspices of the American Youth Congress. He asserted positively that they were Communist-dominated movements, with some, but not all, of their sponsors and members "innocent dupes of a typical Communist maneuver."

It had been brought out previously in the committee hearings that eight government officials, three of them of "little Cabinet" rank, belonged to the American League for Peace and Democracy.

Dies Calls On Them to Quit
The resignations of these from the radical group was virtually asked for by members of the Congressional committee. Representative Martin Dies, Democrat, of Texas, chairman of the committee, observed that he thought "any decent public official will withdraw when he knows these facts."

Again, it was brought out by Representative Noah M. Mason, Republican, of Illinois, that Mrs. Roosevelt, wife of the President, had addressed the World Youth Congress.

"Could a speaker at the Poughkeepsie conference," he asked the witness, "be innocently guilty of exploiting the Communist movement and forwarding its cause?"

"Yes," said Mr. Matthews, "to the extent that it would publicize the conference."

"Well, if the speaker was the wife of the President of the United States, it would have that value, would it not?" Representative Mason pressed.

"I think the question answers itself," the witness responded.

Mr. Matthews, educator and writer, a tall, ascetic-looking man in his early fifties, speaking in the rapid and precise accents of a professor, which he has been in several schools and colleges, told the committee how he got into the radical movement, how he rose to the point where he was either a "front man" or consultant for the Communist party in some twenty allied organizations, and how he got out.

He explained that he was not a member of the party but what was called "a fellow-traveler." In many cases it was more effective to be a fellow-traveler than a party member, he explained, since he could go on campuses and platforms the country over and appear merely as a liberal.

In the ten years he was in the

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Liberals Called Dupes in Reds' 'United Front'

(Continued from page one)

movement, he said, he visited Soviet Russia five times.

The reason for his becoming a radical, he explained, was that "like so many other Americans of the middle class, I suffered from a very sentimental idealism; I fell hard for Wilsonian idealism; I lived through the war-to-end-war and I lived through the post-war disillusionment."

"Step by step," he added, "I was drawn further and further toward the left. I felt that we needed something that would bring the ideal world to pass more quickly. The Communist party promised the most—a speed-up of social change."

Idealism Drove Him Out

"Having got in on an idealistic basis, I got out on the same basis. No man can be inclose touch with the movement without realizing that every human ideal is more flatly violated in left-wing circles than outside those circles. Fellow travelers, on the fringe, will never discover these things. The party morality is that 'anything goes that serves the interests of the class struggle.' There is no degree of perjury or violence of any sort which is not used or planned. As an idealist you would have to have a pretty well-lined stomach to sand that sort of thing."

As an example of the party morality the witness detailed an episode at Norfolk, Va., where communists donned the white robes of the Ku-Klux Klan to terrorize Negro clothing workers into joining a Communist-controlled labor union. Then the party organs had a field day, he said, denouncing the way the South "terrorized" Negro workers.

Mr. Matthews launched quickly into a description of the various United Front organizations, which are called, among the elect, "innocent clubs."

It was through these organizations that the party's influence reached far beyond its immediate enrolled membership, he said. In fact, he explained, the Communist party did not require a majority to work; as little as a 2 per cent minority, well organized and disciplined, was as good a break as it wanted. The Russian revolution was conducted on a basis much smaller than this, the witness told the committee, and, at present only 2,000,000 party members absolutely controlled the other 158,000,000 residents of Soviet Russia.

Cites Youth Congress

As an example of how the left-wingers could "capture" an organization set up originally for a vastly different purpose, the witness turned to the American Youth Congress. The original founder, Miss Viola Ima, invited all shades of national youth organizations, from the Boy Scouts to the Young Communists League, to take part.

"Her arrangements were remarkably efficient and all-inclusive," said a report of the congress, "and that was her mistake." The Young Communists, along with left-wing Socialists, captured the organizing meeting and threw Miss Ima out, the witness detailed.

Mr. Matthews named some surprising names as the sponsors of the American Youth Congress. Among them were Bishop Ralph S. Cushman of the Methodist Episcopal Church; former Governor Harold G. Hoffman of New Jersey; Henry Noble McCracken, president of Vassar; and William Allen White, editor of "The Emporia Gazette."

The witness absolved many of these of any communistic leaning, but said they were "being made the innocent dupes of a carefully contrived Communist maneuver." He had explained the situation to former Governor Hoffman and he had resigned, the witness said. "Many do not know what it is all about, but there are many who do," he added.

'Peace' Ideal Held Delusive

The idea of peace is held in the forefront of the movement, according to Mr. Matthews, but the peace which the members are supposed to fight for is a "breathing spell to give the world proletariat still more time to rally its forces for the final overthrow of capitalism."

Asked at this stage for some proof of his statement that the youth congress was Communist-dominated, the witness said:

"You will find at this meeting at Poughkeepsie that the resolutions will follow faithfully the new Communist 'party line.'"

"In a recent statement purporting to reply to the charge of Communist influence in the World Youth Con-

character advanced by organizations based on the contention that Communist members were in a minority.

"In the center," wrote Mr. Browder, "as the conscious moving and directive force of the united front movement in all its phases, stands the Communist party. Our position in this respect is clear and unchallenged."

Explains "New Tactic"

Turning to the "new tactic" of the Communist party, Mr. Matthews asserted that in 1932 the Third International began to be much afraid of Fascism, as a result of the rise of Hitler. It realized that it would have to seek allies in the democracies. At a special meeting of the Communist International in Moscow, at which Mr. Browder was present, the "new tactic" was evolved, he said.

In France and Great Britain, the Communist party was able to set up united front organizations immediately, but in the United States, unripe for that as yet, an organization known as the American League War and Fascism was founded. He became its chairman.

"The purpose of the 'new tactic' was to work as fast as possible for the disintegration of the Democratic party," the witness continued. "It was a case of boring from within. I was asked, for example, to join the Democratic party in New Jersey and to run for the Assembly, which I did."

Thousands of radicals joined the Democratic party and infiltrated the government to drive a wedge between the conservative and liberal elements of the party. The idea was that, by 1940 or 1942, a strong Farmer-Labor party would be brought about, through the split."

Barbusse Visit Cited

As proof of the Communist origins of the League Against War and Fascism (which became the American League for Peace and Democracy at exactly the same time that the same name change was occurring in Great Britain and France—"showing some centralized control"), Mr. Matthews offered the fact that Henri Barbusse, French novelist and Communist, was sent to the United States to attend the organizing congress and that he received a silver bust of himself inscribed as "Father" of the league. In reprinting back to Moscow, it was related, Mr. Browder told the Communist International: "We led the congress from the first quite openly."

Some amusing sidelights on the financing of the American League for Peace and Democracy were read into the record by Mr. Matthews.

Tells of Raising Money

There were four ways of getting money, he said. First, there was the "nickle, dime and quarter drive among the innocents, with tin cans and collections on the table." Second, there was the method of "staging banquets for the upper middle class—the pink intellectuals"—at which a speaker such as John Stachey was the leading light. These banquets for "pink intellectuals" sometimes netted up to \$2,000, he said.

"And then, when they get into difficulties they sometimes go to Corliss Lamont and get him to sign a note," the witness declared, smiling broadly as the committee smiled back.

Mr. Lamont is the son of Thomas W. Lamont, a partner of J. P. Morgan & Co. The younger Mr. Lamont was a "fellow traveler," the witness stated.

If the bank wouldn't make a loan and it became necessary to find money quickly, he said, "then we called Browder on the 'phone and told him how much we had to have—there was a party fund from Moscow; he could draw on in emergencies."

The witness said that once he had needed money quickly for a trip to Cuba, Mr. Browder was called and the sum, in cash, was sent over "instantly," he said.

Another "front" organization in which Mr. Matthews had a finger was the Student Congress Against War, in which "we encountered no difficulty whatever in obtaining the adoption of a set of resolutions which conformed completely to the 'line' of the Communist party."

Henderson Case Discussed

Still another was the National Student League, which staged campus strikes at Columbia to demand the reinstatement of Professor Donald Henderson, of the economics faculty. Professor Henderson, the witness said, had deliberately courted non-renewal of his contract with the university so that he might become an "academic martyr, useful in the larger party purposes." He had become a member of the party in 1932, declared the witness.

Mr. Matthews said also he had had a large part in the formation of unemployed councils and bringing them into a merger which finally formed the Workers Alliance, which has recently been under the fire of the committee as a Communist organization penetrating the

in which he described his reaction to the "insane machine" of Spanish Fascism. "Comradeship was something I really found," he wrote, "for every man I met there would lay down his life for the preservation of ideals and the lives of his comrades."

The other photostat was of a letter by Halpern to "The Daily Worker," in which he wrote that his American comrades were in an army "that knows what it is fighting for." "I can't say enough for those fellows over there," he went on. "Since I left Spain before I was scheduled to, and in order to make up for this, I hope to co-operate with and help the Friends of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in their fine work."

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"You will find at this meeting at Poughkeepsie that the resolutions will follow faithfully the new Communist 'party line.'"

"In a recent statement purporting to reply to the charge of Communist influence in the World Youth Congress, the American Youth Congress officials asked rhetorically: 'Will the single delegate of the Young Communist League of the United States outweigh all the other forty-nine American delegates?' This statement, couched in the form of a rhetorical question, is obviously intended to lead the reader to believe that the only Communist delegate who will be a member of the American group in the Youth Congress will be there in his capacity as a member of the Young Communist League—a lone Communist among forty-nine non-Communists. The statement is wholly false in its implication. Besides being false, however, this statement reveals a typical 'united front' tactic of the Communists.

"Approximately thirty-five of the fifty delegates are either Communists or fellow-travelers. The voting on resolutions at the meeting, you will find, will be thirty-five or thirty-six in favor of the Communist resolutions with fourteen or fifteen against.

Party Has Many "Disguises"

"As a matter of fact, a careful check will show that many of the organizations sponsoring the World Youth Congress and having delegates in its membership are nothing more than the Communist party in some of its numerous disguises.

"A united front organization is nothing more than the Communist party wearing a false face."

As simple test of whether or not an organization was Communist, Mr. Matthews said, was for some one to rise in a meeting and introduce a resolution which condemned the Communist party.

"If it is Communist then you will see who is the sacred cow," he said. "Then you will see who runs the organization."

Quoting Earl Browder, Communist party candidate for President in 1936, the witness said his words gave the lie to all denials of Communistic

members who combined to win Corliss Lamont and get him to sign a note," the witness declared, smiling broadly as the committee smiled back.

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Mr. Matthews said also he had had a large part in the formation of unemployed councils and bringing them into a merger which finally formed the Workers Alliance, which has recently been under the fire of the committee as a Communist organization penetrating the ranks of the unemployed. The nominal head of it, the witness said, was David Lasser, a "fellow traveler," while the one who "runs it" was Herbert Benjamin, an acknowledged Communist.

Lincoln Brigade Veterans Denounce 2 'Deserters'

Scoff at Charge Loyalists Hold Americans Prisoner

Captain Carl Bradley and Lieutenant Frank O'Flaherty issued a statement yesterday in behalf of 300 veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, denouncing "gross misrepresentations" by Abraham Sobel, a Boston law student, and Alvin Halpern, of Brookline, Mass., who testified at Washington on Thursday and Friday before the House committee investigating un-American activities. Sobel and Halpern had declared that more than 4,000 Americans were being held "virtual prisoners" overseas.

The brigade is an organization of American volunteers fighting for the loyalists in the Spanish civil war. Captain Bradley, who is executive secretary of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and Lieutenant O'Flaherty were both wounded and honorably discharged. They asked in their statement whether credence should be given to 300 veterans "who returned only because of their wounds" or to the "two deserters." Any one of the veterans, they insisted, would readily return to the fray "in the interests of the cause which they know to be the cause of democracy and the American people."

The veterans at the same time made public photostats of material written by Sobel and Halpern, which were different from the sentiments they expressed before the House Committee. One of these was a personal sketch in Sobel's handwriting.