

My Day *WT 12/13/39* By Eleanor Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, Tuesday.—Dec. 15 will mark the 148th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights. I hope every citizen in this country will read over those first 10 amendments to the Constitution and keep them constantly in mind, particularly articles IV, V and VI.



In Article VI it mentions that in criminal prosecutions the criminal shall have certain rights. I am wondering if in the present day these rights should not be observed for all people, whether accused in a criminal case or whether merely accused through the public press. It seems to me that the right "to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense," would be a safeguard to a great many people today who find themselves suddenly held up as dangerous citizens when they have not had an opportunity to be heard.

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If you are not accused of being a Communist these days, you may be a Communist front and now you

may be a Communist transmission belt, and these names apply both to individuals and organizations. I don't question that all three kinds of people exist, but I begin to wonder whether some perfectly innocent people may not be suffering because of the fears which are being aroused. Timid people soon will not dare to stand for the things in which they believe, because some may imagine that they are any one of these three dreadful things, or that they are countenancing them in somebody else.

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It is really going to take quite a strong minded person with a great indifference to what may be said about him to join an organization, even though the objectives as they are presented seem in accordance with his beliefs. Before long I think we are going to find people saying what a certain lady said to me not long ago: "I hope you will not see Miss —, you know she ran on the Communist ticket." If I had not happened to know that there had been no election and there was no Communist ticket in that place, the warning might have had some effect even on me.

Let's fight realities with all we have. Let's fight for our Democracy and our Bill of Rights, and wherever we find things in which we do not believe, let's be free to express ourselves, but let us pray not to be dominated by fears or disturbed by nightmares.