

*Murdock - Nixon*

# Congress of Industrial Organizations



718 Jackson Place, N. W. • Washington 6, D. C.

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EXECUTIVE 5581



September 7, 1950

My dear Senator:

We enclose for your attention and consideration copy of resolution on internal security and civil liberties adopted by the CIO Executive Board on August 29.

Sincerely yours,

*Nathan E. Cowan*

Nathan E. Cowan, Director  
CIO Legislative Department

SEN. L. C. HUNT  
ACC. NO. 270

RESOLUTION  
INTERNAL SECURITY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Congress of Industrial Organizations stands foursquare behind the American Government in its determination to preserve our democratic way of life and to resist to the utmost Soviet aggression. The Communist challenge must be met and turned back, whether that challenge takes the form of armed attack, espionage or sabotage, or traitorous Fifth Column activity within our own country. The Congress of Industrial Organizations supports every necessary step to prevent espionage, sabotage or subversive activity.

We in America must be ever zealous to protect our democratic liberties not only against totalitarian foes without or within, but against unnecessary or unwarranted governmental restraints. In forging weapons to resist a foreign police state and the alien and totalitarian ideology which is its tool, we must take care that we do not ourselves irreparably damage the very democracy for which we fight. The problem was well stated by President Truman in his recent Message to Congress on Internal Security, in which he said:

"We face today, as we have always faced in time of international tension, the question of how to keep our freedom secure against internal as well as external attack, without at the same time unduly limiting individual rights and liberties."

Moreover, the battle against totalitarian aggression must be fought with ideas as well as armies. It will not do to prate of democracy to our allies abroad unless we preserve and strengthen it at home. To quote again from the President's message:

"It would be tragic in the highest degree if we were to frighten ourselves into destroying those very liberties which are the basis of our moral leadership in the struggle for peace.

"I am determined that the United States shall be secure. I am equally determined that we shall keep our historic liberties.

"Success in achieving both these objectives is of exceptional importance in the present period of international tension. For by our actions, we must maintain the United States as a strong, free people, confident in our liberties, and moving forward with other free peoples to oppose aggression and to build a just peace for all mankind."

The plain fact is that measures such as the Mundt-Ferguson bill and the McCarran (S-2311) and Wood (HR-9490) bills which incorporate its provisions, do not add one single iota to our immediate defenses against Communist espionage, sabotage or subversive activity. They are thus useless against the real menace. And they would subject freedom of thought, speech and belief to restriction and regulation by a federal board. It would drive the Communist Party completely underground and give it an undeserved

halo of martyrdom. As the President further stated in his message:

"Such measures would not only infringe on the Bill of Rights and the basic liberties of our people; they would also undermine the very internal security they seek to protect.

"Laws forbidding dissent do not prevent subversive activities; they merely drive them into more secret and more dangerous channels. Police states are not secure; their history is marked by successive purges, and growing concentration camps, as their governments strike out blindly in fear of violent revolt. Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.

"This kind of proposed legislation is dangerous because, in attempting to proscribe, for groups such as the communists, certain activities that are perfectly proper for everyone else, such legislation would spread a legal dragnet sufficiently broad to permit the prosecution of people who are entirely innocent or merely misguided. As far as the real conspirators against our institutions are concerned, such legislation would merely have the effect of driving them further underground and making it more difficult to reach them. Furthermore, if such legislation were held unconstitutional, as it well might be, it would make martyrs out of our worst enemies and create public sympathy for them."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Congress of Industrial Organizations endorses the principles laid down by President Truman in his Internal Security Message, and commends the President for the guidance and leadership given to the nation on this important issue at this critical time.

The CIO urges that the Congress adopt legislation which will effectively and immediately deal with the problems of espionage and sabotage in the spirit of the President's message. Specifically, the CIO supports the enactment of that portion of Senate Bill 4061 (that is, sections 3-6 inclusive) which embodies the recommendations of the President with regard to tightening existing laws dealing with espionage, sabotage and subversive activity.

However, Senate Bill 4061, in some respects, goes beyond the recommendations of the President, and seems unnecessarily repressive of the rights of aliens. For example, the courts, not the Attorney General, should decide whether an alien is to be admitted to bail pending deportation proceedings, which may go on for years. Again, whether undeportable aliens are to be jailed, or required to submit to medical or psychiatric examination, should be decided by the courts, not the Attorney General. The CIO urges that these provisions be liberalized.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations declares its opposition to the McCarran Bill, to the Mundt-Ferguson Bill and to the Wood Bill. These bills are completely ineffective as immediate measures against spies and saboteurs. Their present effect will be to undermine our democracy and to create a threat to freedom of thought, speech and belief. They are aids to Communist propaganda throughout the world rather than effective measures against Communist espionage. Many of the

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features of these bills have been declared by the Attorney General to be of dubious constitutionality, and certainly they transgress the spirit of the Bill of Rights which we seek to defend against Communism.

The CIO urges the Senate and the House of Representatives to enact legislation in the spirit of the President's message and to defeat the McCarran, the Mundt-Ferguson and the Wood Bills.

