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6418 – Communist Influence Behind Racial Demonstrations

Guest: Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC)

Morphew: Introduction...recently there have been a number of developments regarding the Communist influence behind racial demonstrations and the so-called civil rights movement...what are they?

Thurmond: Well, Dick, last year I brought out in the Commerce Committee's hearings on civil rights on the Senate floor that there is Communist influence in and penetration of the current Negro demonstrations and agitational efforts in this country. Now I would just like to tell you and your audience what Mr. J. Edgar Hoover has said. He testified before a House committee some time ago and his testimony has just now been made public and I think it's very significant because it bears out the charge I made last year and which was denied by the attorney general and others who were trying to defend these demonstrations at that time.

Morphew: This is his quote?

Thurmond: This is correct. Here's what Mr. Hoover said, "The number of Communist party recruits which may be attracted from the large Negro racial group in this nation is not the important thing. The old Communist principle still holds. Communism must be built with non-Communist hands. We do know that Communist influence does exist in the Negro movement and it is this influence which is vitally important. It can be the means through which large masses are caused to lose perspective on the issues involved and without realizing it succumb to the party's propaganda lures." And Mr. Hoover goes on further, Dick, and gave this testimony: "Currently the Communist Party, USA, is stressing such domestic issues as the racial struggle, the abolition of all internal security programs, and of congressional committees investigating Communism,..." Do you catch the significance of that? "and the reduction of military spending with the diversion of

such appropriations to a broad program of social welfare projects. On the international level, the party is dutifully echoing Soviet propaganda regarding peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition.” And if you know, that’s what’s going on. “Disarmament,” of course they’re pushing disarmament now, “an end to nuclear testing, an increased East-West trade. Woven into all the party’s propaganda are basic Communist themes. In one way or another it stresses a never-ending class struggle, a necessity for destroying the capitalist system, the claimed overwhelming superiority of Communism over all other social orders, and the inevitable triumph of Communism in the United States and throughout the world.” Now Dick, those words came directly from Mr. J. Edgar Hoover and he’s probably the best authority in the United States on Communism. Now, I might say that various columnists, and these are liberal columnists too, have made similar statements. Joe Alsop, for instance, and nobody would accuse him of being conservative, and Bob Novak and Roland Evans, who also are liberal columnists, and Bob Allen and Paul Scott, and a great many people read those columns, the Scott and Allen column, because it’s a very outstanding column. These columnists get around and obtain a lot of valuable information that others do not.

Morphew: And they have been discussing the Communist influence in the civil rights drive recently?

Thurmond: That’s correct. And Holmes Alexander and he’s a very able columnist. And Richard Wilson, another columnist, has been doing likewise. And Dick, I think it would be of interest, too, to this audience to know that in the demonstrations in Cleveland, Ohio, recently the mayor has requested an investigation by the FBI up there, and he says that there are 38 known subversives who participated in those demonstrations, showing that there is penetration in the Negro movement and in the Negro demonstrations and in the Negro riots that have been taking place across this country.

Morphew: Last year when you made these charges and also when 2 southern governors showed similar evidence, these charges were swept under the rug, weren’t they?

Thurmond: That’s right. They were ignored. I remember that Senator Monroney wrote the attorney general and asked him if there was any Communist influence in these demonstrations and my recollection is the attorney general wrote back to Senator Monroney and said that there was not any evidence about these and he specifically singled out one or more Negro leaders and said that there was no evidence to show that they were in any way connected with the Communist movement. Well, this is simply not true that there’s not Communism connected in these movements because there’s no question about that Communism has infiltrated these movements and has inspired these movements and if people will look up the records of some of these leaders of these movements I think they would be surprised. Of course, they may not be able to get all of the information that we get, but I can tell you now, it almost frightens me when I see some of the people taking an active part in these demonstrations.

Morphew: Why is this concern being suddenly expressed now? Is it that the demonstrations have moved out of the south and into the north?

Thurmond: Well, I think some of the leaders in this country are now becoming concerned. Even some of the liberal commentators and columnists are becoming concerned because they don't know what can happen now. They're wondering whether or not this really means an effort to overthrow the government or whether this is going to end up as a Communist revolution. You see, they're calling it revolution. But so far they have scoffed Communism within the movement. Now, they cannot hide it under the rug any longer, and as I stated, even these liberal columnists are now admitting that Communism is in this movement.

Morphew: You have a national reputation as a student of Communist methods, why would the Communists want to attach themselves to this civil rights movement?

Thurmond: Well Dick, one favorite tactic of the Communists is to move in any way they can and create a division among the people and for years they have been trying to penetrate the Negro movement and they would like to array one race against another. They like to array employees against employers or vice versa. In other words, they are trying to create strife and chaos and confusion and riots wherever they can do so and this seems to give them a fine opportunity here and I think this deserves a thorough investigation. I don't think this civil rights bill ought to be passed until this government, until the FBI has been directed by this government to investigate the effect of the Communist influence in this movement and to see just how strongly the Communists are back of this movement to pass this civil rights bill and to see just what is at the bottom of this thing because if we can get the true facts about this matter, in my judgment, it will amaze the American people.

Morphew: Is it just coincidence that whenever there is a very intensive campaign of racial demonstrations in this country it seems that the forces of international Communism make some move overseas

Thurmond: Dick, I don't think there's any question about it that there's an international movement and you can just see things happened right at the right time, at the right place all over this country and all over the world. There were demonstrations when the Greek king went England. That just didn't happen. Somebody pressed the button. There have been demonstrations in South America. Somebody pressed the button. There have been demonstrations in various parts of this country. Somebody pressed the button. There's no question in my mind that there is a central direction to what's going on in these demonstrations, not only in this country but throughout the world and there's no question in my mind that the bottom of it is Communism. It's international Communism that's inspired and directed from Moscow.

Morphew: If demonstrations in our own backyard are keeping us occupied, it's pretty hard to get too concerned about what's going on overseas

Thurmond: Well, I guess so because a lot people get concerned about what's happening here and they don't keep up or don't realize just what's happening in various parts of the

world and sometimes I wonder if all of our people keep abreast of things as well as we should. In fact, the attention of the people is frequently diverted in one direction for a specific purpose so they will not be observing what happened somewhere else. There might be something to take place in Berlin in order to divert the people's attention away from Cuba or vice versa and that's just a simple illustration, many others could be given.

Morphew: Would you say that there is too much interrelation between these various happenings to ascribe it all to coincidence, that there must be some pattern to it all?

Thurmond: I don't think there's any question about it. The direction comes from a common source. There are too many of these instances, there are too many demonstrations, and there's too much of a pattern for anyone to cast it aside and say there's not a central direction.

Morphew: Do you think there's any possibility of getting an investigation in this election year?

Thurmond: I cannot say because it seems that both parties are making a play for the Negro bloc votes and the minority votes and they'll go a long ways and I just don't know whether we can get the investigation or not. It certainly should be done.