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6531 – Communist Infiltration in CRM

Guest: Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-SC)

Morphew: Introduction...if it were not so serious, I suppose we could take an 'I told you so' attitude on this program because many, many times in past you and other participants on this series have warned of the dangers of Communist penetration and influence of the so-called CRM throughout the nation and now some of the chickens are coming home to roost in a manner of speaking...what is your feeling, is there a growing awareness that the Communist are involved in the demonstrations?

Thurmond: Well Dick, I don't think there's any question about it that there's Communism in these so-called civil rights movements. Two years ago, when we had the hearing before the commerce committee, I put a lot of information in the record then showing this and I have made many speeches and many statements along this line. There is no question but that there is Communism in these so-called civil rights movements. I hold here in my hands an article from Chicago's American. It's Thursday, June the 24th. It's entitled, "Reds' Link to Willis Protestors." And I want to take time to read you one paragraph from it. This is by Sam Blair, "More than a dozen individuals identified as members of the Communist party in Chicago have infiltrated civil rights meetings and marches directed against school superintendent Benjamin C. Willis. Several have flung themselves into the streets, blocking pedestrians and traffic, and precipitating mass arrests. In addition, they were in the forefront of demonstrations that erupted around the old United States court of appeals at 1212 Lakeshore Drive during hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Another group of identified Communists and sympathizers whose identities are known to security agencies have also joined the marchers. Several of the militants were identified as Communists during the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings. Others were named by congressional committees and investigators for local and national security agencies.

Morphew: Now this is in Chicago?

Thurmond: This is in Chicago. "And many also marched and picketed for Chicago Area Women for Peace Rally in Grand Park, April 17th. This group has also been identified as a Communist front organization. They have been photographed as they attended all these rallies and marched with various groups." And then it goes on and gives the names of these people, their ages, their backgrounds, tell who they are, calls the names, and it shows their Communist connections and it shows absolutely without any question that the Communists have been involved in this protest up there against Superintendent Willis and in other civil rights marches and demonstrations. And I have another article here too that I think is of some interest. Now this is an interview held by Mr. Frank Vanderlenin (???), one of Washington's most prominent reporters with an officer of the nagra organizations known as 'snick', S-N-C-C. Now these are some questions and answers, I think, that should interest the American people. And Mr. Vanderlenin says, "if you found a person in your movement who admitted having been a Communist either now or in the past, would you exclude him from your organization." And this nagra leader's answer is, "Well, see, in the first place it would be hard for me as an individual, as an American citizen to determine what a Communist is." And then Vanderlenin, "Suppose he said, yes, I used to be one, but I'm in favor of your program and I want to help you in your campaign. Would you welcome his support?" Answer: "I think any person who believes contrary to the basic democratic process, who believes they are contrary to the program of SNCC can work within the framework. We do not make any kind of a security check on people. If people are committed to working for what we call interracial democracy, the open society, we accept them. In the second place, I want to believe that some ideas must also be caught up in the means and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee also, the whole civil rights movement, we believe you can separate the ends and means." In other words, what he's saying is that the end justifies the means.

Morphew: SNCC is mentioned in this report from the Alabama Legislative Commission to Preserve the Peace, as a result of a two-year investigation and it is described as 'extensively Communist dominated and its leadership substantially follows the Communist party line,'...it continues, "this commission finds that SNCC is an agent for the Communist conspiracy and measures up to every definition of a Communist party front." That's the organization whose official is being interviewed in this article.

Thurmond: That's correct, Dick, that's correct.

Morphew: In recent weeks we have had Daly and the Chicago police department and the Chicago press as well identify Communist influences at work in the various demonstrations and racial agitations in the South and the North...the Alabama Commission report that attracted a great deal of attention when it was released a few weeks ago says that "on the basis of cumulative evidence SNCC is found by this commission to constitute one of the most serious attempts by the Communists in America with support of Red China, Cuba, and Communist nations in Africa to effect a violent overthrow of existing governments, state and federal, in the United States."...this

involvement of Red China or Cuba in some of these Communist front organizations in this country, how are these demonstrations linked with our foreign policy?

Thurmond: Well, some of the main leaders who are interested in these so-called civil rights movements are making expressions now on foreign policy. They would withdraw our men from Vietnam. They are opposed to waging war against the Communists in Vietnam and trying to maintain the freedom of the free countries of the world. I have an article here from the New York Times, dated July the 5th, entitled, "Peace and Civil Rights: Movements Viewed as Growing Closer." It goes and says, "A leader here urges the end of war in Vietnam." I'll just read you a short paragraph here, says, "The Negro revolution which has been concerned primarily with attacking racial discrimination is showing signs as well as becoming a vehicle for opposition to the United States military posture abroad. Although there has traditionally been a close relationship between the civil rights and peace movements, most Negro leaders have avoided issues of foreign policy for tactical reasons." And then it goes on and tells about this Negro leader who's taking a stand now on Vietnam. In other words, he's opposing what we are doing in Vietnam. It fits right into the pattern that we have been telling the people about for several years, Dick, is that there is Communism in these so-called civil rights movements and in these demonstrations and in these marches. Some of these movements have been infiltrated by the Communists, others have been directed by the Communists, and in others, the Communists have played a vital role. And some of the same leaders who have been active in that movement are also active in opposing President Johnson and what we're doing in opposing the Communists in Vietnam and in the Dominican Republic.

Morphew: Getting back to the Chicago American article that you mentioned, it says in spot that security and intelligence agencies have lists from 12 to 15 other known Communist or sympathizers who have infiltrated the ranks of this protest movement in Chicago, saying, the numbers of some of their Communist party cards are known if they possess a card, then it refers to a statement made in the past year by Hoover, that Communist influence does exist in the CRM...it continues, the infiltration of the drive in Chicago follows the prediction of Mr. Hoover...we are seeing throughout the nation this increasing recognition that Communism is linked with some of these protest movements in this country

Thurmond: There's no question about it, and Mayor Daly has been a friend of the Negroes, they have supported him in his political races, and he certainly wouldn't have made such a statement if there had not been merit in it.

Morphew: What can the people do about it?

Thurmond: Well, I think that there should be an investigation by the executive branch of the government into this matter. I think there should also be an investigation by the Congress. I have called for an investigation for several years, but we have not gotten an investigation because this administration is so closely aligned with the Negro movements and is receiving the support of the Negroes, that they are afraid that they will offend all of the Negroes....in my judgment, the people are entitled to know the truth, the people are

entitled to know who these Communists are and the movements in which they are participating and just what these people stand for and I think the president of this nation has an obligation to our people to bring out these facts to our people. And I think the Congress has an obligation, too, Dick, to investigate these matters. It's very important that the Congress which is an investigative body, too, can investigate the Communism in these civil rights movements and in these marches and demonstrations because there's no question. As Mr. Daly said here, there were at least a dozen in a march up there, and J. Edgar Hoover has referred to the Communists in these so-called civil rights movements. There's no question that there have been numerous instances in which this has been verified. And in my judgment, the Congress has a deep obligation to the American people to come out and take a stand on this matter and reveal what is going on. Why should we withhold this from the people? The enemy of America today, the enemy of the free world today is Communism, and if we have Communism right here on our doorsteps, if we have it right here in the United States, if Communism is playing an active part in these so-called civil rights movements which are supposed to be a good movement in the eyes of a lot of people, then the American people are entitled to know this and to know it because it is the truth.