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6330 – Racial Agitation and Various Organization

Guest: Myers G. Lowman, Circuit Riders

Morphew: It is a pleasure to have on the program today, Mr. Meyers G. Lowman of Cincinnati, Ohio. Mr. Lowman is executive secretary of Circuit Riders, Incorporated, a group organized to oppose and expose Communism and particularly Communist influence in America's churches and educational institutions. Mr. Lowman, after a very successful business career, has devoted full time to the Circuit Riders organization for the past several years...

Lowman: It's always nice to be on with you, Mr. Morphew.

Morphew: Like to discuss certain organizations, like the Southern Conference Educational fund that you have written about. What is their role in demonstrations and agitation?

Lowman: Its current role has been its initial role when it was founded in 1938 in Birmingham, Alabama. And this is described best by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and by the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives, which in citations have shown that the Southern Conference Educational Fund, originally called Southern Conference for Human Welfare, was ostensibly set up to improve race relations while in reality it advanced the program of the Communists. And its personnel, leadership, presidents, board members, not all of the board members, but some 300 of the board and committee members and public supporters have had their names appear in public print in support of anywhere from a hundred to more than 100 Communist and pro-Communist causes as each one of these persons. The current president is just recently elected a Fred L. Shuttlesworth. The Communist press one week will show him as being from Birmingham, Alabama, another week he's from Cincinnati, Ohio, it so happens he's from both. I don't know whether it's true this week, but until

recently, he operated a church in each of these cities and a residence in each of these cities, and is widely publicized in the Communist press, such as the Worker and the Midweek Worker, as speaking in race and race incitation meetings all over the United States. The executive director of Southern Conference Educational Fund is the Rev. James A. Dumbroski, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, who when asked whether or not he was a Communist in hearings, of course denies Communist affiliation. And I said, it makes no difference whatsoever insofar as the security of the United States is concerned whether James Dumbroski is a Communist or not a Communist. His record of affiliation and leadership in the Southern Conference Educational Fund and in its maiden name, Southern Conference for Human Welfare, is so serious it doesn't make any difference what else he is.

Morphew: Other members have Communist leanings?

Lowman: Well, it's a unique thing that the field staff members, one is an Episcopalian rector from New York, William Howard Melish (sp?) who was identified publicly as a Communist, he's a New York field representative. And then there's Carl Braden. Carl Braden was convicted in Kentucky for sedition. He was saved from a 15 year penitentiary sentence by the Supreme Court decision in the Nelson, the Steve Nelson case, said that sedition was purely a federal matter. He then was convicted later in a federal court of contempt of the United States House of Representatives Committee UnAmerican Activities for answering or not answering and the kind of answers he gave on the question of Communism and his alleged affiliation with the Communist Party of the United States and race incitation in the South.

Morphew: Evidence that these persons were active in recent demonstrations

Lowman: Well, you live in Mississippi, I live in Ohio. These men agitate in both of our states. Carl Braden has traipsed all over Mississippi, inciting, organizing in race agitations. James Dumbroski has been very active at Clarksdale, Mississippi, one of the hottest spots in the United States on race incitation. There is a long record, including a hearing in your state, on Dumbroski's relationship to Clarksdale and other Mississippi towns.

Morphew: And of course Shuttlesworth was in B'ham, during the recent demonstrations there.

Lowman: Well, 'Birmingham Shuttlesworth' as compared with 'Cincinnati Shuttlesworth' was the number 2 man, second to Martin Luther King in the Birmingham situation. And this is a heading in a Cincinnati paper, 'Cincinnati Pastor Named as Head of Red Front.' And when the Cincinnati Inquirer's reporters called Shuttlesworth, to ask him whether or not this was a Communist front, he refused to identify it as a Communist front or to discuss it, he said. But at the cited here, here is a photographic reproduction of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee's citation where it says, 'It's simply an expedient for a larger aim serving the Soviet Union and its subservient Communist Party in the United States. Now Mr. Shuttlesworth and Bishop Edgar A. Love of Baltimore,

Maryland, who was present up to a month or 2 ago are not ignorant persons. They read the daily press, they have access to information from congressional hearings, just as you and I, and I am not saying that either of these men is deliberately aiding the Communist apparatus, but it would be much harder to find types with reputations as clergymen, who wittingly or unwittingly are facetiously, half-wittedly do more to aid the Communist cause than somebody who can wear the cloak and the garb of clergymen.

Morphew: Connection between Communism and King's movement?

Lowman: Well, I don't know who is a Communist party member today or since the supreme Court resolution because today, a man will say, I'm editor of the Communist paper or I'm spokesman for the Communists but no one of them will say I am a Communist Party member, so all I can say about this is, the public record. In October 26, 1962, the St. Louis Globe Democrat, the Birmingham News, and another daily paper, carried this story, 'Communist Revealed as Reverend King's Aide.' And then, Jack H. O'Dell, acting executive director of the Conference in Southeastern States, including Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, was identified as a member of the national or central committee of the Communist Party, USA, long time ago identified in a hearing in New Orleans as the head of the Communist Party, the organizer in New Orleans. I know some of the people who raided this man's room and seized his papers years ago and got the absolute truth of his party official position.

Morphew: When he turned up as the top aide of the SCLC, MLK's group, he was using the name, Jack H. O'Dell.

Lowman: Well, he has a new name today, I don't know what it is, but if you're curious as to where he is, recently, he's been dividing his time between Birmingham, Alabama, Atlanta, Georgia, and New Orleans and your home state is in that path. I don't know whether he stops there or not.

Morphew: During his Communist days he was known as Hunter Pitts O'Dell.

Lowman: That's right. Now, had Hunter Pitts O'Dell or a lawn cutter for somebody like Welch of the Birch Society been identified as a Communist connected with the Birch Society or the Circuit Riders or the American Legion, there would have been headlines for 4 weeks about this but only 3 papers carried the story about Martin Luther King's number 1 one man being a second strata Communist leader, identified as such in the past. And of course, they were very slow in getting rid of him down there, there's some claim in Alabama now, including a newspaper story about a week ago, asking for a congressional hearing on this Hunter Pitts O'Dell thing and why as long as a month or more later after this story it is alleged that they were paying his travel expenses from New York down to Birmingham again, or to Atlanta, rather.