

Looking at WASHINGTON

Communist Tactics in U. S. Court

It is not a crime to be a Communist in the United States, but, according to our understanding, it is a crime to teach and advocate the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force.

The present trial of the leaders of the Communist Party, now going on in New York City, follows an indictment accusing the party leaders of advocating the overthrow of the Government by force. If the charge can be proved by the evidence, the leaders of the Party will be guilty of violating a statute of the United States Government.

There may be some question in the minds of thoughtful Americans about the advisability of the prosecution now going on and some others may question the wisdom of the law enacted by the Congress of the United States. These questions may be debated but there can be no dispute as to the punishment of those who violate the laws of the land.

In connection with the trial in New York, the behavior of the defendants' friends and attorneys seems to indicate their intention of attempting to make a farce of the judicial proceedings or to set the stage for an attempt to create the impression that the Communist leaders are being unduly persecuted. Moreover, it is apparent that the tactics being attempted are designed to persuade unthinking partisans to believe that the judge and the entire processes of the court are influenced by prejudice and a desire to persecute.

From a reading of press accounts of the trial, we are inclined to the belief that Judge Harold R. Medina has been patient in his consideration of the motions made by the defendants' attorneys and of the incidents in court that tend to support the suspicion that the Communists are seeking to organize a demonstration. Motions to quash the indictments on the ground that the Grand Jury was illegal and to have the jurist declare himself disqualified on account of prejudice seemed to be addressed more to Communist Party followers than to the Court itself.

While discussing the issue, it may be well to admit that some non-Communist commentators are doubtful of the wisdom of trying the leaders of an American Party en masse. Certainly, as these observers point out, if the present leadership of the Communist Party is guilty as charged, any new leadership of the Party will be similarly guilty. This guilt, if established and punished, will practically outlaw the Communist Party or drive it underground.

Against the weight of this observation is the fact that the Communist leaders are accused of violating a statute, designed to protect the Government against a conspiracy to overthrow it by force. If the statute deserved passage and if a law of the country, it should be enforced or repealed. After all, the leaders are accused of violating the law. The trial is being conducted fairly, under adequate safeguards to protect the innocent. The verdict, when rendered, should settle the question of guilt and, if convicted, the defendants should be punished.

World Situation Has Improved

The world situation has improved markedly since last spring, according to Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, in explaining why the request of the armed forces for \$20,000,000,000 for the fiscal year 1950 was pared to \$14,400,000,000 by the President.

Mr. Forrestal points out, however, that the figure submitted by the joint chiefs of staff was not "unwise or ill-advised" at the time and asserted that this conclusion becomes apparent if one projects himself back to last summer and considers conditions which existed at that time.

While the Defense Secretary favors the creation of a seventy-group air force, he supports, for economic reasons, the President's budget which fixes a limit for next year at forty-eight groups. He points out, in this connection, that air power is currently responsible for about sixty percent of all military expenditures and expresses the opinion that American air power may become, in the sky, what British naval forces have been to the sea.

It is interesting to note that one of the leading officials of the United States has concluded that the world situation shows improvement since a year ago. The Secretary of Defense may have information not available to the public or he may be aware of a lessening tension in the relationship between the larger powers.

Let us hope that this conclusion is correct, although to the inexperienced eye, there is little apparent evidence to support the belief that a \$30,000,000,000-defense program was wise last year and that less than half is the correct amount today.

Stalin Fears Atlantic Pact

Proposals relating to peace, recently coming from Communist sources in Italy and France, have been fol-

lowed by some talk in Moscow, including an interview with Premier Stalin in which he excused himself from meeting President Truman in Washington on the grounds of his physical condition.

The arm-chair experts have been trying to figure out what the sudden interest in peace means and most of them have about come to the conclusion that what Russia now fears is that the western nations of Europe will become firmly allied under a defensive pact which will be considerably bolstered by the proposed collaboration of the United States and Canada.

This conclusion seems to make sense. It is in line with the Soviet government's notes to Norway, protesting the apparent decision of the Norwegian government to look into the possibility of becoming aligned with the North Atlantic nations. The Russians contend that this pact is designed to bolster the aggressive policies of strong nations and offer the Norwegians a non-aggression pact to prove that they have no desire except to live at peace with the Norwegians.

This is interesting, of course, but the nations of Europe, now outside the Soviet orbit, are a little bit worried over what might happen to them if, and when, the Russians change their minds. They realize that they are utterly helpless if they stand alone and that, before Russian treaties will be conclusive, there must be a military balance established which will make it impossible for the Communists to lightly change their minds.

In the United States, one reads in various mediums, that our officials

are not yet very anxious to hold any decisive parley with the Russians for the very same reason. Any agreement made will depend upon Russian forbearance in the way of aggression until there is in existence a military force that approximately balances the preponderance of the Russian nation. When this is a fact in being there is every reason to believe that the con-

tending groups may be able to work out a solution that will avoid warfare. Committee Now Commends Itself The House Un-American Activities Committee, under the leadership of Representative John S. Wood, of Georgia, has decided that it will hold future hearings without the attendance of radio, television and photo-

graphic equipment or reporters, spectators and broadcasters.

The committee has been severely criticized in the past because of the publicity that attended its hearings which resulted in vast publicity to preliminary disclosures against individuals who had no chance to answer allegations or deny their alleged guilt. This basic wrong to American citizens aroused the indignation of many persons who pointed out that the committee should probe into un-Americanism in much the same manner that a grand jury investigates alleged criminal acts.

Under the action recently taken by the committee there seems to be little

reason to fear that innocent men and women will be blasted before the nation without an opportunity to be acquainted with charges against them and with no hearing whatever. The change will not interfere, in the slightest degree, with the ability and power of the committee to root out and, at the proper time, expose any and all un-Americanism that is discovered.

Ideality is only the avant-courier of the mind, and where that, in a healthy and normal state goes, I hold it to be a prophecy that realization can follow.

—Horace Mann.

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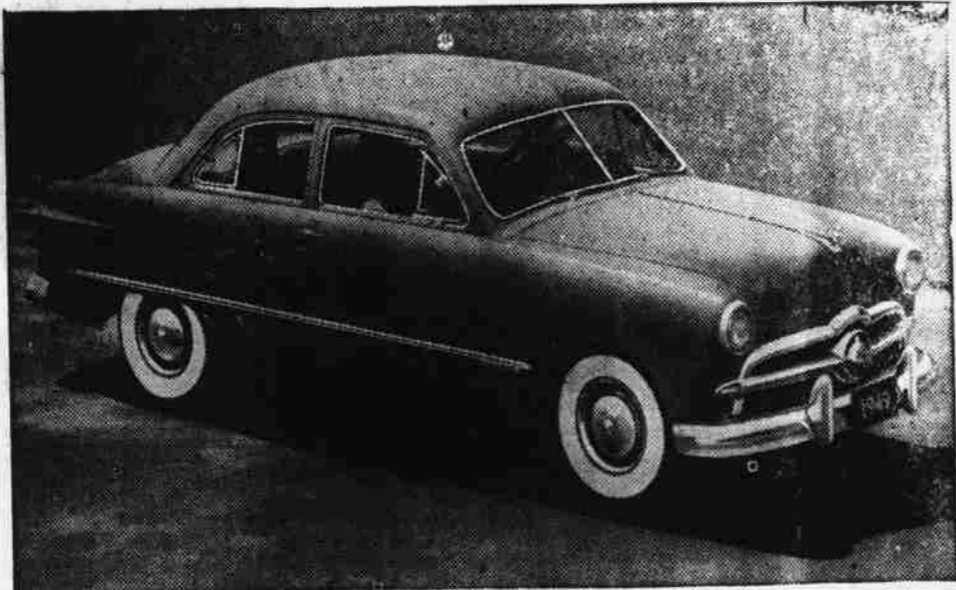
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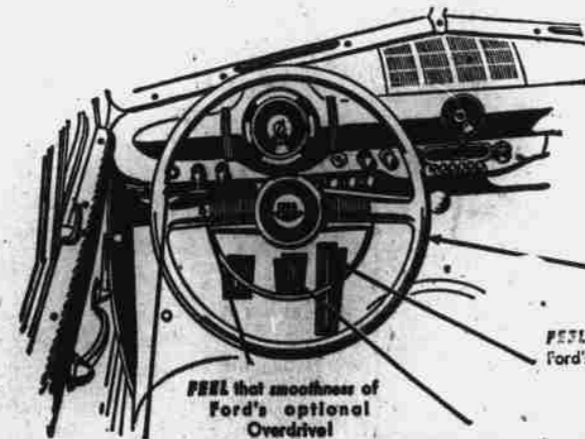
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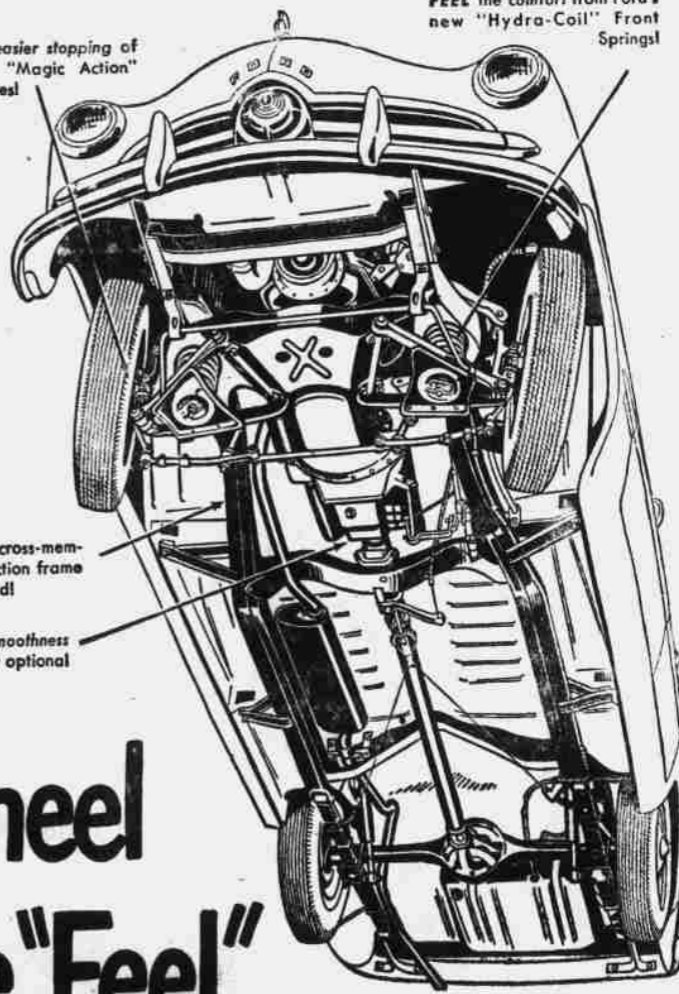
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