From National Public Relations Division, The American Legion, Indianapolis, Indiana

 ARMISTICE DAY - 1946

MY FELLOW AMERICANS:

With humility and with thanks, with reverence and with determination, The American Legion, 3,500,000 strong, leads today in the observance of the 28th anniversary of Armistice Day.

Two global wars have poured their oceans of blood and tears, toil and treasure and sacrifice and glory into the significance of this day. It has a two-fold meaning today.

It is Attainment Day!

In the hearts of the nation's Legionnaires this anniversary will always be associated with America's great triumph in freedom's cause and her conquest for peace.

The day will be forever connected with the attainment of victory - victory which came the first time when the guns of World War I were stilled in final German surrender - and victory which came again with V-E and V-J Days in World War II, shattering the power of fascism, Nazism and Nipponism.

For these attainments we bow our heads in grateful prayer.

It is also Reconsecration Day!

We have won the shooting wars. Now on this solemn occasion when we count the precious cost in gallant lives, we consecrate ourselves anew to the unfinished task of winning the peace.

We stand again on the threshold of another postwar era. Again we are striving to secure our future and preserve our freedom from war. Again The American Legion is in the forefront of a sound movement for insuring eternal peace. Its members have fought in two great wars to achieve that end. Veterans speak with the voice of experience. Veterans speak with realism and yet with vision.

The immediate task calls for building an America FIRST in STRENGTH in its WILL for PEACE and SECOND to NONE in its ABILITY to ENFORCE that WILL!

That strength MUST be mustered, that ability MUST be maintained to assure America's own future safety and to make effective her cooperation in concert with other peace-loving nations in outlawing war.
But first we need national unity in the faith in America. We need a new zeal in our belief in the principles on which America was founded. Those principles still represent the greatest charter of human freedom, liberty and justice on the face of the earth. They have made America the land of promise, the land of opportunity and the land of reward which has been the envy of countless millions abroad. Only by clinging to them can we retain our blessings.

Our comrades died by the tens of thousands in two great wars to vindicate those principles. They believed in them enough to die for them. Wherever our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen fell in battle - at Chateau Thierry, at St. Mihiel, or in the Meuse-Argonne - or at Pearl Harbor, or at Midway, or Guadalcanal, or in North Africa, or Cassino, or on the beaches of Anzio or Normandy, or on the slopes of Okinawa - they created American shrines of inspiration for the last full measure of devotion to freedom and liberty.

Their silent white crosses - wherever they sleep in glory today, far from home or in native soil - carry an eloquent message.

They are the outposts of American faith!

They testify to the invincibility of the American spirit of liberty!

They serve as proof that the fires of freedom lighted in American hearts at Concord and Lexington in 1775 still burn brightly.

We need such eternal flames of patriotism to feed the fires of love of country in America today. For there are evil influences at work in our homeland today, as never before, to quench those fires of Americanism.

A cunning and sinister movement is on foot. It seeks to create disbelievers in America. It cultivates grievances of individuals, groups, classes and minorities, slyly offered as proof that our system of government has become outmoded, that it needs streamlining, that we should import political and social reforms from foreign countries. It proposes to make us over into a satellite state?

I refer to the menace of American communism.

We have it on the authority of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover himself, that during the past five years American communists have made their deepest inroads upon our national life. He warns that in our "vaunted tolerance for all peoples, the communists have found America's 'Achilles' heel."

The menace of American communism lies in its "bore from within" tactics. The membership of the Communist Party of the United States, according to Director Hoover, does not exceed 100,000 today, BUT he warns "each of those 100,000 communists has his or her contacts and his or her adherents and followers who are only too willing to follow the party line and they number close to a million."
Consumed with zeal for their absurd theories, Communists are seeking to infiltrate into all strata of American life. They are concentrating on key workers in basic industries, on returned veterans, on government posts and on strategic positions dealing with the dissemination of public information and news through press, radio, movies and speakers' channels. If the communists cannot get a party member into an important outpost, they maneuver a satellite into the spot — a fellow traveler, a so-called progressive, a liberal ally, a parlor pink, or a duped impractical idealist. Their campaign of penetration relies on dishonor, deceit, propaganda and deliberate lies. The whole communist movement thrives in the field of delusion. It provokes and agitates minorities because they are the most responsive. To that end communist tacticians and field generals exploit and fan hatreds of groups against groups, classes against classes, creeds against creeds, races against races. The tragedy lies in the fact that many sincere Americans are misled into becoming catspaws for ulterior communist designs. An example is the attempted mobilization of American war mothers in the cause of pacifism. Chapters have been organized by Communist front workers in 22 cities where such mothers are duped into demonstrating against national preparedness in the belief they are advancing the cause of lasting peace. They fail to realize that peace can belong only to the strong.

Make no mistake about the final objective of American communists. It has been publicly set forth by William Z. Foster, head of the Communist Party in the United States. He says, "there is room only for one party, the communist party... The road to this social development can only be opened by revolution — the working class cannot itself come into power without civil war." The ultimate objective is the overthrow of capitalism and free enterprise and replacing those principles with world communism.

Foster has declared openly his intention of the party's plans, once in power, to dissolve all democratic groups — The American Legion, Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Columbus, the YMCA, Rotary Clubs, employers' associations, chambers of commerce and any other groups fostering independence of thought and free expression of opinions.

If we are to preserve constitutional government in our land, if we are to perpetuate our cherished freedoms and liberties, and if we are to keep the yokes of foreign tyrants off our necks, we must fight as we never fought before against the attacks on the bulwarks of our way of life.
At its 28th national convention in San Francisco, The American Legion called on all Americans to stand up and be counted in on this fight for the survival of American principles and ideals.

The American Legion in San Francisco laid the foundation for a militant revival of old-fashioned Americanism. It proposes to fight with every means at its command - citizenship training of the young, education of the adult, and counter-offensives against the subversive elements.

In its militant efforts to increase individual and group appreciation of American blessings, The American Legion is counting on the support of millions of veterans of World War II. Men and women who have served in uniform in foreign countries have seen for themselves how much happier and more plentiful life is under the free American way. They invested a part of their life-time in defending that way. They will not stand for losing the investment.

Relighting of the fires of love of country must underlie every program of service The American Legion has adopted for 1947. Our job is to make believers in America.

The American Legion will continue to be an effective force for the preservation of American institutions and ideals in the days of peace in the same patriotic and vigilant sense that its members were a fighting force for the saving of those institutions and ideals in time of war.

By the silent white crosses of our heroic dead, this is the pledge of America's Legionnaires on this Armistice Day.

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