

**FORTY-FOURTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Las Vegas, Nevada
October 9, 10, 11, 1962**

Resolution No. 105: Definition of Americanism

Origin: Wisconsin

Submitted By: Convention Committee on Americanism

WHEREAS, The freedom of man is under an unceasing attack by the Godless conspiracy of communism - the greatest and most widespread evil the world has ever known; and

WHEREAS, The United States of America is unquestionably both the primary target of the conspiracy and the last big hope of freedom-loving peoples that the conspiracy shall not succeed in its master plan for world conquest; and

WHEREAS, The 1960 National Convention of The American Legion adopted a resolution petitioning the Congress of the United States for continuation of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee; and

WHEREAS, The House Committee on Un-American Activities has rightfully declared that one cannot possibly detect and effectively oppose un-Americanism until first he fully comprehends and appreciates Americanism; and

WHEREAS, The Special Committee on Un-American Activities in order "to determine what activities and propaganda are un-American," adopted an eloquent and accurate definition of Americanism based upon the writings of our founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion has repeatedly expressed its determination to oppose with all its strength the international conspiracy of communism; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 9, 10, 11, 1962, That the definition of Americanism now recognized and utilized by The American Legion be amended to include the following definition of Americanism given by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities in House Report No. 2, dated January 3, 1939 (First Session, 76th Congress):

"AMERICANISM DEFINED" - 76th Congress, 1st Session - House Report No. 2 Report of the Special Committee on Un-American Activities pursuant to H. Res. 282 (76th Congress).

"In order to determine what activities and propaganda are un-American, we must first define Americanism. No scientific definition will be attempted, but we will undertake to set forth in simple and understandable language what some of the chief principles of Americanism are. In the first place, Americanism is the recognition of the truth that the inherent and fundamental rights of man are derived from God, and not from governments, societies, dictators, kings, or majorities. This basic principle of Americanism is of Independence, where our immortal forefathers said that all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, chief among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. From this declaration and well-established interpretations that have been put upon it from the beginning of the Republic down to the present moment, it is clear that Americanism recognizes the existence of a God and the all-important fact that the fundamental rights of man are derived from God and not from any

other source. Among these inalienable rights which are the gift of man from his Creator are: (1) Freedom of worship; (2) Freedom of speech; (3) Freedom of press; (4) Freedom of assemblage; (5) Freedom to work in such occupation as the experience, training, and qualifications of a man may enable him to secure and hold; (6) Freedom to enjoy the fruits of his work, which means the protection of property rights; (7) the right to pursue his happiness with the necessary implication that he does not harm or injure others in the pursuit of this happiness. Upon this basic principle, the whole structure of the American government was constructed. The system of checks and balances in the Constitution was wisely conceived and ingeniously constructed to provide every possible guaranty that ever citizen of the United States would enjoy and retain his God-given rights. First, the Federal Government was specifically enjoined from exercising any power that was not expressly or by necessary implication granted to it in the Constitution. Second, such powers as the Federal Government was authorized to wield were widely distributed between the three great Departments, the executive, the legislative and the judicial. The essence of Americanism is therefore, class, religious and racial tolerance. It should be emphasized in the strongest language possible that the maintenance of these three forms of tolerance is essential to the preservation of Americanism. They constitute the three great pillars upon which our Constitutional Republic rests, and if any one of these pillars is destroyed, the whole structure of the American system of government will crumble to the earth. Therefore, the man who advocates class hatred is plainly un-American even if he professes racial and religious tolerance. The converse of the proposition is equally true. It is un-American to hate one's neighbor who has more of this world's material goods as it is to hate him because he was born into another race or worships God according to a different faith.

"The American Government was established to guarantee the enjoyment of these fundamental rights. It, therefore, follows that in America, the government is the servant of the people. The rights of the people are protected through laws and their strict enforcement. For this reason, law and order are essential to the preservation of Americanism while lawlessness and violence are distinctly un-American.

"Americanism means the recognition of the God-given rights of man and the protection of those rights under the Constitution through the instrumentality of an independent Congress, an untrammelled judiciary, and a fair and impartial executive operating under the American system of checks and balances. Americanism likewise means the protection of an unorganized majority from an organized minority as well as the protection of a helpless minority from an inconsiderate and thoughtless majority.

"The characteristic which distinguishes our Republic from the dictatorships of the world is not majority rule, but the treatment of minorities. Dictatorships muster huge majorities at the polls, through intimidation and high-powered government propaganda, but these majorities are used for ruthless tyranny over minorities. The majority rule of the American form of government is distinguished by its recognition of certain rights of minorities which majorities cannot alienate.

"All of these definitions of Americanism are based upon the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution."