



Letter to J. Francis Neylan, September 26, 1949

[Letter, September 26, 1949]

September 26, 1949
Dr. J. Francis Neylan
1 Montgomery St.
San Francisco, Calif.
Dear Dr. Neylan:

If you are disturbed by the present tendencies to deny to Communists the civil liberties accorded all others, will you join in signing the enclosed statement for publication? We wish to emphasize our own traditional position by the expression of a group of well-known citizens.

Our only connection will be to secure representative signers and to give out the statement. We enclose the list of those invited to sign with the understanding that no statement will be given out unless a substantial number of those invited accept.

The statement may be slightly modified in accordance with any suggestions received, but its import will not be changed. May we have the privilege of your prompt reply on the enclosed card or by letter?

Sincerely yours
John Haynes Holmes
Chairman
Arthur Garfield Hays
General Counsel

[Enclosed Statement, September 26, 1949]

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The undersigned group of American citizens who repudiate the police state philosophy of Communism, join in expressing their opposition to all attempts in the U.S. to outlaw the Communist Party.

We regard the present attacks upon the rights of Communists as dangerous to American civil liberties because the attempt to outlaw one sort of propaganda sets the precedent for outlawing others. The U. S. has never outlawed any political movement, however hateful its doctrine to a majority of the people. The sound sense of the American people has always encouraged political movements to operate in the open where evil ideas may be combated in free public debate.

We are opposed to any special legislation making the advocacies of Communism in themselves criminal. We deplore the growing tendency to extend the definitions of Communism to cover all associations and movements in which Communists may take part, and thereby to so broaden the attacks as to include citizens who have no sympathy with Communism.

We of course favor the fullest public disclosure of Communist agencies and activities. We do not of course oppose the exercise of discretion by public officials in examining the political associations of employees in so-called sensitive areas of government where special precautions against qualified loyalty are necessary. But such measures do not justify resort to any general repression or discrimination.

We oppose all measures aimed at putting penalties upon political opinion; all forms of inquisitions into opinion; all censorship or controls by public agencies based upon opinions and utterances alone. The sound principle of American law is that ideas should be free, and that only acts or incitements to them should be punished. That traditional doctrine was never more needed than today.

Where problems of national security are involved, the authorities can be counted upon to take the necessary precautions. Such considerations do not justify any wholesale proscription of Communists nor the easy resort to proscribing others on the basis of mere association.

Anti-democratic influences can best be fought by asserting the strength of our democracy, capable of tolerating all propaganda from whatever source. To drive any movement underground into secret conspiratorial channels or to encourage such methods, is contrary to the American democratic principle. On the contrary every encouragement should be given to the fullest freedom of expression by Communists as by all others in order that the American people may determine through public debate of all issues, the road to progress. Above all, we shall not fall victims to adopting the police-state devices of Communists to combat them.

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THE ENCLOSED STATEMENT HAS BEEN SENT TO THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Dr. H. B. Allen	
Mr. Frank Altschul	Mrs. W. Clark
Mrs. Arthur F. Anderson	A. P. Cleveland
Dr. D. Anderson	Robert C. Clothier, Pres.
Dr. Frank App	Dr. Henry Sloan Coffin
B. M. Armfield	Mr. Charles A. Collier
Mr. Ellis Gibbs Arnall	Mr. Henry Steele Commager
Mr. Thurman Arnold	Dr. A. H. Compton
Bishop James C. Baker	Pres. K. T. Compton
H. H. Barrows	James Bryant Conant, Pres.
Mr. Bernard M. Baruch	Rev. Gaines Munroe Cook
Mr. William L. Batt	Mr. Morris L. Cooke
Pres. James P. Baxter	Dr. Wm. D. Coolidge
Mr. Edwin de Turck Bechtel	Mrs. M. Costigaw
Mr. Neal Dow Becker	Mr. Norman Cousins
Mr. William Benton	Prof. C. Counts
Mr. Francis Biddle	Mr. Gardner Cowles

Mr. Barry Bingham	Mr. John Cowles
Pres. T. Seelye Bixler	Bishop Ralph Spaulding Cushman
Mr. E. Manchester Boddy	V. Dabney
Judge Curtis Bok	Mr. Joseph E. Davies
Mr. Ernest S. Bradford	Mr. Elmer Daivs
Mr. Henry Breckinridge	Mr. John W. Davis
Dr. B. T. Brooks	Dr. Michael M. Davis
Mr. Van Wyck Brooks	Pres. Edmund E. Day
Dr. Arlo A. Brown	Mr. Monroe Emanuel Deutsch
Mr. Percy S. Brown	Mr. John Dewey
Mr. B. Brownell	J. S. Dickey
Mr. J. I. Brownlee	Pres. H. W. Dodds
Mrs. J. L. Blair Buck	Pres. Robert E. Doherty
Mr. Homer Buckley	Col. R. D'Olier
Mr. Harry A. Bullis	Mr. Melvin Douglas
Mr. William G. Bullitt	Mr. David Dubinsky
Mr. Charles C. Burlingham	Mr. Leo A. DuBridge
Mr. James F. Byrnes	Rt. Rev. Angus Dun
Mr. Louis G. Caldwell	Mr. Charles H. Durfee
Cass Canfield	Mr. Sherwood Eddy
Mr. Erwin Dain Canham	Mr. Charles Edison
Mr. James B. Carey	Mr. Dwight David Eisenhower
Dean Harry Carman	Mark Ethridge
J. M. Carmody	Mr. Wm. T. Evjue
Mr. Arthur H. Carter	Mr. Marshall Field
Mr. Bennett Cerf	Mr. Thomas K. Finletter
Mr. Henry Chapin	Dorothy Canfield Fisher
Dr. Harry Woodburn Chase	Mr. James Lawrence Fly
Mr. Stuart Chase	Mr. Abe Fortas
Mr. Leo M. Cherne	Dr. Raymond B. Fosdick
Prof. John L. Childs	C. Francis
Mr. Evans Clark	D. S. Freeman
Mr. Grenville Clark	Mr. Alexander Hamilton Frey

Mr. J. Kirkland Clark	Rev. Franklin C. Fry
— 2 —	
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Mr. J. Kenneth Galbraith	Dr. J. R. Mott
Mr. Lloyd K. Garrison	Mr. Donald R. Murphy
Dr. Christian Gauss	Mr. Phillip Murray
Rt. Rev. C. Kendall Gilbert	Mr. Edward R. Murrow
Mr. Clinton S. Golden	Mr. Allan Nevins
Mr. Albert S. Goss	Dr. J. Francis Neylan
Mr. John Gunther	Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr
Mr. James E. Gowen	Prof. Howard Odum
Mr. Philip L. Graham	Mr. Reuben Oppenheimer
Mr. William Green	Mr. Wm. C. Osborn
Mr. George I. Haight	Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam
Mr. John W. Hanes	Mr. William S. Paley
Mrs. J. Borden Harriman	Hon. Robert P. Patterson
Mr. Earl Grant Harrison	Mr. James George Patton
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Mr. Leon Henderson	J. Potofsky
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Mr. Eric A. Johnston	Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
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Mr. Alfred A. Knopf	Mr. Bayard Schieffelin
Mrs. Thomas W. Lamont	Mr. Arthur M. Schlesinger
Rev. Wm. Edmund Lampe	Mr. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.
Dr. Irving Langmuir	Judge C. B. Sears
Mr. Albert D. Lasker	Murray Seasongood
Mr. Fred Lazarus, Jr.	Dr. C. Seymour
Hon. Monte M. Lemann	Mr. Francis M. Shea
Mr. Max Lerner	Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill
Mr. Samuel A. Lewisohn	Mr. Robert Sherwood
Mr. M. Danforth Lincoln	Mr. William L. Shirer
Mr. Walter Lippmann	Mrs. Harper Sibley
Prof. Karl Llewellyn	Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver
Mr. Charles Luckman	Mr. H. Christian Sonne
Mrs. I. Bonbright Lydecker	Mr. Willard Learoyd Sperry
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General Maxwell D. Taylor	
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Dorothy Thompson	
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Mr. Leroy A. Van Bommel	
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