November 4, 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

I refer again to a message I had some time ago from Arthur Sulzberger and which I referred to you for comment by J. Edgar Hoover. The reason for suggesting re-study of this case is that Mr. Hoover obviously answered under the misapprehension that I was concerned with Communists. I am in full agreement with what he says about anyone who is now or who has ever been a Communist.

The Communists are a class set apart by themselves. Indeed, I think they are such liars and cheats that even when they apparently recant and later testify against someone else for his Communist convictions, my first reaction is to believe that the accused person must be a patriot or he wouldn't have incurred the enmity of such people. So even when these "reformed" Communists have proved useful in helping us track down some of their old associates, I certainly look for corroborating evidence before I feel too easy in my mind about it.

The object of my concern is not a Communist -- he is another individual entirely. He -- or she -- is the younger person who in the late thirties and early forties was inclined toward leftish thinking, and particularly toward giving expression to his sympathy for the Soviets. This individual may have done this through joining organizations that later came to be classified as subversive, or in any number of other ways.

Let us remember this. Many prominent officials of the Allied Governments were at that time talking in terms of support of the Soviets; witness Winston Churchill's comment when the Soviets came into the war on the allied side. In Washington there was much of the same. In fact, starting in December 1941, it was a policy of our government

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12065, Sec. 3-204
MR 79-22 #1
By DJH Date 4/4/79

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

to foster friendship with the Soviets. So the individual of whom I am speaking (who must have depended on people high in government for information and judgment) could very easily and very honestly have said many things that today would indicate or imply an unjustified support of Communism.

I assume, then, that any American could have been excused for statements or actions favorable to the Soviets during the war and even as late as 1948.

But I also believe that anyone who, after the blockade of Berlin began, (or some other equally revealing incident), continued to speak in support of the Soviets or in terms of sympathy for them, is either very stupid or very dangerous.

All this points up to this one thing -- the finding of some formula that could be applied to cases of individuals who have never been Communists, but who did in earlier years speak favorably of the Soviets, and who now, as teachers, preachers, professional people of all sorts, or workers in non-sensitive positions of government, may feel themselves under suspicion and are consequently living in doubt and fear.

So the original question to which I sought an answer was, "Could we not choose some specific act of the Soviets that left no doubt as to their intentions with respect to the free world, and let that moment of time normally be decisive in forming current judgments as to the real leanings, sympathies, and thinking of an American who has during his lifetime shown some sympathy for these leftist or Communist causes?"

I realize that a thing like this is very difficult to answer in specific fashion and with a categorical "Yes" or "No". I also know that no "formula" could be considered infallible. But I am sending you herewith my little file on this subject, with the request that you and Mr. Hoover look it over once more, with the thought that some day soon the three of us might have lunch together and chat over the whole thing.

From this rambling, vague sort of paper, you can see that my mind is far from made up -- but I repeat that we must search out some positive way to put ourselves on the side of individual right and liberty as well as on the side of fighting Communism to the death. We might decide that this is a matter on which I or someone else should make a speech. We might decide that we needed to bring in two or three outstanding individuals of the caliber of Learned Hand to help us devise a policy or "formula."

If you consider that there is no value in this suggestion whatsoever, then don't take up Mr. Hoover's time in asking him to consider it again; but if he does study it, then won't you please set up with Tom Stephens a lunch date here at the White House?

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

D.D.E.