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"OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID"

In June 1953, Mark made the commencement address at Kentucky State College, a Negro institution at the time, that brought more commendation than anything he ever said before. It was ~~xxxxxx~~ reprinted in Neiman Reports, the Birmingham News, the San Francisco Chronicle, and by Southern Newspaper Publishers Association. And hundreds of ~~xeroxed~~ copies were run off by the ~~Jewish~~ American Jewish Committee.

The gratifying response showed, so Mark felt, how starved the people of the United States were at that dark period of their history for words of assurance and of encouragement.

This dark period began in the late 1940's and extended well into the 1950's as Senator Joseph Mc Carthy of Wisconsin and other Republicans, including Richard Nixon, then a senator, accused members of the State Department, of the Department of Defense, of the Press and many others of being Communists. So constant and alarming were their charges that domestic subversion became the number one subject in the public's mind. Even President Truman, though he rejected the accusations, created in 1947 a loyalty-security program for screening government ~~xxxxxx~~ employers and workers in private firms doing certain kind of work for the government.

Mc Carthy built his entire career in the Senate on his fearsome warning^s that ~~the~~ subversion was undermining the government. At a Lincoln Day rally in Wheeling, West Virginia, he ^{February, 1950, in} declared, waving sheets of papers, he had in his hand a list of

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205 Communists Party members holding major posts in the State Department, But at his next speaking engagement he said there were 205 "bad risks" and 57 ~~Communists~~ card-carrying Communists in the Department. A few weeks later on the Senate floor he claimed to have 106^v documented cases.

He smeared with Communist allegations Ambassador-at-large Philip C. Jessup and Owen J. Lattimore in the State Department; General George Marshall, Secretary of State; Drew Pearson, columnist, and many others. Public officials hesitated to denounce him; he might just as ~~recklessly~~ recklessly accuse them of being soft on Communism. A climate of fear spread over the land.

In this atmosphere of uneasiness Mark took as the subject of his speech "Of Whom Shall I Be Afraid?" and

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The gratifying response showed, so Mark felt, how starved the people of the United States were at ^{that} ~~this~~ dark period of their history for words of reassurance, of encouragement. The speech was titled, "Of Whom Shall I Be Afraid?" *and*

Pick up Mark began by saying:

"If the reverend doctor who delivered your baccalaureate sermon will forgive me for invading his precinct, I should like to take as my text the last clause of the first verse of the Twenty-Seventh Psalm: "Of whom shall I be afraid?" I would apply the question to the United States and to those of us who make up its citizenry.

"We are, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul, citizens of no mean country. We are more nearly self-sufficient than any nation the earth has known; nature has been indeed lavish in her endowments. Our production and distribution system, ^{the} the marvel of the planet, are ^{the} certainly the most effective history has known. They have permitted us to attain an economic position that all the world envies. They have made it possible for us, three times within one man's lifetime, to equip and transport huge armies three and seven thousand miles from our shores to fight in freedom's name. Taking

what nature has given us and improving it with inventive and productive genius, we stand, in terms of power and the capacity to muster forces, as a Mt. Everest among the lesser hills.

"And yet we seem to have lost along the way in the last few years what Oliver Wendell Holmes called, 'that faith in a universe not measured by our fears' and to have evidenced what the executive board of the American Friends Service committee calls 'a spiritual failure of nerves...!'"

Then Mark talked briefly about the menace of Communism that we faced; he admitted it was "one of the most evil forces the world has ever know", a force more powerful than Fascism or Nazism ever was.

"But to me and many others, there is a danger greater than that which comes from the outside; it is fear of ourselves, the fear of our neighbors that has already whittled away a good many freedoms of the individual, a good many of the attributes of man's dignity for which I am satisfied that all men yearn...."

"There are those who call it, superficially, I think, McCarthyism. That is flattering the evil genius of the senator from Wisconsin too much; he is only an archangel of Darkness, not the devil himself. Our illness goes deeper than any one man. It is a malady of the soul and summons all the evil forces of the Inquisition, of the Cheka, of Hitlerism, of Stalinism, of the Klu Klux Klan, and all those nauseous forces that claim dominion over the conduct and the souls of other men. The danger is that in our hysteria to achieve what we regard as security, we tear out the real roots of security ~~the~~ man's confidence in himself and in other

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men; in our hunt for subversives, defined by those who have arrogated to themselves the right to judge what is subversive and what is one hundred percent American, we create real subversives: those who would whittle away ancient and hard-won liberties; and we set in motion forces so dangerous that frequently they can be stopped only after they have left deep scars upon us all, or, as the French discovered in their revolution, only after a nation is sated with blood-letting and vengeance.

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"What are the attributes of that mood of the moment of which I am talking?... It is that spirit in Congress that has expressed itself in the McCarran Internal Security act of 1950 and the McCarran-Walter Immigration act of 1952; both of them, in their way, expressions of fear of fifth columns; both of them narrowing the concept of the competition of ideas.... It is the ~~spirit~~ ^{spirit} that gave rise to the recent revision of the government's internal security program under which employees may be released for almost any reason.... That program is a violation of all the concepts of justice as far as the individual is concerned....

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"This evil spirit of which I speak is that which tends to elevate in esteem confessed traitors who turn informers on others; the spirit that makes congressmen and senators, drunk with power, bully and browbeat those who appear before them if they have held views in the past that do not meet the orthodoxy of the moment; it is the spirit of the Inquisition in which poor dupes of the past, mostly gullible artists or emotional reeds of one kind or another, parade before the altar of Congress to shrive their souls and try to save their jobs; it is the spirit that made our own Kentuckian, Mildred McAfee Horton, the leading figure, as someone said in a

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letter to The New York Times, of a new playing of Kafka's 'The Trial,' in which the accused never knows what he is charged with or who his accusers are and never enters the courtroom where his case is decided.

"It is the spirit in which groups, sitting in judgment upon what should be said, or thought, or read, or written, fire a librarian in Oklahoma for subscribing to the Nation; cancel a speech by Mary McLeod Bethune, a great and noble woman of your race, because someone has whispered that she is subversive; boycott Copland's music; arraign Sarah Lawrence and Vassar colleges as hotbeds of radicalism; drive Canada Lee, John Garfield, and Larry Adler, to mention only a few, from the American stage; drum a man like John Carter Vincent, guilty at most of mistaken judgment, if indeed he was even that guilty certainly, as I can testify, of a devout passion for the welfare of mankind, out of public life; and, on the anonymous reports of anonymous scandalmongers, almost drive out 'Chip' Bohlen, the man who knows more about Russia than any man in the Foreign Service.

"The catalogue is long, and could be longer. The danger is that such a spirit moves in ever-widening, concentric circles until at the end every man tends to regard himself as the only authority on what is one hundred percent Americanism. Minorities that stand to lose most by intolerance ^{are} and inclined to join the pack. The Catholics want to prevent the showing of The Miracle. Jewish groups don't like Oliver Twist and "The Merchant of Venice." The NAACP tries to prevent performances of The Death of a Salesman because its author was listed in Red Channels....It could be wished that all such gestures would have as ridiculous a denouement as the McCarthy-inspired ban on

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Russian works on the Voice of America. Edward Barrett, lately the able director of the International Information program, says that in late March of this year a Voice of America producer asked the librarian for a recording of the 'Song of India' to be played upon the request of some Indians. The record was not available, the librarian explained, 'Because, you see, it's by Rimsky-Korsakov, and we're supposed not to use anything by Russians.'

Mark then listed the evil consequences of the manifestations of the moment:

"1) We have magnified the atmosphere of tension, anxiety, and insecurity by encouraging an informer system that is close to Nazi and Communist cell systems;

"2) We have resorted to subtle and open methods of repression that become totalitarian states but degrade a free nation. If every man's house is his own ^{castle} ~~castle~~, every man's mind and soul [#] ~~are~~ the sine qua non of his own dignity;

"3) We have introduced fear of each other as an element of American life, where Americans have always been known by other peoples of the world as open-hearted, naively trustful creatures, an indictment in which we should have some pride because we do believe in the natural goodness of [#] ~~men~~;

"4) We have tended to subscribe to the 'gleichshaltung' that Hitler tried to achieve: that molding into one form the thoughts of all people...;

"5) We have violated the British-American concept of justice by taking short cuts, such as the recent loyalty program; by torturing the doctrine of clear and present danger; ^{by} ~~but~~ hit-and-run character assassination, of which McCarthy and Jenner are expert practitioners; by using the power of legislators to intimidate in secret sessions and by the denial of counsel in what have been converted from

legislative inquiries to judicial proceedings;

"6) We have adopted the Big Lie technique of Goebbels in [#] too many instances, particularly those in which Senator McCarthy figures. The State Department is not guiltless of that in the Mildred McAfee Horton case. It has wilted so often under frowns from the Hill that ^{none} ~~we~~ of us knows who is really the author of Foggy Bottom policy or the judge of the fitness of employees. By some people the present period is known as the McCarthy interregnum as Secretary of State.

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"7) We have been guilty of anti-intellectualism. We ban the books of those who do not write to formula and deny admission to those scientists and artists whose political standards do not conform to our own.... We are inclined to forget that the atom bomb, our strongest weapon, was the product of many minds, among the more responsible for its success being Einstein and Meitner, German refugees; Fermi, an Italian; and Niels Bohr, a Dane. We are likely to forget the enrichment that our culture has sustained through those who fled authoritarianism and came here because they could work in a free atmosphere.

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"8) It is a manifestation of the night rider and the Klan spirit when we undertake to stifle dissent. It is the central core of our political ^{cal} ~~genius~~ genius: the right to dissent. We gave the world in our own Revolution the finest justification for it. We gave a great part of the world freedom because it followed our example and dissented. Our genius has been revolutionary. Our production line is a revolt against the ancient guilds; our distribution system is a revolt against the country store. Every invention that ^{has} ~~has~~ increased the productive capacity of man, swiftened his travel, lightened the burden of the housewife, is a revolt against ancient methods. Why are we so blind that we will not see that the most precious heritage

we have in the field of ideas as well as in the field of industry is the spirit that has cast out, pioneering and unafraid? And yet it is true that some of our most successful businessmen, who spend millions a year on research for new methods and new ideas to improve their gadgets, help finance organizations that are designed to keep us in a mold of thought and of culture.

"9) We have narrowed the limits of academic freedom. The word liberal has become a 'poisonous word' to many potential employers, who regard the liberal graduate as an 'obstructionist' and 'organizer against the interest of the employers.' It is unfortunately true that too many people in the business world are looking for neatly-turned-out robots who will have no disturbing ideas. Personally, if my children had left college subscribing to the pattern of civilization as they found it upon graduation, with no passion to change any of it, I would have considered them intellectual morons and spiritual paupers. And if any members of the Negro race so felt, they would betray every man and every movement that has sought to remove the stigma of 'second-class citizen.'

"But it is not solely against the graduate that the thumb is turned. Some colleges have made a cowardly surrender to pressure; others, like Harvard, have made manly stands in record with ancient and decent traditions. The college that suffers its professors to be punished because they are liberal, as opposed to Communists, is not worthy of the name of an educational institution. This would be a poor country indeed if the college professor, free from the routine and demands of the business world, were not able to project his thoughts and his ideas beyond the grub-worm's eye view that most of

us, bound by routines, do get. When we make them fearful to have their political ideas and to express them in their proper places, we breed that fear which, as Brandeis said, 'breeds repression, which in turn breeds hate, which in turn menaces stable government.' We stifle the creative force of ideas by which we have become great; we make hacks of men and women whom we trust to train and stimulate the minds of our children.

"10) The final and [#]most deadly product of our internal mood is the effect it has upon foreigners, looking at us. Everybody in a free world knows that, if there is a shield against Russia, we are it; everybody knows that, unless we are able to turn aside the heretofore-inexorable force of history which dictates that when two nations of such power as Russia and the United States face each other in contention, there will be war.) In such a situation our greatest need is to exercise the leadership with which we are endowed and summon to our side in all confidence all those of like mind and like determination. But if we are afraid, if we are divided internally, if we lack and fail to assert determination to remain free; if we grow weary in expanding freedom for others and are set upon whittling away our own, the world will not rally to us.

"Free people will not follow a weak man or a weak nation any more than an army will follow a coward. If we have no confidence in ourselves, how can we impart confidence in others? France fell quickly because she was the victim in large measure of her own doubts. She could not fight the evil that was Hitlerism because she doubted herself. We cannot fight ~~communism~~ abroad if there is an atmosphere of division and distrust at home..g

Mark closed the speech by quoting a semi-humorous paragraph from

Bernard DeVoto:

"I like a country where it's nobody's damned business what magazine anyone reads, what he thinks, whom he has ^{cocktails} ~~cocktails~~ with. I like a country where we do not have to stuff the chimney against listening ears and where what we say does not go into the FBI files along with a note from S-17 that I may have another wife in California. I like a country where no college-trained flatfeet collect memoranda about us and ask judicial protection for them, a country where [✓] when someone makes statements about us to officials [✓] he can be held to account. We had that kind of country only a little while ago and I'm for getting it back. It was a lot less scared than the one we've got now. It slept sound no matter how many people joined Communist reading circles and it put common scolds to the ducking stool...!!

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^{Mark}
 Then ~~he~~ repeated the question: "Of Whom shall I be afraid?"

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