

The Party Line

By Frederick Wolfman

J. EDWARD BROMBERG, the actor who died of a heart attack in London, Dec. 7, was actually a victim of "the un-Americans," the Communists say.

The life of this "great American," to quote *The Daily Worker*, was "snuffed out" by "a sinister conspiracy in Washington."

The "conspiracy," of course, is Congress' attempt to learn which of Hollywood's public figures were or are Communists.

Because of Actor Bromberg's heart condition, he was able to avoid testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee for a long time. Then, last June, he showed up in Ann Arbor, Mich., to play a featured role in "The Royal Family." This time the congressional subpoena stuck.

Asked on the witness stand if he was or is a Communist Party member, the actor refused to answer. Asked about his associations with a string of fronts termed subversive by the Justice Department, he plead self-incrimination.

ASKED if he would help defend the United States in a war with a Communist enemy, Mr. Bromberg's reply was:

"I can't answer yes or no."

But now the Communist Party has decided to utilize his corpse in a renewed drive against what it calls "character assassination" and "witch-hunting."

Others, not directly identified with the Communist Party, have taken up the cry.

Clifford Odets, the playwright, passed a verdict of "death by political misadventure." It was "an unnatural death," he wrote in *The Compass*, a New York

tabloid which often coincides with the Communist Party line.

To the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions this "great human being" was "sacrificed to the witch-hunt."

As a co-conspirator with Congress, they cited also "Red Channels, the Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television," which is published by Counterattack, the weekly newsletter on Communism. "Red Channels" is a sort of "Who's Who" of people in the air-wave industry whose names have been used to bolster the Communist cause.

"Red Channels" lists more than 15 Communist Party front connections of the late Mr. Bromberg. On the ground he might incriminate himself, the actor under oath refused to deny or discuss them. Yet, somehow, according to his admirers, the very listing hastened his death.

Strange reasoning. But good Commie propaganda.

THE Commies are steamed up because an unidentified man in Pittsburgh burst into the hospital room of Steve Nelson, the party's Western Pennsylvania chairman, and threatened to shoot him. Nelson, awaiting trial on sedition charges, was undergoing a court-ordered medical examination after an auto accident.

"So you're Steve Nelson," the man shouted. "I just want to see what you look like, you —! I just got a wire saying my two brothers were killed in Korea." Nurses chased him out.

"The attack on me," declared Nelson, "is because the Communist Party, of which I have the honor to be a leader, is aggressively fighting for world peace."

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