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PROGRAM The Fred Fiske Show STATION WAMU-FM

DATE January 26, 1983 8:00 P.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Interview with Michael Straight

FRED FISKE: I spent today reading one of the most fascinating books that I've read in a long time. It's the story told by Michael Straight, who was born into the Whitney family, one of the most wealthy and influential families in America, who while a student at Cambridge in the '30s became involved with a communist cell, several of whose members became Soviet spies within the British intelligence service.

Years later, Michael Straight reported their identities to the FBI, leading to the flight of Guy Burgess to Russia. And more recently, it was his evidence that led to the disclosure that Anthony Blount, the art historian and the Queen's personal curator, was indeed a Soviet agent.

His book is titled "After Long Silence," published by Norton.

Very nice to have you with us, Mr. Straight.

MICHAEL STRAIGHT: Thank you.

FISKE: You wrote this book to unburden yourself?

STRAIGHT: Exactly. To square my own accounts with myself, to tell the truth. I felt that it was part of my debt to the American people, to the British people to tell this story.

FISKE: How, in fact, do you feel now that you've done it? I guess you wrestled with yourself and probably tortured yourself for a good many years until you sat down and wrote this book. Now that it's done, has it achieved the purpose?

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STRAIGHT: I hope so. I'm in limbo at the moment. I don't know whether I will regret the fact that I chose to tell it, whether I will prefer to have gone to my grave in silence. I've had a lot of criticism for writing the story. I've had some rather unfair attacks upon me. Most of the comments, I think, have been very fair. I just hope that my own belief in the American press and television and radio will be justified, that their comments will be fair.

FISKE: Well, Anthony Blount, your old college friend, whom you finally exposed, told you that he was relieved.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: You had a 15-minute private meeting with him before the British intelligence people came in, and he thanked you for it. He said he was expecting the other shoe to drop for a long time and he was relieved.

Now, if he thanked you for it, who's criticizing you?

STRAIGHT: I had a line in the book saying that I remained a liberal. And I think that I'm being hit very hard for that one line.

One of my close friends when I went to the London School of Economics when I was 17 years old was an American who was head of the student union at the London School. His name was Frank Meyer. And I used to march around the streets of London crying, "Free Frank Meyer," when the British Government tried to throw him out of England. It then turned out, unknown to me, that Frank Meyer was in fact a communist organizer. He came back to America, became a communist organizer for the Young Communist League. Then he went to the Un-American Activities Committee, gave them all his names, told his story. Then he came to me and said, "What do I do?"

He went all the way over to the right and became the literary editor of The National Review, and as such was revered by the right in America.

I think perhaps had I done that, I would also be a folk hero in those sources today. But I said no, I remained a liberal. And so I think those sources are now rubbing their hands with glee at finding somebody who is a liberal whom they can attack.

FISKE: You became involved -- you draw a picture of your childhood, your early years which, though they were privileged, had some difficulties attached to them. Your father died shortly after World War II. Your mother sought to console herself by becoming involved in all sorts of good works, and in

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fact took you to England to live when you were nine.

Apparently, your becoming involved with this group which you call the Apostles at Cambridge University was in some way related, I gather from your book, to your need to belong, to be accepted, to be a part of a group. Was this related to your father's passing, your mother's remarriage, and the kind of life you lived?

STRAIGHT: Well, very much so, Fred. I believe very much in tradition. I think we're all held in place, as individuals, by the tradition we grow up with, the friends we have, the papers we read, the programs we watch, the schools and universities that we attend. And so we're defined by other people. But I had nobody to define me. I moved from one country to another. I had no father. We were split up as a family. And therefore there was no tradition keeping me in place. That was one point.

And I think another point, which you will remember but which is very hard for younger Americans to understand, is that in the 1930s, traditions themselves were collapsing all around us. Life was no longer viable in England. The English nation didn't seem to be able to provide the promise of peace or security to its own citizens. And so tradition itself was collapsing.

FISKE: Having grown up during the same period, I recall the atmosphere that existed in the schools. Debates over Marxism and communism occurred all the time. I belonged to an honor society of graduates from my high school who met monthly for a long period of time, and we'd have different subjects for discussion. And regardless of what the discussion was, it almost always wound up in a debate between those who were sympathetic to Marxism and those who were opposed.

You became involved in such groups, didn't you?

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. There were two great differences, I think, between America and Great Britain. First of all, America was always a country large enough to survive as a nation. And England really wasn't. It still isn't today. It can't make it as a nation on its own. It's got to be allied with some other grouping.

Secondly, America had Roosevelt and the New Deal, a democratic alternative to depression and unemployment and poverty. In England there was no visible alternative to the misery in which I grew up as a 17-year-old. The Labor Party...

FISKE: You say you grew up as a 17-year-old. You actually grew up in opulence.

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STRAIGHT: Yes, I did. But this was all around me when I lived in London...

FISKE: Did you feel guilty of the fact that you were a child of a very wealthy family, you had a large estate in this country, you had an estate in England, you had servants, you had chauffeurs, you had lots of money? And it was during the time of the Great Depression. Did that bring about a feeling of guilt in you which...

STRAIGHT: Deep-seated. Deep-seated guilt, which was, I think, the principal motivation for me, the principal motivation.

The Labor Party, as I was saying, was not a viable alternative to the conservatives who were ruling England. The misery was great. And the First World War had wiped out a generation of men who would have been the leaders of England in the 1930s. It wiped them out. So when I was coming to manhood, as a student, there simply weren't leaders to whom young people like myself could turn.

All that created a sense of despair in us, and that sense of despair was deepened by our belief that within a couple of years we would be fighting a war.

FISKE: Now, your mother remarried a man who opened Dartington Hall, was it called?

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: A kind of off-beat progressive school in England which sought to defy tradition, shall we say, in many ways?

STRAIGHT: To create its own. Yes. It was a Greek city-state created in the most backward countryside in England. There were no radios, no television sets, no running water, very few automobiles. People pumped the water out of the village pump and took it back with them in pails to their homes. The milk was filthy. There were no doctors. They had to go eight to ten miles to go to a doctor on Saturday mornings. It was a very backward life.

And my parents, my stepfather and my mother, went to that community, took over an old castle that had belonged to Richard II, and used it as the hub of a great experiment to create a new life for the whole of South Devon, and they hoped for the whole of the world. They hoped that the whole world would be watching that experiment.

FISKE: So it was an atmosphere for a young child of change, of breaking away.

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STRAIGHT: Yes. Exactly.

FISKE: Which played a part, I suppose, in your thinking.

Beyond that, you were caught up in the tradition of debate. You had some very literate debate, far more literate, it seems to me, than most of us recall from colleges.

STRAIGHT: At school.

FISKE: Yes.

STRAIGHT: Great men came to the school, but not for very long, unfortunately. Huxley, A.S. Neill, Stokowski, Stravinsky.

FISKE: You studied under Keynes.

STRAIGHT: Oh, later on, when I went to university. Then I had the great men of the day, of course. J.M. Keynes, who I think was the -- certainly the greatest mind that I've ever encountered -- was a close teacher of mine, a close friend of mine. He took me into his own inner circle as a boy of 18.

FISKE: You had the unusual good fortune, and in some ways ill fortune, I suppose, of having met and been influenced by a great many great minds, fine artists, and powerful people.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: Including presidents. You knew President Roosevelt, Mrs. Roosevelt very well, many Cabinet officers, many other people in this country and in Britain who held positions of enormous prestige and power.

STRAIGHT: That's true.

FISKE: None of them had any suspicion of what you were becoming involved in at school.

STRAIGHT: Oh, in England, yes. My teachers in England understood very well and accepted it. My teacher Harold Lasky in London understood very well what the students were doing. J.M. Keynes knew exactly what I stood for, and praised it. He said, "There are only two groups today in England that I can admire, the liberals of my own age and the young communists." He looked at them, quite rightly, not as people who believed in the overturning of governments -- we did not at all -- people who were concerned with short-range objectives, of trying to stop the German armies of Adolf Hitler.

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When we sat in our meetings, we weren't talking about Stalin, we weren't talking about communism. We were talking about raising money for Spain, for trying to stop the Black Shirts in Cambridge when they came through Cambridge, for trying to raise money for the hunger marchers when they came through, the unemployed, for trying to do something about Italy, Germany and Japan. That movement happened to be led by young students who had affiliated themselves with the Communist Party. But as students in Cambridge, we saw none of that background. That was the real tragedy of it, to me, that we were led into a student movement in Cambridge which, in turn, was directed from London, and ultimately from Moscow, and which used this student movement as an antechamber to suck young men out of an honest and honorable life and to send them underground.

FISKE: Since you were a debater, and a successful debater, you attracted attention to yourself. You eventually were invited to join a group you call the Apostles. Tell us about that.

STRAIGHT: The Apostles was a secret society formed early in the 19th Century by Alfred Lord Tennyson and his friends, who met once a week to read papers, to discuss the meaning of truth and beauty. And it recruited all the great men of Cambridge from then on. The men who belonged to it when I was the youngest member were Keynes, E.M. Forster, the novelist, Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, the philosopher, G.M. Trevelyan, the great historian. All the great men of the day were belonging -- belonged to the Apostles. And so did the two men whom you mentioned, Guy Burgess and Anthony Blount. I knew them through the Apostles. And the Apostles gave to them a kind of intellectual legitimacy and respectability.

FISKE: Why were such a large proportion of these people homosexuals?

STRAIGHT: I think that the British public school system produced a homosexual relationship by segregating boys and adolescents, just as they were segregated in Classical Greek days. They were cast very closely together, and it was almost expected that in a certain time of their lives, as in Classical Greece, the most important relationship would be an adolescent to a younger boy or a young teacher for an adolescent. And ultimately they would grow out of it, as they did in Greece, and marry and have children. And many of them, in time, married. If they didn't have children, like Keynes, they were married. But yet in their young lives, as students, they had indeed been homosexuals. And most of the members of the Apostles, as you say, were homosexuals.

FISKE: Now, did this homosexuality, or fear of its

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public revelation, make some of these people more vulnerable? Did it, in fact, make it possible for the apparatus, led from Moscow, to make demands on people like Burgess, for example, and Blount and others which might not otherwise have been possible?

STRAIGHT: I do not think so. I've never seen any evidence for that. Nor do I think that they were alienated from English life and that that was a cause for them becoming communists. They had everything that life had to offer in England. They had respectability. Nobody made fun at them for being homosexuals. Most of them were very discreet about it. Burgess happened to be the exception, of being rather flamboyant, an exhibitionist about his homosexuality. He was, essentially, a gypsy. Whereas Blount, on the contrary, was a highly discreet, highly respectable art historian with close ties to the royal family.

FISKE: Now, these friendships became extremely important, particularly to you, as we pointed out earlier, due to your upbringing, your father's death, and so on. You were really sucked into this cell, shall we say -- I don't want to overdramatize it by calling it an apparatus -- following the death of a man named John Kornford, whose friendship you valued particularly.

STRAIGHT: Yes. What happened was that Burgess was two years ahead of me and had gone back to London and had become the private secretary of a right-wing homosexual Member of Parliament called Captain Jack McNamara, who had very close ties to the Nazis. And there was great concern in two sources in England -- or in two sources, let me say, in the world, the Russians and Jewish circles, as to what was going on. Because if the British Conservatives formed a real alliance with the Nazis, this was a matter of great concern both to the Russians and to the Jews, who knew what Hitler was doing to them.

FISKE: Wasn't the prime mover in that Sir Oswald Moseley?

STRAIGHT: No. Moseley was an open fascist and Black Shirt and a man who was essentially drawing a lot of fire, but not a man of great power. But within the Conservative Power, the Clivedon set, led by Lord Astor and Lady Astor, included in it the hard core of the British Conservative Party. And the Clivedon set would meet on weekends to discuss how to cement their ties with Adolf Hitler. And Edward VII, the Prince of Wales -- Edward VIII was deeply sympathetic with this move to reconcile the two nations, England and Germany. And so were many, many influential Englishmen.

Well, this was a matter of great concern, as I said, to

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certain Jewish people and great concern to the Russians.

When Guy Burgess came back to Cambridge, he would laugh about his homosexual Nazi acquaintances and he would gloat over the fact that he had obtained some interesting information from them. And if any of us thought about that and said, "What is he going to do with this information?" we would have said, "Probably he's going to give it to the Rothschilds, whom he knows well and who are paying him." And plainly, they're not paying him for financial advice, which they've got much better financial advice than they can get from him.

So, he was a suspicious figure, a strange figure, but nota figure whom I identified in any way with Moscow.

I happened to get in a great scrape in my second year in Cambridge. I noticed when I had supper every night in the college hall, as I did, that the waiters were slipping slivers of meat off the plates and putting them in their pockets. And I said to a waiter, "Are you going to eat the meat when we go?" And he said, "No, it's not for me. It's for my children."

And I was deeply upset by that. As you said, I felt guilty, anyway, about having a lot of money. Here were waiters who were eating -- or taking our leftovers home to their children because their children couldn't afford to have meat. And so I organized a petition to raise the salaries of the waiters in [unintelligible]. And this very nearly got me thrown out. It ws fine to demonstrate against the government in England. It was not so fine to demonstrate against your own college. And I was very nearly expelled.

And Anthony Blount was one who took my side and went throughout the college arguing with the professors that I didn't mean anything bad. I was naive, perhaps, and silly, but I was not trying to do something wicked.

FISKE: How did John Kornford and his death -- he was killed in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. And it was that death that really precipitated your entry into this communist cell.

STAIGHT: Exactly.

So, to continue the story for a second, I was deeply indebted to Anthony Blount, whom I looked on as a good friend, as an Apostle, and as an art historian who had no political views of any kind, to the best of my knowledge, but who was a good friend of Burgess's.

My close, beloved friend, whom I revered, as a year

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older than I was, was John Kornford, who was a young poet named for Ruppert Brook. His name was Ruppert John Kornford. He was the great-grandson of the genius Charles Darwin. He was an extraordinary individual. He was the first British volunteer to go to Spain. He was leading his own men on what was called the English Crest outside Madrid when he was killed in action on his 21st birthday, on December 28th, 1930...

FISKE: Was it by his own sentry?

STRAIGHT: I'm sorry?

FISKE: Didn't you say he was shot by his...

STRAIGHT: The rumor came back and proved not to be true. No. He was killed in a battle. That was in the end of 1936.

And I was in deep despair after this. And Anthony said to me, "Come to my rooms and talk." Two weeks after I had gone to tell John's father and his girlfriend that he was dead, I was called to his room and he said to me, "What are you going to do when you leave Cambridge?"

And I said, "I will become English and write a book."

He said, "No. We have other ideas for you."

And I said, "What do you mean, 'We have other ideas'?"

And he said, "The International." And he suddenly revealed himself to me as an undercover member and spokesman of the so-called Third International, the Communist International. And I was stunned by this.

What they wanted me to do was not to go into government, but to go to Wall Street, go back to my father's old firm, J.P. Morgan & Company, and from that vantage point to write political and economic reports for the so-called Third International on the plans of Wall Street.

FISKE: And he said, "Do it for John." Right?

STRAIGHT: I said, "Why would I do this?"

And he said, "Your closest friend was killed. You also owe your life to his cause."

And at that moment in my life, I had no answer to that. I wanted to suffer. I wanted to sacrifice myself because my closest friend had just been killed.

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FISKE: Interestingly, you had joined the party, but you thought it was a school lark. And when you left school you thought that you would put it behind you, with everything else from school.

STRAIGHT: Yes. Essentially, that's right.

FISKE: But they looked upon it differently. They almost seemed to have some proprietary rights in your life. Because as I recall from your book, you rejected this offer, you said you had other plans, and they wouldn't accept your rejection.

STRAIGHT: Yes. They played upon my loyalty to my dead friend. Looking back on it now, it's apparent that the student communist movement was used as an antechamber by the Russians not to advance a new internationalism, but to advance their own form of nationalism. That whole generation was betrayed. By my best count, 15 to 20 of the students who felt as I did, that this was one way of advancing useful causes, were sucked out, as I was, and put into underground work. Two or three of them have been identified. Two or three have killed themselves. Two or three have died. Some are going quietly to their graves. I've named all the ones I know to the FBI and to British intelligence.

FISKE: Well, they thought they had a real find, because in Michael Straight they had a man who could go back to the United States and join President Roosevelt and his wife at tea, to say, "Mr. President, I'm looking for a job." Not many people could do that.

STRAIGHT: That is true. They didn't look ahead that far. They wanted me to go back to J.P. Morgan.

I came back to America. I was unemployed. I ended up by saying to Mrs. Roosevelt, "Where can I find a job?" because it turned out that my training in England really didn't equip me to have a good job in America at all. And 1937 was rather a bad year. Like this year, it was a year of recession, in which people were being fired. They weren't getting jobs.

FISKE: So you finally, after the President thought about it for a while, couldn't find a job in the United States Government at the time. You took a job as an unpaid volunteer?

STRAIGHT: Correct. And three months after I took that job, the phone rang one night and a man said, in a husky European voice, "I bring you greetings from your friends in Cambridge."

FISKE: That was Michael Green.

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STRAIGHT: He called himself Michael Green. To this day, I don't know who he was. I don't know what his real name was. I believe he was here legally. I'm sure he was not a member of the Soviet Embassy or the Soviet Legation in New York. He had an American wife, born in Kansas, and he was very proud of her.

I believe that I sent him to his death. I believe he was executed by Stalin. I believe that in his trial, his secret trial when he went back to Moscow, the opinions which I wrote out for him, which were frequently very critical of Soviet policy, were probably read back to him before he was taken to his execution.

FISKE: You identified him to the FBI.

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. And the FBI and I went through pages of photographs, and I spotted him at once.

This autumn I went back to the Department of Justice, under the Freedom of Information Act, and said, "Can you please tell me who this man was? What was his real name? Where was he living? What happened to him? Who was his wife?" And the Department of Justice said to me, "Can you prove to us that he's dead?" And I said, "No, I can't." And they said, "In that case, if we told you his name, we would be violating his civil liberties."

[Laughter]

STRAIGHT: I found that, I must say, very reassuring.

FISKE: That points out one of the great differences between our society and ours. Right?

STRAIGHT: I said, "God bless America." That's beautiful.

FISKE: However, Michael Green popped up at varying intervals for a good number of years.

STRAIGHT: Three. Yes. 1938 to 1941.

FISKE: And he wanted you to take interesting documents that may have crossed your desk when you were working in the State Department and, what, photograph them?

STRAIGHT: He wanted me to bring them home on the guise that I would be taking them home to study, as other people were, to give them to him for an hour. He would take them and photograph them and bring them back. I refused to do that. I

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gave him my own opinions, my own reports typed out by myself, but that was all.

FISKE: And that's principally the reason for which you argue that you were never a spy.

STRAIGHT: Yes. Correct. I never took orders from him. I never gave him any classified information. I never wanted any.

FISKE: You passed along information to him -- your opinions regarding a variety of things. Anything important?

STRAIGHT: The two that I remember was a long attack on the Nazi-Soviet pact and a long plea to give up the principles of world revolution and to collaborate in the postwar world with democratic governments.

FISKE: And during this period you were living in an apartment on H Street with Joseph Alsop.

STRAIGHT: At the very beginning of that time, yes. It was a house in which my father and his bachelor friends had lived. It's still there today. It's the Foreign Service Association, where the retired Foreign Service officers go to have lunch.

FISKE: You mentioned the Nazi-Soviet pact. My recollection is that it was at that point that a great many young people who had been intrigued with the idea of Marxism and some of the false doctrine that seemed attractive during those Depression years parted company with the Soviets. This was the turning point. It was very hard for a great many Americans, and British too, who had been sympathetic to the Soviets to accept this alliance between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany. And it was a turning point here, too. It's when the communists in this country began to turn against President Roosevelt and the New Deal.

You found that hard to accept, didn't you?

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. The argument which I made to Green was, "All right. You had to do this for military reasons for the moment. But don't extend it from a military alliance to a political partnership." But that is precisely what they were doing.

So that here, as in England, as in France, the communists were trying to weaken the Roosevelt government, the British government, the French government,and were playing the game of Adolf Hitler during that period. And this greatly

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embittered me. I saw it going on in the conference which I helped Mrs. Roosevelt to organize, in which I wrote speeches for the Roosevelt Cabinet, and the communists in the audience howled them down. So I was very much on the other side.

FISKE: I was in college during that period. And I told you earlier on that many of the people you mention in your book I have met at one time or another. And one of them was Norman Thomas, the great Socialist leader. And I can recall him being hooted down by communists at a speech at my college when he criticized this.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: And you saw similar things happen.

STRAIGHT: I certainly did.

FISKE: Now, it was at this point, was it, that you told -- Guy Burgess is another one who kept popping up into your life.

STRAIGHT: Three times. He came over here in an effort to get to Moscow. The British Ambassador in Moscow said, "I don't want him. Send him back." So he was stranded in Washington. He called me up, came out to my house in Alexandria. And having got drunk, said to me, "I'm out of touch with my friends. Can you put me back in touch with them?" My friends, he meant being his Soviet contacts.

FISKE: He was assuming that you were in touch.

STRAIGHT: He was assuming I was.

And I said, "I can not. And if I could, I would not."

And he smiled at me and had another drink.

That was the last time I saw him then. But that was the first time that I understood that he was the man behind Blount who had directed Blount to recruit me as a student.

He was not in the government then. I didn't believe that he was going into the government, since I thought the government would not take him, in Moscow or anywhere else.

I saw him next when I happened to be in London and met him on the street, in 1949. The Apostles were having a dinner and he happened to be the chairman of that evening, in which we all gathered in a club in London. And I got into a rather violent argument that night with a communist who had been a student in Cambridge and who said that there were more political

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prisoners in America than there were in Czechoslovakia. And I shouted at him, "That's a damn lie." And this was overheard by Burgess and Blount. And they came to me and said, "We want to talk to you tomorrow." What they wanted to do was find out whether I'd turned them in. They learned, to their satisfaction, that I had not turned them in; and that, out of motivation to fear and loyalty, still, to my dead friends, I was not about to.

But the reason I wasn't about to was that I believed that this was all in the past and not in the present. I believed that Anthony Blount had gone back to his old profession of being an art historian. And I believed that Guy Burgess was going back to the BBC. He swore to me that he was about to leave his momentary position in the Foreign Office and go back to the BBC, where he would have no information of a confidential nature.

Again, he double-crossed me. And you can say that I'm naive for believing him at all. I think I was.

The next time I saw him was in Washington, and that was during the Korean War. And I came out of the British Embassy in my car, and here he was trying to hail a taxi on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue. And he saw me and climbed into my car and said, "Drive me downtown." His own car had been impounded. He'd driven down the day before to Williamsburg to give a lecture and had been caught three times for speeding in the secondhand Lincoln that he'd bought. The Governor of Virginia had requested the British Ambassador to impound his car, and the British Ambassador had impounded it and told him he was about through as a diplomat.

Nonetheless, I knew we were at war. I was shocked to see him there. And I then said to him, "If you aren't out of government inside a month, I swear to you that I'll turn you in."

FISKE: Hadn't you first discussed your Yalu River crossing in Korea?

STRAIGHT: Yes. The reason I was deeply disturbed was that it occurred to me that he had given informatin which would have led to the deaths of American soliders.

FISKE: And may well have.

STRAIGHT: I don't think so. I've read over that, because it's a matter of great conscience with me. The Chinese massed 400,000 soldiers north of the Yalu River, which was a very sensitive border for them, across which the Japanese had attacked them in the past. The Chinese, the Indian Ambassador in Peking, the British had all warned the United States, as Guy said, "Don't cross the 38th Parallel. Don't go up to the Yalu River. They

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have to attack you if you do." We had chosen to disregard that.

So, on two counts, I think that Burgess had nothing to do with this. First, we knew, or should have known, that the Chinese were going to attack us anyway. Second, if any agent in Washington transmitted that information to Moscow, as General MacArthur believed later on they had done, it was Donald Mclean.

FISKE: Who left with Burgess.

STRAIGHT: Who left with Burgess. But both Burgess and Philby were under CIA scrutiny at the time. And Burgess himself, being very much discredited, was not being given any confidential information.

FISKE: Let me ask you this. A while ago you said that it was generally known in Britain that these people, the Apostles and others, were involved in socialism or communism, extreme left-wing activity. It was generally known that they were homosexuals. The British intelligence apparatus is highly vaunted. It's supposed to be very, very professional. If it was generally known, how is it that these people became high-level operators in the British intelligence?

STRAIGHT: John LeCarre, I think, has written brilliantly on this score. I believe that his books are first-rate studies. The British intelligence officer who interrogated me at great length and who on the basis of the information that I gave him confronted Blountand forced Blount to confess was the original, I think, for George Smiley in this series we've all watched and admired. But LeCarre said, absolutely rightly, it was the old school tie. The old Etonians and Harrovians and Oxford and Cambridge types who ran the Secret Service could not believe that one of their class and education and background could possibly betray his country. And it was that disbelief which led them to be naive.

Over and over, later on, in the '40s and '50s, when I would go to England, I would read articles excoriating the Amerians, Joseph McCarthy and Harry Truman, for our loyalty programs. Leading friends of mine, like Richard Crossman, who became a leading Cabinet member, would compare these programs in writing to the Nuremberg laws of Hitler and say they were outrageous, that democracy in America was dead because of these loyalty programs.

And I would say to them, "Look, we may have faults. Joseph McCarthy may be not the best man to be doing this. But there is a problem of infiltration, and you must face it." But they wouldn't face it. There was no vetting going on in England until the late '50s.

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I think when I finally met with British intelligence and went over 150 names of students whom I had known, we shelled out completely that generation in Cambridge. But Cambridge was only a fifth or a sixth of the student body of intellectuals who would have been open to recruiting. And therefore, if I can remember 15 to 20 members of that student communist movement in Cambridge who were sent into underground life as moles, then 50 to 75 students of my age and generation would have been sent into similar work. And of that 50 to 75, some are members of the House of Lords today, some are members of the House of Commons, some are judges, some are newspaper columnists and editors, some are scientists. Most of them have set aside their early beliefs. Very few of them have been named. I've named them to the British Government. I'm not going to name them all to the press. I think they'll go quietly to their graves. I've chosen to be the only one, so far, who has told teh story.

FISKE: Some of the people who you were associated with in the Apostles really did achieve high positions, among whom was Krishna Menon, who was very, very powerful in Indian politics. Was he, in fact, a member of this?

STRAIGHT: No, no. Krishna I knew earlier when I was at the London School of Economics. He was the perpetual student there at a time when all the Indian nationalists could not go back to India without being jailed. He was a highly abrasive, quarrelsome individual. And he went back and became the Foreign Minister of India, and as such was a thorn in our side for many years.

No, he was a doctrinaire socialist. He was not a member of the Communist Party at all. But there were others who were.

FISKE: There's much more that I want to discuss with you, but I'd like to involve our listeners for the discussion at this point....

At our microphones, Michael Straight, former Editor and Publisher of New Republic magazine, who in his new book "After Long Silence" reveals the influence in his life of the communist cell to which he belonged when he was a student at Cambridge University and some of the events thereafter, and his reporting to the FBI and to British intelligence the names of some people who later, amidst much publicity, either fled England or, like Mr. Blount, stepped down in disgrace from highly influential, very prestigious positions.

WOMAN: ...Why did Michael Straight stay on if he was so against the Nazi-Soviet pact? Why did he stay and do that work for some time after, I guess?

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STRAIGHT: Well, I didn't. That was -- the Nazi-Soviet pact was, as I remember, the autumn of '39. Up to that moment, Maxim Litvinov had spoken on behalf of the Soviet government and was the leading champion of the League of Nations. It was Litvinov we believed in. He held on till quite late, and then was thrown out, of course, by Stalin and replaced by Molotov, and the pact was signed.

By that time, I was about to leave the government. And as a private citizen, if Green wanted to meet with me from then on, I felt that I had a channel which I would use to say the things I believed in, because I believed their policies were deeply wrong. They were trying to weaken Roosevelt. I would write them memoranda saying, "Don't weaken Roosevelt. Roosevelt is President and he is going to continue to be President. Don't weaken him."

I don't know who read those memoranda, but I believe that when I was doing that I was aiding, and not hurting, the United States.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: There's a gentleman living in the Washington area named Wilfred Mann, who was in some manner involved with the days in England. And I wonder if Mr. Straight knows of him and can comment on his involvement.

STRAIGHT: I read about Dr. Mann, who is a scientist and was identified, I think by Andrew Boyle in his book "The Fourth Man," as being the fourth of the these communist agents. The first three being Philby, Mclean, and Guy Burgess. This was before Anthony Blount had been identified as one of the so-called Ring of Five.

The story put out by Andrew Boyle, who obtained his information from former members of the CIA and of British MI-5, was that Dr. Mann had been turned around by James Angleton of the CIA and had subsequently provided very important information to the CIA.

Dr. Mann -- I should hesitate to use his name at all here if you hadn't brought it up -- was quick to deny all this information. So I should add right away that Dr. Mann, himself, has denied this.

I've never met him. I'd never heard of him until I read his name in the Washington Post. I have no idea whether Mr. Boyle was right or wrong.

MAN: I understand. And thank you.

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FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I just wanted to ask Mr. Straight whether, in his view, in a sense, history repeats itself, in this regard: When one looks at the Soviet activity in Afghanistan and one looks at what seems to be almost a virtual lack of interest or real protest, either in Britain, Western Europe or the United States, whether this, in some respects, takes you back to the '30s, to the Hitler-Stalin pact, if you will, and whether there is a sense of history repeating itself, perhaps, in regard to Soviet actions.

STRAIGHT: Well, the charge has been made, of course, by the Reader's Digest and by President Reagan that the nuclear freeze movement, the peace movement in America has been directed from Moscow. And this charge was supported by Judge Webster, the Director of the FBI.

I have no information on this. I know no more about it than you do, as I read the Washington Post and The Times.

I think, today, that the majority of those men and women who demonstrate outside the White House or outside the Air Force bases in England are desperately worried about a nuclear war and are not deceived by the nature of Soviet communism. They don't believe in it. They're not naive about it, the way we were, as students. But they believe that the most terrible catastrophe in the world would be a nuclear war. And therefore they are trying desperately to put a lid on the arms race.

My own pilot, as I try to think my way through these terrible times, would be a man like George Kennan, who understands perfectly the nature of Soviet society, has no use for it, and yet is convinced that, even between ourselves and this Soviet government, which may or may not have ordered the assassination of the Pope, there is still nothing that would justify using nuclear weapons in a war against the Russian people.

I believe, as George does, that the people who have suffered most from communism, as I said, are the Russian people themselves. And in a sense, to punish them more by threatening a nuclear war against them would be to multiply the tragedy which they have already suffered.

MAN: Could I ask you just a question about the current state of the British Labor Party?

STRAIGHT: Yes, sir.

MAN: Of course, the Social Democratic Party has broken

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off from the party for a number of reasons. But there seems -- I think the basic reason to be feeling that there now is within the British Labor Party what I guess you might call an anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary strain that one sees in the left wing of the Labor Party. And I'm wondering about your own thoughts. I'm sure you're an observer, obviously, of British politics today -- what your feeling is about the British Labor Party, its direction, and how much of this may involve some Soviet action at all.

STRAIGHT: The British Labor Party is very different from American political parties. Power lies in the local constituency, which can vote to accept, to reject, or to turn out the party's candidate from that district for Parliament. And that means that the activists, the people who care most and are willing to stay up the latest every night and do their homework and their preparatory work can control the Labor Party at the local level. Those people are very frequently either members of the Communist Party or members of the Trotskyite wing of the communist movement, who are bitterly anti-Communist Party, but are revolutionaries themselves. And those two groups, without any doubt at all, have wielded a great deal of strength in the British Labor Party.

When I was last in England, the last job I did for British intelligence was to talk to my old student friend Brian Simon, who is today a member of the Central Committee of the British Communist Party. And we talked and had supper in a London restaurant. And he said to me, "The man we admire above all in England is Anthony Benn." Well, Anthony Benn was the opposition leader of the British Labor Party. He's since having his bad times with the British Labor Party. But he represented a very powerful wing of the British Labor Party, as did the trade unions, whom were behind Benn for their own reasons. And many of those trade unions, to my knowledge, are led by members of the Communist Party: the South Wales miners, the Yorkshire miners, many, many more.

This is all well-known in England and is frequently talked about, but there's nothing they can do about it, nothing they think they can do about it. But it's certainy a very good reason, were I living in England, not to vote for that wing of the party. I don't think they can be trusted with power.

I would guess, off hand, that in the last 20 years, there have been between 15 and 25 Members of Parliament who have been elected as members of the British Labor Party who are in fact undercover members of the Communist Party. And as such, have had access to parliamentary discussions in committee, access to military information, and in at least two cases we know about have turned that information over, in one case to the Czech secret police, in the other case to the Soviet secret police.

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FISKE: You had firsthand experience with the way in which the communists in this country attempted to infiltrate labor unions. You knew Philip Murray, the great labor leader, and others. You had personal experience with the way in which they attempted to infiltrate and take over the Progressive Party, which ran Henry Wallace for President, the way in which they attempted to infiltrate and take over the American Veterans Committee, of which you were a founder and chairman, if I'm correct.

STRAIGHT: That's correct.

FISKE: Were the tactics the same?

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. Yes, entirely the same.

FISKE: What would they do?

STRAIGHT: They'd work harder and stay up later than anybody else.

FISKE: They would vote together in a block?

STRAIGHT: Yes, yes, yes. Ballot -- bullet balloting, as it was called.

FISKE: So that with their relatively few in numbers, they could really control large organizations.

STRAIGHT: Yes. Yes.

FISKE: You're on the air.

MAN: I'm interested in your guest's comments with respect to the American labor movement and the Communist Party. And in particular, I wondered if he could trace the development within the establishment American labor movement today of the -- essentially, as I understand it, the Trotskyite kind of wing of this split. In other words, as I understand it, when Trotsky left and went into exile in Mexico, one of his close associates was an individual named Shackman.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

MAN: Who, in turn, after Trotsky's assassination, went to New York City and became very deeply involved with many of the American labor leaders of this time, in fact.

And I wondered if he could comment on that. I'm not too familiar with the developments, and I'm interested in some of this thoughts in that respect.

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STRAIGHT: The opposition members of the Communist Party in America remained bitterly anti-communist, as Trotskyites. And you remember that Arthur Koestler said that the final battle would be fought between the communists and the ex-communists.

MAN: Right.

STRAIGHT: The ex-communists in America understood very well that they had to continue this battle. They became -- in one instance, an individual of great prominence in the AFL, and later in the AFL-CIO, when the two were merged, was a man of great ability who rally ran the international affairs department of the AFL, and later the AFL-CIO.

In turn, I remember in my early days the FBI had very little comprehension of the difference between a Trotskyite and a communist. And I was getting into trouble because I was signing applications for a number of former communists who came to this country, like Stephen Spender and Gustave Regler, and the FBI couldn't distinguish between ex-communists and present communists.

But, in turn, former members of the American Communist Party, to my knowledge, spent many hours educating not only people like George Meany, but educating FBI agents as to what this was all about. And so the FBI gained sophisticated knowledge of what it was about from a number of former communists. Whitaker Chambers, of course, is the best known of these.

And I think, within limits, our attitudes were dictated by the fact that these men, with passionate convictions, but rather narrow outlooks, were so important in determining the attitudes of our government. And, for example, they became staff directors of the House Un-American Activities Committee. And there again, their bitterness, I think, played a significant part in the role of that committee. Whereas people like George Kennan would have had a somewhat broader attitude in perspective.

MAN: Yeah, I respect Mr. Kennan very much. And I'm really intrigued with the role that these, I guess, ex-communists, essentially, these Trotskyites have had in shaping much of both labor policy, as well as foreign policy.

STRAIGHT: I think that's very true.

FISKE: One of the ex-communists, Louis Boudins (?), who was Editor of the New York Daily Worker, had a little run-in with you, didn't he?

STRAIGHT: No. An informant who was black, as a matter of fact, was asked after I'd given testimony before a

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congressional committee which was hostile to the committee and hostile to the legislation they wanted to pass -- they turned to an informant who was working for the Bureau of Immigration as a paid informer and asked him if he knew me. And he said, "Oh, yes. I knew him well. His name was a byword in the Communist Party back in the '30s."

And so I read this in the Washington Post one morning. And it was ironical for me because the man had the germ of an idea there. It was perfectly true, but in a different context, a much more serious context than this informant was talking about.

So I went up to the Senate committee and said, "Look, at the time that this man knew me well, I was a boy of seven years old living in England."

And so he said, "Well, I'll check on that." And he then called his main informant, who was Louis Boudins, who was the Editor of the Daily Worker until he left the Communist Party and became, himself, a bitter anti-communist, and said, "Do you know this man Straight as a communist?" And Boudins said, "The New Republic, which he edits, called me a worm."

And the Senate staff member said, "That's not what I asked you. Did you know him as a communist?"

And at that, Boudins could have perfectly well said, "Yes, indeed." And he would have been entitled to, since the magazine had called him a worm. But he said, "No."

I checked on that. I had never called him a worm, of course. But Harold Ickes, that abrasive old curmudgeon who used to be Secretary of Interior and had become a columnist for The New Republic, had indeed called Boudins a worm. And Boudins, to his credit, told the truth about me and said no, he'd never heard of me.

FISKE: Good evening.

WOMAN: Mr. Straight, your book, which I anticipate reading with much interest, I'm sure is a form of mea culpa.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

WOMAN: Good. Now, how much will you be reimbursed by the publishers, or whatever, who's financing this for this mea culpa?

Number two. Were you ever -- were you and are you still in touch with Kim Philby? And when was the last time you were in touch with him?

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And number three, what was your connection, if any, during the '30s and '40s with Elizabeth Bentley and Whitaker Chambers?

I'll hang up and listen.

FISKE: Well, you'd better stay on. You've asked so may questions, we're likely to forget them.

STRAIGHT: Number one was, am I going to make any money out of the book? The answer...

WOMAN: I didn't ask you if you were going to make any money. I asked you what the compensation was.

STRAIGHT: The compensation -- right -- is zero. My first instinct was to turn over all the royalties for it to Amnesty International, which I set up in America. My second instinct, since my own children and grandchildren had suffered substantially...

WOMAN: Why?

STRAIGHT: ...the publication of this story, was to give it all to them. So none of it is coming to me. If it does make any money, which I don't think it will, it'll go to may children and grandchildren.

Your second question was, when did I last see or hear of Philby? I've never in my life met Philby. I read about him when he fled to Soviet Russia from Ankara, or whever he was, Beirut.

And your third question, I've forgotten now.

WOMAN: Were you in touch with Elizabeth Bentley and Whitaker Chambers?

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. And Whitaker Chambers. No. I never heard of Miss Bentley until she was brought before the House Un-American Activities Committee. I never heard of Whitaker Chambers, although I suppose I might have read his editorials in Time magazine.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I wanted to ask questions about the -- just becaue you were around -- the folk singers of the '30s and '40s. To what extent were they involved in communist activity? I mean were they just idealists, with communism with a small c, or were they in cells, actively subversive, or what? What was going on?

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STRAIGHT: It's hard for me to answer that, since, I've said, I was not a member of any communist organization in the United States. I was present on the White House lawn when Woody Guthrie was there, and he wrote his song about "Why are you standing in the rain?" And we were all standing in the rain and listen to Roosevelt scold us. Woody Guthrie and members of this generation did indeed write labor songs for the CIO. The CIO, of course, had communist organizers and leaders in its early days.

I don't know of any of those folk singers who were members of the Communist Party.

MAN: In other words, they were just sort of like idealists on the left side of the...

STRAIGHT: I think so. I don't know of anybody who was more than that.

MAN: That makes me feel real good, 'cause I'm a folk singer, and I was wondering what was happening.

[Laughter]

STRAIGHT: I knew some of them, and I admired them. But I didn't really know them well.

FISKE: Did you ever formally resign your party membership in England?

STRAIGHT: No. When Blount came to me and said, "You must do this," what I gathered was that they had had the intention of catching me after I left Cambridge. But the death of my friend was an opportunity too good to be missed. It's a terrible thing to say that, but that is precisely what Burgess must have decided. They would take advantage of his death and my despair to force me to stage a nervous breakdown, which would in part be fake and in part be real, and then break with my friends, since this break had to be visible.

I was so well known, as a student leader, I was the president-elect of the Cambridge Union...

FISKE: I have to interrupt. We have news coming up on the network. Please stand by. Let's talk some more the other side of the news.

We're talking to Michael Straight. His book is titled "After Long Silence."

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FISKE: We're very pleased to have at our microphones Michael Straight, whose book is receiving a great deal of attention nationwide. It's titled "After Long Silence." It's published by Norton. And it tells of the secret that he kept for many years regarding his involvement with some Communist Party operatives, people who became high-level spies in Great Britain, with whom he went to school at Cambridge University in England in the '30s....

You're on the air.

MAN: When you were the Editor of The New Republic, weren't you involved in Henry Wallace's campaign? And what was the role of the American Communist Party in that campaign?

STRAIGHT: Yes, you're right. I came back from the Air Force in 1946. The New Republic had then a circulation of 20,000. It was paying one cent a word to its contributors and $5000 a year to its senior editors. And I didn't think that it could survive in the postwar world at that level. I believed that this magazine, which my parents had founded, could survive only if it got up to about 100,000. And when Wallace was fired by Harry Truman after he spoke at Madison Square Garden, as you remember, I said to myself, "Here's our chance to use Wallace," whom I greatly admired and thought of as the heir to Franklin Roosevelt, "Here's our chance to run the circulation up five times."

So I came down to Washington. Wallace was then living in an apartment at the Wardman Park -- and said to him, "Would you like to be the editor?" And we drew up a little slip of paper in which he said, "I will concentrate on running The New Republic, and you will run its circulation up five times."

Well, that was all right. But the naivete was that you could deliver a magazine to an individual who had very nearly become President and hoped to become President again. It doesn't work. We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in recruiting a new staff and pushing the circulation up. Meanwhile, Wallace's political associates out in the country, in the Democratic Party, in the unions, in the PAC, political action committee, and in the independent citizens committees for the arts, sciences and professions were all in debt. They all wanted Wallace to lead them. They were looking forward to the '48 campaign. They hated Harry Truman, as did the unions. They felt he was too small for the job. And they were very angry with me for taking Wallace out of the political arena and burying him in an editor's office.

So after he'd been with us three or four months, I got a call one night from Joe Davidson, the famous sculptor, who had become head of what was now the amalgamation of the ICC and the

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PAC, the Progressive Citizens of America. And he said, "Mike, we're having a party for Henry Wallace, and we'd like you to come." Well, he'd never met me. It was not exactly Mike and Joe. But he was an old friend of my aunt, who had been herself a sculptor and who founded the Whitney Museum.

So I went along to this party. And here was Henry with Harold Young, his old associate in the Democratic Party and Department of Agriculture, with Binnie Baldwin, his old head of Farm Security Administration, who is now the director of the PCA, and with Henna Dorna, who had been the directorof the ICC, and who in my opinion was a very resolute woman, well to the left.

So, they said to me, "Mike, you've had him long enough. You've kept him to yourself. Now the people are going to reclaim him."

They put him out on the road, trying to pay off their deficits, trying to establish a base of political action. And that would have been all right, except that in the spring of 1947, Harry Truman acted in Greece by proclaiming the Truman Doctrine. And that Wallace took to be a declaration of political war, and he denounced it on NBC, and he got 6000 letters within a week saying, "Lead us. We can't stand this man. We hate the Truman Doctrine. We're very close to a world war."

I think, in fact, there were many generals in the Pentagon who felt that the war was going to come sooner or later, and we'd better get it over with before the Russians got the atom bomb. I know that feeling was prevalent in Washington at the time. I saw it.

Wallace pulled away from the -- they pulled him into the creation of the Progressive Party. I did what I could to stop it by getting all his old friends who were still loyal Democrats, like Mrs. Roosevelt and Helen Gahagan Douglas, to call him up and say, "Please don't do this to us." But the tide of history was running very strongly. It was being directed from Moscow. And the Progressive Party was forced upon him, with his unconscious or conscious consent, at the beginning of 1974.

And I then broke with him, took away his column in The New Republic after three months, repudiated the Progressive Party, and ended up by endorsing Harry Truman, Wallace's most hated enemy.

That was a very painful experience for me. I'd grown fond of Henry. I'd also invested an enormous amount of money. And needless to day, we had 30 or 40 thousand cancellations. And my hate mail would lie in packages all over my room.

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MAN: Okay. Do you think he was aware of the Communist Party influence?

STRAIGHT: I think he didn't care about it. Henry had come on the high road from Iowa to Washington. He'd never been in the byroads of American politics. He'd never been down in the cellars. He'd never known urban ghettos. He didn't know how the CIO was formed. He didn't know what a communist was. He thought, "Well, we've got to deal with them in Moscow if we want peace. We might just as well deal with them in America too." And that sounded fine.

When he wrote his editorial saying, "I am going to lead the Progressive Party," and we published it in The New Republic, he said, "I can't not do this just because some communists happen to be for it." Well, that was a lie. It wasn't that they happened to be for it. It was that they controlled it. But he couldn't face that.

He deeply hated Truman. He deeply wanted to be President, I think. But more than either of those two, he cared deeply about peace. He felt there was a real danger of a war, and he felt he could do something for peace by going this route. I think he was wrong. And he came to, himself, believe that he was wrong before the end.

FISKE: Several times in your discussions of Wallace, you say, almost with a snicker, that he fell asleep during important discussions.

STRAIGHT: Yes. Yes.

FISKE: Now, that's unusual for a man who reaches high public position. I think if there's any one characteristic that characterizes people of that sort, it's that they have enormous energy and vitality, and probably do with a lot less sleep than most of us.

STRAIGHT: I think sleep for Wallace was, in a way, a defense mechanism. He didn't want to listen to the details. He didn't want to hear the arguments.

On that night I was describing, when they took me to the party in Joe Davidson's house and said to me, "Mike, you've been keeping Henry to yourself for too long," they looked at me and I looked at Wallace, and he'd fallen asleep. He didn't want to face this confrontation between his new friend and partner, me, and his old friends. So he feel asleep.

FISKE: It was a defense mechanism of some sort.

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STRAIGHT: I think so. Yes.

FISKE: Before I go back to the phones, this intrigues me. You mentioned Mrs. Roosevelt. You were rather friendly with Mrs. Roosevelt.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: At one time, you accompanied her to West Virginia, and you say that you then rode with her for an hour and a half in a car back to her airplane, where her airplane had landed, so she could go back to Washington. And she said, at that time, that if she thought the United States were like Soviet Russia, she could be a communist.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

FISKE: Would you amplify that for us? You don't go into it in detail in the book, aside from reporting it. What do you make of that?

STRAIGHT: She cared deeply about the unemployed. She had none of the deep-seated affiliation and loyalty to the Democratic precinct workers and captains and mayors that her husband had. She was an independent and a liberal, not a party Democrat. She was pulled to the left. She greatly admired young men of my age who had gone to Spain, like Joe Lasch, and who were radicals. She was a free soul and a deeply concerned person. And so she felt this pull to the left.

On the occasion when she organized and helped to organize the American Youth Congress meeting in Washington, she got them free rooms in the Army camps around Washington, she got Army buses to run them back and forth, she got the hotels to give them free rooms, she got the Department of Labor auditorium for them to meet in, she got CBS and ABC and NBC to broadcast their sessions. Without her, they would have had nothing. And yet that congress was controlled by undercover members of the Communist Party. I couldn't tell her that. I could recognize them.

FISKE: You knew it at the time?

STRAIGHT: I recognized friends of mine whom I'd known in Cambridge who were there in high capacities, running that conference. They never spoke to me about it. I never spoke to them about it. I did not know, factually, that they were communists, but I sensed it in my own bones.

I wrote speeches attacking their line, defending the President and defending intervention, because this was at the

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time of the Nazi-Soviet pact. And yet Mrs. Roosevelt couldn't possibly have understood what was taking place. She had a very large picture, and she was being used, in a sense, without her knowledge.

FISKE: How did she react when, in fact, they turned upon her husband at the time of the pact?

STRAIGHT: She reacted nobly, by defending her husband in a critically important and brutal hour, when they were yelling and booing her. And she stood by him and defended him. And at the end, her bravery silenced them all. And it was exhausting for her. It was terrible. And she faced that. And I think it must have been one of the worst moments in her life.

FISKE: Did you ever talk to the President about that?

STRAIGHT: No. He was beginning to run for the third term then. He was in a lot of trouble with his own party, with the press, with the Congress. As Jonathan Mitchell of The New Republic said to me, "He doesn't like the smell of the albatross that his wife has hung around his neck." And he didn't want to meet with people like myself and talk about it. He wanted to get rid of it. He had to make his deals with the important men in the Democratic Party.

FISKE: In the years that I have been broadcasting from Washington, I've interviewed thousands of people. And one of my most cherished memories is an interview with Eleanor Roosevelt on the day that those Puerto Rican terrorists attempted to shoot Harry Truman at the Blair House. Very memorable. A great lady.

Good evening.

MAN: Before I ask my question, it occurred to me as you were speaking about Henry Wallace that I believe that he subsequently supported Dwight Eisenhower rather than Adlai Stevenson.

STRAIGHT: That's correct.

MAN: Because he thought that Eisenhower was probably a more effective instrument for peace than Stevenson would be.

STRAIGHT: That's correct.

MAN: My question has to do with the Alger Hiss episode. And I'm curious as to whether, at long last, you can shed any light, on the basis of your knowledge, on that.

STRAIGHT: I've described it briefly in my book. I had

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only one or two encounters with him. When I wrote a long report as a volunteer, he called me down -- he was a senior official in the State Department -- to talk about my report, which was a report advocating American intervention in Europe, at a time when there were a lot of isolationists in the State Department.

I went back to see him when I came back from the war as a pilot. I didn't know what to do. And I went -- I decided I would go and work for the United Nations, because I believed in it. And I went down to see Hiss, who was still in the State Department and had been the Secretary of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco, and said to him, "I'd like to go to work for the United Nations."

And he said, "Don't be silly. It doesn't have any real power. The power resides here in Washington. We tell the delegation in Lake Success," where it was then, "what to do." And so Hiss talked me out of going to work for the United Nations. I went back to The New Republic instead.

On the day that Whitaker Chambers identified him as a member of a Soviet network, I was going to press in The New Republic. I called him up and I said, "What is this?" And he responded very quietly and deliberately and said, "As you know, I'm the President of the Carnegie Endowment for World Peace. The only explanation I can give you is that this is an effort to undermine the attempts of the Carnegie Endowment to do something for peace."

And I said, "Thank you." And I thought about that and I said to myself, "If he was really innocent, he would have been terribly upset today. His voice would be shaking and he'd be very nervous and upset. Instead of which, he's totally calm. And this suggests to me that he's been preparing himself for this day for quite a while."

So subsequently, when Whitaker Chambers wrote his book, most of the liberal press attacked Whitaker Chambers and attacked the book. And I ran a review in the New Republic praising the book. And when Dean Acheson said, "I will not turn my back on Alger Hiss," I wrote an editorial saying, "You can say that as a private individual, but you can't say it as Secretary of State. You had no right to say that."

And my old friend Felix Frankfurter, who had been a patron of Alger Hiss's in Washington, was so angry with me for criticizing Acheson for defending Hiss that he called me up from the Supreme Court and gave me a terrible tongue-lashing and said, "How dare you be cowardly? You have to stand by our friends."

And at that moment the door opened and his secretary

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came in and said, "There's a very important man come to see you." And he hustled me out by the back door.

So, he himself was urging me to be very brave, but he wasn't being very brave in pushing me out the back door.

I never knew anything about Alger Hiss until I read Whitaker Chambers' testimony. Then, reluctantly, I came to the conclusion Whitaker Chambers was telling the truth.

MAN: Do you have any indications, recollections that there were responsible and senior-level people in the State Department -- perhaps, for example, A.A. Burley, who may have been suspicious of Hiss before these -- before the Whitaker Chambers exposure?

STRAIGHT: Whitaker Chambers, as you remember, went to Burley, and Burley, in turn, went to Roosevelt and gave Roosevelt the information that Whitaker Chambers had given him. But the information which Whitaker Chambers gave to Burley was far from complete, because it was at the beginning of Whitaker Chambers's break and his decision to tell his story, and it was by no means the full story. So, within limits, I think both Burley and Roosevelt can be excused if they didn't take it too seriously.

I gather, in those official reports, that 28 people, or so, were allowed to resign from the Department of State rather than to be fired. Who those 28 were, I don't know. I knew four or five of the men identified by Elizabeth Bentley as members of her ring in the State Department. None of them were known as leftists or communists to me.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: First of all, I'd just like to make a quick comment. Then I have a question for Mr. Straight.

Fred, you and I also are old enough to remember the despair of the 1930s. And I think we both can understand the feelings that Mr. Straight had in those days. I remember thinking that Norman Thomas' political pronouncements made a lot of sense when I was hearing him in the '30s.

And secondly, I have a childhood question for you, Mr. Straight. You're the youngest of the siblings, Straight siblings, aren't you?

STRAIGHT: Yes, sir.

MAN: Would it have been possible that your mother, in her interest -- I believe she had an interest in some young women

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who were studying art in New York at a place called the Three Arts Club. Does that ring a bell with you?

STRAIGHT: No, but it's very probable.

MAN: Would it have been possible that she might have engaged some of these students to look after your older siblings? Because I have a vague recollection that my mother said that she had been what we'd call today a babysitter for the Straight children.

STRAIGHT: Perfectly possible. My mother was away most of the time doing good works. And it's perfectly possible.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I have a question for your guest, Mr. Straight. [Unintelligible] the question the previous caller asked about Whitaker Chambers and Alger Hiss. But I have a second one.

Could you shed any light on what motivated Alger Hiss?

STRAIGHT: No, sir. I think that he was motivated by the same essential quality that motivated the members of the Apostles. He regarded himself, quite rightly, as a member of a privileged elite who understood more clearly than the people themselves what was good for the people, who was, in that sense, above the law, able to decide for the people what was good for them. He believed that capitalism was over, that Roosevelt was toying with an outworn system, that there would be a social revolution, in time, which would extend political democracy to the economic and the social levels, and there would be a communist state in America. I'm guessing.

FISKE: You know, I had him on this program three or four years ago, and he still maintains his innocence, of course. And he argues that, in fact, the typewriter was never his, that Woodstock typewriter. And as we've been talking about him, I'm trying to -- I'm wracking my brain trying to think of the basis on which he makes that claim. I do recall that when he presented it here it sounded very reasonable.

But he's an old man now. And it would be easy for him, I expect, to go quietly his own way. But he is fighting to clear his name, still. And I suspect that he probably will do that for the rest of his life, and likley not successfully.

STRAIGHT: I think it's worth reading Whitaker Chambers's book once again.

FISKE: "Witness" is its title.

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STRAIGHT: I read it, "Witness," after I'd finished my own book, and then made a few revisions in my own book, purely in reference to him.

To the extent that one is committed totally to a cause like communism, then, in the break, one becomes totally committed to the other side. So Whitaker Chambers, who was deeply committed to the Soviet Union, ended up by believing that the Soviet Union was the incarnation on earth of the devil, and he was God's instrument in opposing it.

Now, I never went through anything like this. But while I find his book, in many ways, a terrible book, for that reason, that it is so lurid and so unbalanced, I think his comments on people like Alger Hiss are frequently very generous and very fair, and probably very truthful.

So, I would read the book again for those insights into the people around him.

MAN: Of the people you've spoken with, and they were in some kind of a group, do you think that a certain narrowness in their education was a factor in their inability to really see things more realistically?

STRAIGHT: I do think so. I think they were all the products of the English public school system. They had been to rather conservative preparatory schools. They had led sheltered lives. They had never mingled with the poor.

FISKE: They were all upper class and...

STRAIGHT: They were all upper class. They didn't know what it meant to be poor, to struggle, to have the disciplines of poverty. They were, in part, guilty, the way I was, but basically out of touch.

The only man who I had to identify as a Soviet agent who came from the poor was Leo Long, who I knew and who was recruited by Blount and who, regrettably, continued in intelligence work after the war, unlike Blount, and was the deputy director of British intelligence in Berlin when he was caught as the result of my evidence. He came from the working class. And he said, in his own defense, that when Blount recruited him, he came to England with a good deal of bitterness about the British upper-class system. So that was the other side of the coin. But he was the only one I knew who came from that background.

Well, John Caincross also had been poor, and he was also recruited by Burgess. And he is now living as an exile in Rome.

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FISKE: When you speak of Cambridge, you speak frequently of your rooms, inviting people to your rooms or being invited to their rooms. What kind of quarters are students provided there?

STRAIGHT: Oh, in the college -- you move in a college in your second year and you have wonderful rooms.

FISKE: You mean apartments?

STRAIGHT: I had a very large sitting room, a tiny bedroom, and a large bedroom, which I shared with another communist student. And meetings were held every day in my room, and it went on. I've told the sad story about how the poor old man above me used to be kept awake all night by our meetings and he used to thump with his cane on our ceiling, and he finally died. And he turned out, after he died -- I didn't know who he was -- but he turned out to be the great poet A.E. Houseman. So I had contributed to the death of this great man by holding these noisy meetings in our room. We would end up at midnight, and we all had to go home by getting up and singing the International. And poor old Houseman would lie up there gritting his teeth and banging away with his cane.

They were fine rooms.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: Please correct me if I'm inaccurate historically. I'm somewhat familiar with the Clivedon set. I'm sorry I didn't hear much of your program because I was in and out of my apartment. But did you identify them as a conservative, very conservative group?

STRAIGHT: Yes, sir.

MAN: Let me ask you, without getting too technical, are you familiar with the Milner group?

STRAIGHT: An earlier group of Lord Milner?

MAN: Called Milner's kindergarten group.

STRAIGHT: He was a diplomat, wasn't he?

MAN: No, no. Milner was -- Milner inherited -- his group inherited the money of Cecil Rhodes.

STRAIGHT: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes, I have. Yes, of course. But I don't know anything about it.

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MAN: But they took over the Clivedon group.

STRAIGHT: Ah-ha.

MAN: The Clivedon group, Milner, Lionel Curtis, Lord Esha (?),...

STRAIGHT: Very good.

MAN: ...Alfred Zimmern.

STRAIGHT: Yes, I know those names.

MAN: Oh, fine. Okay. And they're all international bankers.

STRAIGHT: Right.

MAN: And they took over the Clivedon group, which took over the intellectual center of Oxford University and...

STRAIGHT: Yes. Yes.

MAN: Are you familiar -- now, you identify them as conservative. This was the very, very left-wing group at Oxford.

STRAIGHT: Ah-ha.

MAN: And they later took over, then, the Foreign Office of England. And, of course, the Astor family the London Times, was all these people.

And -- well, let me get to my point. First of all, are you aware that this group, which later established the Commonwealth Nation concept, what is called the English-speaking idea, and it was critical for the United States to belong to this group, and they set up round-table societies in this country. Were you aware of that?

STRAIGHT: Yes.

MAN: Okay. Then [unintelligible] they set up with Rockefeller and Mellon and the Whitneys and the Dillons here, the ruling group here, along with the ruling group in England.

STRAIGHT: Uh-huh.

MAN: Are you aware that the Rockefellers and this group met in the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 at a hotel in Paris and what they set up?

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STRAIGHT: No, sir. I hadn't known this story.

MAN: Okay. Well, it's well-documented. But all right.

Let me get to -- you mentioned one thing -- well, first of all, this group set up their organization, and they still exist. These round-table quarterlies are at Oxford University, Cambridge. Have you ever read them? They start from 1910.

STRAIGHT: I know what you're talking about.

MAN: Georgetown University, Harvard, Johns Hopkins here. They're all on the shelves and well-documented their idea. And they're not a conservative group, in what they attempt to do. But they are international bankers, which set up, virtually, the international financial structure of the Western World. But their idea, what they called the English-speaking idea, was to unite -- get the United States along with England and the Commonwealth nations in England and to set up a supranational government worldwide which would be mostly headed by these people, and bring in, of course, the non-white countries of the world, so that the non-whites, as this group believed, would eventually inundate the white political institutions of the world. Hence, you must bring these people in and share the political institutions, the white political institutions, and hence the English-speaking idea, which they promoted. They were to head this and to guide it. They wanted a supranational government.

Now, my question is, are you also aware that this group favored Hitler, through the Locarno Pacts, etcetera? They favored Hitler because they thought that Hitler would be the man that, if necessary, would go East to stop Bolshevism that was spreading into Europe.

STRAIGHT: Yes, I have read some of that. You're absolutely right. I've been reading that today.

FISKE: Sir, thank you very much.

What was your relationship to Jock Whitney? Was he your uncle?

STRAIGHT: My first cousin.

FISKE: Your first cousin. He was head of the New York Stock Exchange during the '30s.

STRAIGHT: No, that was another Whitney. That was Richard Whitney.

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FISKE: Oh, that's right. Yes.

STRAIGHT: Yes. No, he was a philanthropist and a business investment banker in New York.

FISKE: How was Richard Whitney related to you?

STRAIGHT: No relation.

FISKE: No relation.

Good evening.

MAN: I wondered, Mr. Straight, if you could -- your opinions of the Communist Party be the same as mine, in the sense that in recent years I sense the Communist Party, as such, has become rather, oh, old and old-fashioned and, in one sense, haven't kept up with the most latest radical events, that it has been somewhat displaced by this group called the Communist Workers Party that had that fracas down in North Carolina with those Nazis and Ku Klux Klan.

STRAIGHT: Right. Yes. Trotskyites.

MAN: Are they, you know, somewhat out-of-date or old-fashioned or grown stale, the Communist Party, as such, narrowly defined?

STRAIGHT: I think so. I cannot imagine why anybody would join the Communist Party since 1945, because Soviet Russia was laid bare, under Stalin, for what it was, an oppressor of other peoples.

The Trotskyists, on the other hand, continued to live in the legend of a brilliant adventurer and a martyr who was killed by Stalin. The Chinese Communists were related to them and had a radical wing of the Communist Party, which is still powerful, let's say, in Albania and in parts of Latin America.

In England, where we were talking about it, the Trotskyites were very active indeed, and still are, in infiltrating the Labor Party, in infiltrating local arts councils. So in my counterpart, the British Arts Council, when I was in the National Endowment for the Arts, the British Arts Council was having terrible fights with their local councils, which were headed up by Trotskyites. And there wasn't much they could do about it.

Now, they were filled with energy and determination, and were totally irresponsible. Whereas the Communist Party was dying in its traces. You're absolutely right.

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FISKE: Incidentaly, you mentioned the Arts Council. That played a very significant part in your decision to blow the whistle on Anthony Blount, didn't it?

STRAIGHT: Yes, it triggered it, when President Kennedy asked me to do that.

FISKE: You were nominated by President Kennedy to chair the Advisory Council on the Arts.

STRAIGHT: Which would have become the Endowment. Yes.

FISKE: And you would have been facing an FBI check, and that caused you to review your entire situation.

STRAIGHT: That brought me face-to-face with it. And at that point I would have either had to conceal the truth about myself or tell it and throw away the job. And I chose to do the second.

FISKE: Went to -- confided in Arthur Schlesinger about it, and he sent you to Bobby Kennedy.

STRAIGHT: Robert Kennedy. Right.

FISKE: Who sent you to the FBI.

STRAIGHT: Correct.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: There's five books that I've been reading that pertain to what Mr. Chambers [sic] is speaking about. Could I tell you the titles over the air?

STRAIGHT: Yes, please.

MAN: Okay. "Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism" by Robert J. Lifton. It's from Victor Galansk in London. "The Enemy at His Back" by Elizabeth Churchill Brown. That's from the Book Mailer in New York City. "The Case of Richard Sorge" by F.W. Deakin and G.R. Story. That's from Chatter and Windess in London. "No Wonder We Are Losing" by Robert Morris. That's also from the Book Mailer in New York. And there's one called "The Art of Psychological Warfare" by Charles Roetter. That's by Stein & Day at Scarborough House in New York.

STRAIGHT: Right.

MAN: And what I'd like to ask you is, Elizabeth Churchill Brown -- there's about three questions I've got -- is

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she the daughter of Winston Churchill? Also, is the Book Mailer associated with the John Birch Society? It's a publishing house. And the third question...

FISKE: Let's ask him one at a time and get an answer.

STRAIGHT: I don't know the answer to either one of those two questions.

MAN: Okay. The third question is, the American Communist Party, I've been reading in those books, is, as you said, it's being controlled out of Moscow. And the majority of people think that it's not that are members of it.

What type of power can they wield? Let's say there was some specific individual within the United States that the American Communist party wanted to target, let's say with chemicals, some type of tactical warfare such as that, which is really not direct, sort of an indirect thing, what -- is it possible that they are into that type of a thing? And could -- if so, what type of harm could they do to, say, one specific individual?

STRAIGHT: I think the American Communist Party exhausted itself in 1948 in the Wallace campaign. They sent all their undercover operatives in the CIO out into the front lines, and all of them, virtually, lost their jobs. They overextended themselves. They made a terrible blunder, from their own point of view.

There is a book published by a professor at Georgetown University called "Triumph and Tragedy," in which he devotes nine pages to me and says that I accomplished the greatest political coup of the 20th Century by forcing the virtual dissolution of the American Communist Party by making it extend itself too far with Henry Wallace. I wish I was that clever.

The answer to the rest of the question, I think, really relates back to what we've been talking about tonight. In my generation, people acted out of belief, out of conviction. They didn't believe in communism as such; they believed in a new international order. People don't act out of those beliefs today.

The much more serious espionage cases which have been brought to the surface in the last five years, the two American boys who blew our whole satellite coding system, Prine in England, six or seven others in England, four or five sergeants in the United States who were at military installations, all acted out of one of two motivations: one, blackmail -- in some cases they were homosexuals and were blackmailed, or they were

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caught with other men's wives and photographed -- but more importantly, money.

FISKE: Were you ever offered any money?

STRAIGHT: No. Needless to say, it wouldn't have helped. Nobody I ever knew was offered money.

But money has been the factor now that ideology has gone away. And virtually all of these men, Prine included, in England, who obviously did a thousand times more damage than was ever done by Burgess and Blount, did it because he was hard up, because he was an eccentric...

MAN: ...Stealth bomber, for example.

STRAIGHT: Yes.

Now, these other men, I'm not excusing them. Harold Philby, without any doubt at all, was far the worst of the British lot, in the sense that he turned over a lot of information and he betrayed many men. He betrayed British agents. He betrayed American agents. And he betrayed the bunch that went to Albania and dropped behind the lines.

MAN: In one of these books they talk about the Yalta agreement and how, you know, that came about through the advisers to the President, etcetera. How much influence does the American Communist Party have in the public opinion?

STRAIGHT: I think none on that. If you read Charles Bohlen on that, who was Ambassador to Moscow and was at Yalta, and if you read George Kennan, they will both say that our position at Yalta was dictated by weakness. The Russians were there with their Red Army in Berlin. There wasn't much we could do about it. Roosevelt may have trusted Stalin too far, but the real decisions were being made by military power on the spot.

So, Mr. Bohlen and Mr. Kennan were certainly not fellow travelers.

FISKE: You're on 88.5 FM.

WOMAN: I came in late, but I guess Mr. Straight thinks he's gone straight. However, I wonder if the Wallace party had won, and probably with the aid of young communist activist students, if we'd be in the situation, the insane situation we're in today, where we keep hearing that we're just minutes away from nuclear, you know, worldwide holocaust.

And, you see, I was in college. I took -- I sort of

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audited several sessions of a Marxist discussion group. And the reason -- and they talked about getting into mass orgs, is what they called it -- not orgies, but organizations -- and kind of helping to steer the people towards taking positions -- this was going into churches, even -- on the necessity for peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union. This was when some of our most reactionary leaders were trying to take the other fork in the road. And they felt that since they had studied, were sympathetic, understood the nature of Soviet society, which was not being explained to the American people, and it was basically on a necessarily peaceful course, that it was not a great devil with seven horns, the way people like Dulles were describing it, and that therefore, only with this understanding would people be sufficiently motivated to understand why there could be peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union. And therefore they felt they had a dynamic part to play in helping to steer and shape these organizations towards coming out against the atomic bomb and coming out for peaceful coexistence.

I don't think it was, you know, ulterior -- big devils with ulterior motives just wanting to be able to take over.

FISKE: Well, how would you react to that, Michael?

STRAIGHT: I mentioned the fact that, in my opinion, the nuclear freeze movement is made up, very largely, of people who are appalled by the prospect of a nuclear war. I believe that. And I believe that many people who voted for Wallace had the same good intentions.

I don't believe that his Progressive Party could have ever brought about peace, because I think long-term peace requires patience, but understanding of the Soviet state, the kind of understanding that is expressed by George Kennan in all of his books, the kind of patience which he begs us to have.

The fear which you express, and which Henry felt, was that if we raised the rhetoric of anti-communism to a certain level, it might seem to justify the use of nuclear weapons. And I can repeat once again that I knew men in the Pentagon who were genuinely saying, "Let's get it over now before they get the weapons. It's going to come sooner or later. Let's get it over with."

WOMAN: Right. And another thing I wanted to say was that I read in the Brittanica that what really kind of touched off the tremendous kulak rebellion, which I think -- you know, where Stalin finally had to solve the situation by deporting a lot of people out to Siberia -- what touched it off was that Stalin had sent funds in support of a coal strike in Britain. There was a lot of fear, if you read the literature, in Britain

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in the '30s of the Bolshies, you know, in Britain, because of the Depression. And Stalin had sent funds to the coal strikers. And this so maddened the rulers of Great Britain that they cut off all their funds that they'd been sending to the Soviet Union. They were getting oil out of the Soviet Union. And this just totally threw the Soviet plans to -- they were building big cities and depended on that aid. And so they had to take extreme, drastic measures to collectivize agriculture very quickly in order to be able to partly get money, you know, sell that grain and get those funds that Britain had cut off, and also to feed the people in the cities.

And so, a lot of that -- those mass deportations were really caused, in a sense, by Britain. And also, the Brittanica says thousands were executed. They don't go in for the millions...

FISKE: Let me explain to you that my caller is a woman who calls me frequently and who has never been -- over a period of many years of calling me, has never been able to find any reason to criticize any Soviet action in the last 60 years, at least.

STRAIGHT: I think the best book on this is George Kennan's book "Russia, the United States, and the Bomb." He goes into the Zinoviev letter, which you mentioned, which was said to have been sent by a leading Soviet official in 1926 to a leading member of the British Communist Party, and which was used to unseat the first British Labor government. And it proved to be a forgery. That Labor government was then replaced by a Conservative government. And that increased the sort of suspicion that the British working class had about the rulers of the British press, and also increased their doubts that they could ever form a labor government in a democracy and keep it in for very long, because this one was turned out by a forgery.

I do not think that you're right in suggesting that this had much impact within Russia itself, because the British were far too poor at that time to be sending much in the way of supplies to the Soviet Union. And again, if you read the internal history of the Soviet Union, the effort to collectivize the farms was really begun by Lenin earlier. And the famine which did result resulted a little later on in the '30s.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: Michael, did you and your associates back in the '30s begin to suspect, at least after the Hitler-Stalin pact, that Joe Stalin was not really a true Marxist-Leninist, like Trotsky and the Social Workers Party were, but that Joe Stalin was really more like a National Socialist, like a Hitler, and

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that no one was more surprised than Stalin, who had supported Hitler in his takeover of Europe, when Hitler stupidly invaded Russia, against the advice of the German High Command, and thus lost the war at Stalingrad? Were you aware of that?

STRAIGHT: No, sir. I was back in this country at that time and I was stunned and shocked by the Nazi-Soviet pact, as most people were.

I have again been reading Kennan on this, and he has a brilliant chapter on Stalin himself. And he argues that the leaders of the left wing in Soviet Russia -- I'm sorry -- in Russia, Czarist Russia, were cosmopolitan. Many of them were Jewish. Many of them had been exiled abroad. They had extensive knowledge of the world. They were sophisticated people. Stalin, himself, was a man -- was the son of a small proprietor in Georgia in the interior of Russia. He had studied to be a priest. He may or may not have been a police informant during this period. But during the period between the 1905 revolution, which ended in failure, and the 1917 revolution, the cosmopolitans were all making speeches in Brussels and London and Paris, and people like Stalin were doing the dirty work of robbing trains and banks in order to get enough money to finance their movement. And this group felt very antagonistic towards the Radeks, the Trotskys, the Jewish internationals, as they came to call them.

And Stalin's acsension [sic] to power after Lenin was wounded really represented the triumph of these Russian nationalists of the interior, who were unsophisticated and resented the cosmopolitans in Leningrad and Moscow.

And so, while Litvinov was making these great speeches about the League of Nations, which persuaded me and my generation that the Russians were internationalists, what in fact was happening was that the internationalists themselves, Bukharin above all, who befriended poets and intellectuals and opposition members, were being purged by Stalin in Moscow and were being wiped out.

The purge was taking place just as I left Cambridge in 1937, and it was something that nobody wanted to face, any more than we wanted to face the atrocities carried out in Vietnam when we felt we had to win the Vietnam War.

MAN: Yes, that's what I say. Stalin was really a national socialist. [Unintelligible] Communist Party, even today, is the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. They are still fighting against the Stalinist communists in Russia and elsewhere.

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STRAIGHT: Exactly.

FISKE: Thank you.

Good evening.

WOMAN: I was wondering if Mr. Straight could talk about working with Nancy Hanks, former Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts.

STRAIGHT: Yes. I wrote a little article about her last week in the Georgetowner. Nancy was brought to the arts by the Rockefeller family, and I think it was their great contribution, because she is a woman of extraordinary resolution, good humor, and bravery. She led the whole constituency during eight critical years in which the arts flourished. During that period, none of us knew that she had intermittently been fighting cancer. It wasn't until early December, when we went to New York to celebrate her leadership and to give her an award, and she couldn't turn up to accept the award, that we knew that she was ill. To the very last moment, she kept on saying, "I'll be all right. I'll be back." She'd been fighting cancer all that period. She was a woman of extraordinary bravery.

I am still hoping that the President and the Congress will join together to name the Old Post Office the Nancy Hanks Building.

WOMAN: I agree.

Now, what about your opinion of the National Endowment today compared to the years when you were there?

STRAIGHT: I think Mr. Hodsel, the present Chairman, who succeeded under President Reagan, is having a very tough time because, at a time of austerity, he's having to fight cutbacks in the budget. I think he's trying valiantly to continue the work.

FISKE: Did you see the piece in The Post this morning that, in fact, they're going to receive more funding than they had thought?

STRAIGHT: Yes, I did. Thanks to Sidney Yates of Illinois, who has fought almost single-handedly in the Congress, the budget for the arts is still going to be very high, and the cutback is much less than the cutback which the President has ordered in other areas.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I wonder, did you ever read an article in National

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Review, about four or five years ago, entitled "Were the Intellectuals Duped?"

STRAIGHT: I don't remember it.

MAN: Well, it is one of the best articles about the 1930s I think I've seen. I can't locate it just now. But the point is, the author documents case after case after case of prominent Western intellectuals who knew full well of the blood that was being spilled by Stalinism, and not only tolerated or winked an eye at it, but they actually applauded it.

And Corliss Lamont, for example, millionaire Corliss Lamont, he hailed the Soviet regime for its splending accomplishments, in his words. He headed the American Friends of the Soviet Union.

And, of course, not just him, but many others, French intellectuals, English intellectuals, American intellectuals, they knew that this was going on and -- well, for example, Bernard Shaw, he wrote for English publication, but Pravda printed it without comment, his remark that if someone becomes a liability to the Soviet state or doesn't make his life a paying enterprise, he will lose it. An agent of the GPU, secret police, will take him by the shoulder and will conduct him into the cellar, and he will simply stop living.

So, these intellectuals knew in the '30s.

Do you think that they were idealists, or do you think that so many of the -- and I'm talking about the prominent leading intellectuals. Don't you think that they really knew of the viciousness of Stalinism?

STRAIGHT: No. Let me give you two examples of this. They were -- several books have been written about this, and again I've been reading them. Andre Gide, Thomas Mann, Salone, before he broke, Stephen Spender, Winston Auden were all enormously flattered by the attention they were given. They were taken to Moscow and given the grand tour. They were given huge feasts, and speeches were made in their honor. They were told they were great writers. And they loved that. Camus, Sartre, all were given this royal treatment.

It was only when Gide went to the Soviet Union and discovered that homosexuals were persecuted that he said, "Well, if homosexuals are persecuted, perhaps some of the others are also persecuted." And he came back and wrote his famous [Unintelligible] U.S.S.R., which was the first break by any prominent fellow traveler.

As you said, Bernard Shaw went back and forth and was

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happy to tell Stalin that he shouldn't kill so many people. And then he'd come back to England and say, "Well, of course they have to kill people." Bernard Shaw was an eccentric, and a vain one, and he was one of the men who was, I think, as you said, guilty of deceiving people.

But going back, did they know? I found, in reading the tremendously moving volumes written by the survivors of the Soviet slave labor camps, the poem written by one of the greatest Russian poets, [Unintelligible] Mandelstam, and he wrote his famous poem about Stalin, which was the poem that led to his exile to Siberia. And it begins, "We live death to the land beneath us. Ten paces away, nobody hears our cries." And he was talking about the Russian people themselves, that they didn't know what was going on.

So, therefore, people ten thousand miles away had that much less reason to know what was going on, until the exiles began to get out alive.

FISKE: Sir, I'm afraid our time has run out.

Let me thank you so much for coming. I've enjoyed these past two hours more than I can tell you, and really enjoyed reading your book.

STRAIGHT: Thank you so much, Fred.

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