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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters and friends, in keeping with the spirit of the keynote address of our beloved President, I desire, if the Lord will bless me, to speak to you about the American heritage of freedom—a plan of God.

I direct my remarks particularly to the men of America and more especially to those in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who hold the Holy Priesthood of God.

Every member of the priesthood should understand the divine plan designed by the Lord to raise up the first free people in modern times. Here is how scripture says it was achieved:

First: Prophecy is abundant that God deliberately kept the American continent hidden until after the Holy Roman Empire had been broken up and the various nations had established themselves as independent kingdoms. Keeping America hidden until this time was no accident. (2 Nephi 1:6, 8.)

Second: At the proper time, God inspired Columbus to overcome almost insurmountable odds to discover America and bring this rich new land to the attention of the gentiles in Europe. (1 Nephi 13:12; *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Dr. Samuel Eliot Morison, pp. 46-47.)

Third: God revealed to his ancient American prophets that shortly after the discovery of America there would be peoples in Europe who would desire to escape the persecution and tyranny of the Old World and flee to America. (1 Nephi 13:13-16.)

Fourth: God told his prophets that the kingdoms in Europe would try to exercise dominion over the people who had fled to America, but that in the wars for independence the American settlers would win. (This is a remarkable prophecy in that 2,300 years before the Revolutionary War was fought, God through his prophets predicted who would win it.) (*Ibid.*, 13:16-19.)

Fifth: The prophets were told that in the latter days when the gentiles came to America they would establish it as a land of liberty on which there would

be no kings. The Lord declared that he would protect the land and whosoever would try to establish kings either from within or without would perish. (2 Nephi 10:8-14.)

Sixth: Having declared America to be a land of liberty, God undertook to raise up a band of inspired and intelligent leaders who could write a constitution of liberty and establish the first free people in modern times. The hand of God in this undertaking is clearly indicated by the Lord himself in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith in these words:

“. . . I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose. . . .” (D&C 101:80.)

Seventh: God declared that the United States Constitution was divinely inspired for the specific purpose of eliminating bondage and the violation of the rights and protection which belongs to “all flesh.” (*Ibid.*, 101:77-80.)

Eighth: God placed a mandate upon his people to befriend and defend the constitutional laws of the land and see that the rights and privileges of all mankind are protected. He verified the declaration of the founding fathers, that God created all men free. He also warned against those who would enact laws encroaching upon the sacred rights and privileges of free men. He urged the election of honest and wise leaders and said that evil men and laws were of Satan. (*Ibid.*, 98:5-10.)

Ninth: God predicted through his prophets that this great gentile nation, raised up on the American continent in the last days, would become the richest and most powerful nation on the face of the earth; even “above all other nations.” (See 1 Nephi 13:15, 30; Ether 2:12.)

Tenth: Concerning the United States, the Lord revealed to his prophets that its greatest threat would be a vast, worldwide “secret combination” which would not only threaten the United States but also seek to “overthrow the freedom of

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all lands, nations, and countries." (Ether 8:25.)

Eleventh: In connection with attack on the United States, the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith there would be an attempt to overthrow the country by destroying the Constitution. Joseph Smith predicted that the time would come when the Constitution would hang, as it were, by a thread, and at that time "this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction." (*Journal History*, Brigham Young's Speech, July 4, 1854.)

It is my conviction that the elders of Israel, widely spread over the nation, will at that crucial time successfully rally the righteous of our country and provide the necessary balance of strength to save the institutions of constitutional government.

Twelfth: The Lord revealed to the Prophet Nephi that he established the gentiles on this land to be a free people forever, that if they were a righteous nation and overcame the wickedness and secret abominations which would arise in their midst, they would inherit the land forever. (1 Nephi 14:1-2.)

Thirteenth: But on the other hand, if the gentiles on this land reject the word of God and conspire to overthrow liberty and the Constitution, then their doom is fixed, and they "... shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant." (1 Nephi 14:6; 3 Nephi 21:11, 14, 21; D&C 84:114-115, 117.)

Fourteenth: The great destructive force which was to be turned loose on the earth and which the prophets for centuries have been calling the "abomination of desolation" is vividly described by those who saw it in vision. Ours is the first generation to realize how literally these prophecies can be fulfilled now that God, through science, has unlocked the secret to thermonuclear reaction.

In the light of these prophecies there should be no doubt in the mind of any priesthood holder that the human family is headed for trouble. There are rugged days ahead. It is time for every man who wishes to do his duty to get himself prepared—physically, spiritually, and psychologically—for the task which may come at any time, as suddenly as the whirlwind.

Where do we stand today? All over the world the light of freedom is being diminished. Across whole continents of the earth freedom is being totally obliterated.

Never in recorded history has any movement spread its power so far and so fast as has socialistic-communism in the last three decades. The facts are not pleasant to review. Communist leaders are jubilant with their success. They are driving freedom back on almost every front.

It is time, therefore, that every American, and especially every member of the priesthood, become informed about the aims, tactics, and schemes of socialistic-communism. This becomes particularly important when it is realized that communism is turning out to be the earthly image of the plan which Satan presented in the pre-existence. The whole program of socialistic-communism is essentially a war against God and the plan of salvation—the very plan which we fought to uphold during "the war in heaven."

Up to now some members of the Church have stood aloof, feeling that the fight against socialistic-communism is "controversial" and unrelated to the mission of the Church or the work of the Lord. But the President of the Church in our day has made it clear that the fight against atheistic communism is a major challenge to the Church and every member in it.

During the general conference of the Church in October 1959, President David O. McKay, in discussing the threat of communism, referred to W. Cleon Skousen's book, *The Naked Communist*, and said, "I admonish everybody to read that excellent book." He then quoted the following from the flyleaf: "The conflict between communism and freedom is the problem of our time. It overshadows all other problems."

The fight against godless communism is a very real part of every man's duty who holds the priesthood. It is the fight against slavery, immorality, atheism, terrorism, cruelty, barbarism, deceit, and the destruction of human life through a kind of tyranny unsurpassed by anything in human history. Here is a struggle against the evil, satanical priestcraft of Lucifer. Truly it can be

called, "a continuation of the war in heaven."

In the war in heaven the devil advocated absolute eternal security at the sacrifice of our freedom. Although there is nothing more desirable to a Latter-day Saint than eternal security in God's presence, and although God knew, as did we, that some of us would not achieve this security if we were allowed our freedom—yet the very God of heaven, who has more mercy than us all, still decreed no guaranteed security except by a man's own freedom of choice and individual initiative.

Today the devil as a wolf in a supposedly new suit of sheep's clothing is enticing some men, both in and out of the Church, to parrot his line by advocating planned government guaranteed security programs at the expense of our liberties. Latter-day Saints should be reminded how and why they voted as they did in heaven. If some have decided to change their vote they should repent—throw their support on the side of freedom—and cease promoting this subversion.

When all of the trappings of propaganda and pretense have been pulled aside, the exposed hard-core structure of modern communism is amazingly similar to the ancient Book of Mormon record of secret societies such as the Gadiantons. In the ancient American civilization there was no word which struck greater terror to the hearts of the people than the name of the Gadiantons. It was a secret political party which operated as a murder cult. Its object was to infiltrate legitimate government, plant its officers in high places, and then seize power and live off the spoils appropriated from the people. (It would start out as a small group of "dissenters" and by using secret oaths with the threat of death for defectors it would gradually gain a choke hold on the political and economic life of whole civilizations.)

The object of the Gadiantons, like modern communists, was to destroy the existing government and set up a ruthless criminal dictatorship over the whole land.

One of the most urgent, heart-stirring appeals made by Moroni as he closed the

Book of Mormon was addressed to the gentile nations of the last days. He foresaw the rise of a great world-wide secret combination among the gentiles which "... seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries; ..." (Ether 8:25. Italics added.) He warned each gentile nation of the last days to purge itself of this gigantic criminal conspiracy which would seek to rule the world.

The prophets, in our day, have continually warned us of these internal threats in our midst—that our greatest threat from socialistic-communism lies within our country. Brethren and sisters, we don't need a prophet—we have one—we need a listening ear. And if we do not listen and heed, then, as the Doctrine and Covenants states, "... the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people." (D&C 1:14.)

The prophets have said that these threats are among us. The Prophet Moroni, viewing our day, said, "Wherefore the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation." (Ether 8:24.)

Unfortunately our nation has not treated the socialistic-communist conspiracy as "treasonable to our free institutions," as the First Presidency pointed out in a signed 1936 statement. If we continue to uphold communism by not making it treasonable, our land shall be destroyed, for the Lord has said that "... whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold they shall be destroyed; ..." (*Ibid.*, 8:22.)

The Prophet Moroni described how the secret combination would take over a country and then fight the work of God, persecute the righteous, and murder those who resisted. Moroni therefore proceeded to describe the workings of the ancient "secret combinations" so that modern man could recognize this great political conspiracy in the last days: "Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should

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be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you, which are built up to get power and gain—and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you, . . .

“Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation, because of this secret combination which shall be among you; . . .

“For it cometh to pass that whoso buildeth it up seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations and countries; and it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil, who is the father of all lies; . . .” (*Ibid.*, 8:23-25. Italics added.)

The Prophet Moroni seemed greatly exercised lest in our day we might not be able to recognize the startling fact that the same secret societies which destroyed the Jaredites and decimated numerous kingdoms of both Nephites and Lamanites would be precisely the same form of criminal conspiracy which would rise up among the gentile nations in this day.

The stratagems of the leaders of these societies are amazingly familiar to anyone who has studied the tactics of modern communist leaders.

The Lord has declared that before the second coming of Christ it will be necessary to “. . . destroy the secret works of darkness, . . .” in order to preserve the land of Zion—the Americas. (2 Nephi 10:11-16.)

The world-wide secret conspiracy which has risen up in our day to fulfil these prophecies is easily identified. President McKay has left no room for doubt as to what attitude Latter-day Saints should take toward the modern “secret combinations” of conspiratorial communism. In a lengthy statement on communism, he said:

“. . . Latter-day Saints should have nothing to do with the secret combinations and groups antagonistic to the constitutional law of the land, which the Lord ‘suffered to be established,’ and which ‘should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh according to just and holy principles.’” (Gos-

pel *Ideals*, by David O. McKay, p. 306. Italics added.)

There are those who recommend that the clash between communism and freedom be avoided through disarmament agreements. Abolishing our military strength and adopting an unenforceable contract as a substitute to protect us would go down in history as the greatest mistake free men could make in a time of peril.

President McKay declared:

“Force rules in the world today; consequently, our government must keep armies abroad, build navies and air squadrons, create atom bombs to protect itself from the threatened aggression of a nation which seems to listen to no other appeal than compulsion.” (*Ibid.*, p. 304.)

This parallels the historic statement by George Washington when he vigorously warned:

“There is a rank due the United States among the nations that will be totally lost by the reputation of weakness. If we would avoid insult we must be able to repel it, if we would secure the peace, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.”

Some timid, vacillating political leaders proclaim that communism is something we will have to learn to live with . . . whether it is Khrushchev, or some other leader. The present communist system, they declare, will continue because *there is no alternate system to replace communism*. The policy of increasing power, of pushing their system outward and using the communist party, they say, will go on.

Such a negative attitude writes off the hundreds of millions behind the iron curtain as a lost cause. Surely no courageous, liberty-loving citizen will treat the communist secret combination as “something we will have to learn to live with.”

There is a more courageous and sounder point of view. President McKay expressed it in these words:

"Men will be free. I have hoped for twenty years that the Russian system would break up. There is no freedom under it, and sooner or later the people will rise against it. They cannot oppose those fundamentals of civilization and of God. They can't crush their people always. Men will be free." (Church Section, *Deseret News*, November 6, 1957, in an article entitled, "President McKay receives Senator Kennedy at Church Offices.")

What is the official position of the Church on communism? In 1936 the First Presidency made an official declaration on communism which has never been abrogated. I quote the concluding paragraph:

"We call upon all Church members completely to eschew communism. The safety of our divinely inspired constitutional government and the welfare of our Church imperatively demand that communism shall have no place in America."

We must ever keep in mind that collectivized socialism is part of the communist strategy. Communism is fundamentally socialism. We will never win our fight against communism by making concessions to socialism. Communism and socialism, closely related, must be defeated on principle. The close relationship between socialism and communism is clearly pointed out by Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina in a letter to the editor of the *Washington Post*, of August 6, 1961, in these words:

". . . Both socialism and communism derive from the teachings of Marx and Engels. In fact, the movements were one until the split over methods of approach, which resulted after the Russian revolution in 1905. . . . The aim and purpose of both was then and is now world socialism, which communism seeks to achieve through revolution and which socialists seek to achieve through evolution.

"The industrial achievements of the U. S. are the result of an economic system which is the antithesis of social-

ism. Our economic system is called 'capitalism' or 'private enterprise' and is based on private property rights, the profit motive and competition.

"Both communism and socialism seek to destroy our economic system and replace it with socialism; and their success, whether through evolution by socialism or through revolution by communism or a combination, will destroy not only our economic system, but our liberty, including the 'civil' aspects as well. . . .

". . . The 'common ground' of socialism and communism is a factor to which the American people should be alerted. Without a clear understanding that communism is socialism, the total threat and menace of the cold war can never be comprehended and fought to victory."

When socialism is understood, we will realize that many of the programs advocated, and some of those already adopted in the United States, fall clearly within the category of socialism. What is socialism? It is simply governmental ownership and management of the essential means for the production and distribution of goods.

We must never forget that nations may sow the seeds of their own destruction while enjoying unprecedented prosperity.

The socialistic-communist conspiracy to weaken the United States involves attacks on many fronts. To weaken the American free-enterprise economy which outproduced both its enemies and allies during World War II is a high priority target of the communist leaders. Their press and other propaganda media are therefore constantly selling the principles of centralized or federal control of farms, railroads, electric power, schools, steel, maritime shipping, and many other aspects of the economy—but always in the name of public welfare.

This carries out the strategy laid down by the communist masters. John Strachey, a top official in the Labor Socialist party of Great Britain, in his book entitled *The Theory and Practice of Socialism* said:

"It is impossible to establish communism as the immediate successor

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to capitalism. It is accordingly proposed to establish socialism as something which we can put in the place of our present decaying capitalism. Hence, communists work for the establishment of socialism as a necessary transition stage on the road to communism."

The paramount issue today is liberty against creeping socialism. It is in this spirit that President McKay stated:

"Communism is antagonistic to the American way of life. Its avowed purpose is to destroy belief in God and free enterprise. . . . The fostering of full economic freedom lies at the base of our liberties. Only in perpetuating economic freedom can our social, political, and religious liberties be preserved." (Excerpt from Inaugural address for Dr. Henry A. Dixon, President of USU, delivered by President McKay at the USU fieldhouse, Logan, Utah, Monday, March 18, 1954.)

Again President McKay warned, citing the words of W. C. Mullendore, president of Southern California Edison Company:

"During the first half of the twentieth century we have traveled far into the soul-destroying land of socialism and made strange alliances through which we have become involved in almost continuous hot and cold wars over the whole of the earth. In this retreat from freedom the voices of protesting citizens have been drowned by raucous shouts of intolerance and abuse from those who led the retreat and their millions of gullible youth, who are marching merrily to their doom, carrying banners on which are emblazoned such intriguing and misapplied labels as social justice, equality, reform, patriotism, social welfare." (*Gospel Ideals*, p. 273.)

It is significant that 118 years ago this month the Prophet Joseph Smith, after attending lectures on socialism, made this official entry in church history: "I said I did not believe the doctrine." (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 33.)

No true Latter-day Saint and no true American can be a socialist or a communist or support programs leading in that direction. These evil philosophies

are incompatible with Mormonism, the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

What can priesthood holders do? There are many things we can do to meet the challenge of the adversary in our day.

First, we should become informed about communism, about socialism, and about Americanism. What better way can one become informed than by first studying the inspired words of the prophets and using that as a foundation against which to test all other material. This is in keeping with the Prophet Joseph Smith's motto, "When the Lord commands, do it." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 170.)

The Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, on which President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., served as a board member, continues to supply sound freedom literature. We should know enough about American free enterprise to be able to defend it. We should know what makes it possible for six percent of humanity—living under our free economy—to produce about one-half of the earth's developed wealth each year.

We should know why paternalism, collectivism, or unnecessary federal supervision will hold our standard of living down and reduce productivity just as it has in every country where it has been tried. We should also know why the communist leaders consider socialism the highroad to communism.

Second, we should accept the command of the Lord and treat socialistic communism as the tool of Satan. We should follow the counsel of the President of the Church and resist the influence and policies of the socialist-communist conspiracy wherever they are found—in the schools, in the churches, in governments, in unions, in businesses, in agriculture.

Third, we should help those who have been deceived or who are misinformed to find the truth. Unless each person who knows the truth will "stand up and speak up" it is difficult for the deceived or confused citizen to find his way back.

Fourth, we should not make the mistake of calling people "communist" just because they happen to be helping the communist cause. Thousands of patriotic Americans, including a few Latter-day

Saints, have helped the communists without realizing it. Others have knowingly helped without joining the party. The remedy is to avoid name-calling, but point out clearly and persuasively how they are helping the communists.

Fifth, each priesthood holder should use his influence in the community to resist the erosion process which is taking place in our political and economic life. He should use the political party of his choice to express his evaluation of important issues. He should see that his party is working to preserve freedom, not destroy it. He should join responsible local groups interested in promoting freedom and free competitive enterprise, in studying political issues, appraising the voting records and proposed programs, and writing to members of Congress, promoting good men in public office and scrutinizing local, state, and federal agencies to see that the will of the people is being carried out. He should not wait for the Lord's servants to give instruction for every detail once they have announced the direction in which the priesthood should go. Each member should exercise prayerful judgment and then act.

Sixth, and most important of all, each member of the priesthood should set his own house in order. This should include:

1. Regular family prayer, remembering especially our government leaders.
2. Getting out of debt.
3. Seeing that each member of the family understands the importance of keeping the commandments.
4. Seeing that the truth is shared with members of the family, with neighbors, and with associates.
5. Seeing that each member is performing his duties in the priesthood, in the auxiliary organizations, in the temple, and in the civic life of the community.
6. Seeing that every wage earner in the home is a full tithpayer and fulfilling other obligations in financial support of the kingdom.
7. Providing a one-year supply of essentials.

In doing these things a member of the Church is not only making himself an opponent of the adversary, but a proponent of the Lord.

In the prophecies there is no promise

except to the obedient. To a modern prophet the Lord said:

"Therefore, what I say unto one, I say unto all: Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth;

"And the anger of God kindleth against the inhabitants of the earth;

". . . I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation.

"I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."

(D&C 82:5-6, 9-10.)

May God give us the wisdom to recognize the threat to our freedom and the strength to meet this danger courageously.

Yes, perilous times are ahead, but if we do our duty in all things, God will give us inner peace and overrule all things for our good. God grant it may be so, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking. The combined choral groups accompanied by the Bonneville Strings will now sing the "Hosanna Anthem," conducted by Brother David Austin Shand. The benediction will be offered by Elder Milton P. Ream, president of the San Leandro Stake, after which this Conference will be adjourned until seven o'clock this evening when the General Priesthood Meeting of the Church will be held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

Only those holding the Priesthood are invited to be present. Persons not holding the Priesthood will kindly refrain from attempting to enter the building. This Priesthood session will not be broadcast publicly. However, in addition to overflow meetings in the Assembly Hall and in Barratt Hall, the proceedings of this Priesthood Meeting will be relayed by closed circuit to members of the Priesthood assembled in 299 other Church buildings from coast to coast and in Canada.

The general sessions tomorrow will be broadcast as a public service over television and radio stations throughout