

It is recommended that this article be used only as a humorous anecdote, speakers should use it carefully to avoid turning people off with the spector of communism.

Use idea of following satirical Buchwald article to point up misplaced priorities.  
Copies in its entirety from the Washington Post, March 12, 1968.

Belsky, my Negro friend, was not impressed with the riot report that Governor Kerner and his Commission have just issued.

"The trouble with the riot report," said Belsky, "is that there was no Communist threat implied in it."

"What on earth do you mean, Belsky?" I said.

"Congress isn't going to act on a report that doesn't have a Commie threat in it," Belsky said.

"But there were warnings in the report of riots and turmoil unless something is done about the ghettos."

"It's not the same thing," Belsky said. "You can talk about threats, frustration, inequities, poverty, joblessness and anything you want to, but nobody is going to take notice unless you have a Communist menace thrown in somewhere."

"But that doesn't sound right," I said.

"Look, man, we're spending hundreds of millions of dollars each day out there in Vietnam to win the hearts and minds of people we don't even know or understand. Why? Because they are being threatened by communism. Every time the President goes to Congress and says 'I've got to have a few billion dollars more, or else the Commies are going to take over that poor little country,' wham - he gets the money."

"Of course, and he should. You don't want to fight communism on the shores of Hawaii, do you?" I said.

"No, sir. But what I'm trying to say is that you aren't going to get any action in this country until you can prove that the Commies are fighting to win the hearts and minds of the Black People. You get that message over to Congress and they're not going to filibuster very long."

"THEN YOU THINK if the Negro could prove that there is an international conspiracy to win over the Negroes to Godless communism, we might start a crash program to improve the conditions of the ghettos?" I said.

"I'm sure of it. America can live with poor people, it can live with jobless people - it can even live with angry people. But it can't live with Communist people. If the Negroes say to the establishment, 'Hey, fellows, we got a Red threat in this here ghetto and we need some dollars to straighten it out,' there would be so many Brinks trucks trying to deliver the money that there would be a traffic jam."

"It sounds good on paper, but would Congress go for it? After all, it's one thing to have a threat 10,000 miles away and help people out there to improve their standard of living. But if you start doing the same thing in your own country, you're going to get an awful lot of people mad at you."

Buchwald, March 12, 1968 cont.

"I DIG," Belsky said. "But the best record the United States has since World War II is in helping out any country threatened with communism. When we make a commitment to a country to prevent it from going Communist, we honor it, no matter how much money it's going to cost. Now if the Negroes and the white do-gooders would stop talking about all the social ills in the ghettos, and just harp on the theme that all the Black People in this country want is to keep from going Communist, the white people are going to take a second look at this problem."

"It probably would make them sit up."

"You bet your life it would make them sit up. You go to Congress during an election year and talk about 'Red Power' instead of 'Black Power' and even George Wallace is going to be scared."

"Belsky, you may have hit on something. As a white America, I have nothing against black ghettos, but I sure wouldn't want to live in a country with red ghettos."

"It's understandable," Belsky said. "Nobody wants to have a Commie living next door."