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ing of "Boogwazzies" (bourgeoisie). One witness was accused of "not talking English good."

The final conclusion of this Commission was that "there is no evidence of fascist activities" in Massachusetts, although the Italian government has a paid agent who cooperates with the consul in Boston in maintaining two schools, one in Lawrence and the other in Watertown, three Italian newspapers and a radio station present charming versions of Italian news, and there are two divisions of the German-American bund, the League of German War Veterans and the German League, Inc. The Commission failed to consider the fascist potentialities of such homespun organizations as the American Legion, the Watch and Ward Society or the numerous "patriotic" associations undoubtedly far more menacing than are the admirers of Italy or Germany.

With its sights trained on the "Reds," a word that the Commission applies without discrimination to everything from the American Civil Liberties Union to the National Maritime Union, the legislators brought forth their twelve suggestions for laws. Some of these are mild enough; proposals of this type are usually mild in their specific phraseology and become oppressive only in the hands of a fanatical administrator. One says that political nomination papers shall be preserved for one year (presumably to record the sponsors of minority candidates). Another requires that donors to political parties or campaign funds be registered. A third, the most sensible of the lot, forbids private groups to carry arms. "Foreign societies" are required to file the names and addresses of their "officers and agents" at the State House. Persons using names other than their real ones must register at the office of the town clerk. Political parties must file a complete statement of their expenses, and are subject to the same laws as their local committees. State committees of political parties must file a list of names and addresses of their members. Any organization, other than a religious group, must obtain a permit to solicit funds publicly for any purpose. It shall be a criminal libel to "impeach" in writing "the honesty, virtue, reputation, character or patriotism of any race." None of these proposals, obviously, is especially damaging.

The last two proposals, however, if they should pass the legislature, could end any pretense of civil liberty in Massachusetts. One provides that a "division of citizenship" shall be established for the purpose of eliminating the activities of persons seeking the overthrow of the American form of government. The other prohibits advocating the use of force or violence to effect political or economic change. In the hands of ignorant and reactionary state officials—and Massachusetts has plenty of these on its rosters—such laws could stamp out all opposition to the party in power, could outlaw strikes and successfully stifle any minority criticism.

Red Purge, Boston Style

LEGISLATIVE ACTION is following hot on the heels of the report of the special Massachusetts Commission on Communism and Other Subversive Activities and Propaganda which was completed at the end of May. The legislative committee of eleven, which is responsible for the eight-pound, 2,500-page opus on the influence and activity of the "ism" groups in the Commonwealth, has proposed twelve new restrictive acts designed to check these organizations. The program is being pushed through the legislature with unparalleled dispatch. The Catholic Church, dominant political pressure group in the state, is behind the bills and there is a serious possibility that during the summer session, when public vigilance is somewhat relaxed, they may become law.

The caliber of the Commission was revealed in an article by Robert Morss Lovett in *The New Republic* of December 1, 1937. It consisted of three state senators, three representatives and five appointees of the Governor. Much of the Commission's time was spent heckling radical witnesses and 90 percent of its huge report is devoted to the persons and groups it labels—for the most part erroneously—"Communist." There was much question whether the Communist witnesses could tell the truth under oath, since they did not believe in God. They were pressed to say whether they would fight against the Soviet Union if we got into a war with Russia. They were threatened with contempt proceedings because they would not submit lists of names of party members. The inquisitors kept asking whether prominent Boston liberals were Communists. The Commission was guilty not only of social and economic illiteracy, but also of literal illiteracy. Senator Burke accused a witness of wanting to "liquefy the church." Another member wanted to know the mean-