

Malice, Stupidity And Cowardice

As PM's investigation into the persecution of liberals in Washington continues, certain things become clearer:

In case after case it turns out to be the Dies Committee that has poisoned the springs of justice. When the legislative branch of the Government—in the form of the Dies Committee—turns over a list of "suspects" to an administrative agency, it becomes mandatory for the latter to investigate. No matter how ridiculous and/or malicious the charge, it has to be looked into.

Many of the questions asked by investigators are stupid and some of them are illegal. But the first point to be noted is that these questions would not have been asked at all if it had not been for the inspired viciousness of Martin Dies.

Next: the damage resulting from the misdirected investigations of our secret police is done principally, not by the police themselves, but by department heads, subdepartment heads and straw bosses of various agencies acting foolishly and intemperately on the reports that come to them. In not a few, but in hundreds and hundreds of Dies-inspired investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) report has clearly indicated that Dies was, as usual, talking through his hat.

What is not clearly understood is that the FBI does not find for or against the subjects of its investigations. The FBI simply reports what it found out:

"Subject is known to have signed a petition for lifting the embargo against arms to Spain."

"Interview Mr. Jones who worked in the same office with Subject; Jones says he thoroughly dislikes Subject."

"Subject was seen in conversation with a man whose sister wrote an article for the *New Republic*."

It is the department head, to whom the report is submitted, who acts as judge and jury.

In a perfect world, the secret-police agency might be expected to go out of its way to enlighten the officials to whom it submits its reports on the elementary rules of evidence—and point out a few simple facts of life. But however much an FBI report leaves to be desired, it is not the dossiers, but the departmental interpretations of them, which are terrifying. In instance after instance it is the mere fact that a report has been made that has led to the firing of the subject.

Thus the extraordinary cycle is complete:

¶ The Dies Committee makes irresponsible charges.

¶ The FBI investigates and even though it may find the charges entirely unsubstantiated, it makes a report as outlined above.

¶ Thereupon, the department head fires the individual because of the fact that charges had been brought.

Thus the whole process of investigation is made a tragic joke. The function of the FBI reduced to mumbo jumbo—a meaningless ritual gone through with at the taxpayer's expense.

There is no question about the steps that should be taken to end this fantastic, illegal, unjust and dangerous practice:

Step 1—The Dies Committee must be put out of business.

Step 2—The agents of the FBI, the Civil Service Commission and other investigating bodies must double over backward in the fairness of their reports to compensate for the misuse that is being made of them.

Step 3—The administrative department heads who are abusing their office must

get a good, swift kick in the seat of the pants. Best would be to make examples of a few—fire them for their irresponsibility and see how they like it.

The tolerance of men with enemy ideas and the persecution of liberals for their very loyalty to the principles we are fighting for must end—or as certainly as night follows day the war effort will be weakened, and men will die on the battlefields because of malice and cowardice among the straw bosses in this Administration—RALPH INGERSOLL

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