

None Volunteered to Infiltrate, However

Liberals Weighed Subverting

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The House liberals, who have talked for so long about abolishing the House Un-American Activities Committee, toyed for time this year with a different strategy—subverting it from within.

The nine-member Committee has three vacancies to fill this session because of the death, defeat, and retirement of three conservative Democrats from the South. The idea, as hatched by the liberal hinkers, would be to pack HUAC with as many Congressmen as possible who are dedicated to putting it out of business.

The plot foundered, however. None of the liberals, it seems, wanted to serve as the infiltrators. Rep. James O'Hara, president of the Democratic Study Group, called for volunteers from the organization of House liberals on several occasions. "They did not exactly storm the podium," said one DSG member.

'A Lonely Business'

"None of us is very interested in going on," said Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), one of HUAC's most vocal critics. "It would be a lonely business, day after day of fighting with the staff people and the rest of the Committee. It would take an awful toll."

HUAC, nevertheless, will undergo some changes this session that may restore some of its old prominence as a subject of contention between the left and the right. For one thing, it has a new chairman, Rep. Richard H. Ichord of Houston, Mo., a bright, darkly handsome man who has plans to change HUAC's name and perhaps make it a less vulnerable target for civil libertarians.

The Democratic leadership must also find three new members for the Committee this week and, if the seats are not filled with Southern conservatives as usual, that could

alter HUAC's tone.

Finally, the only liberal voice on the Committee and its persistent dissenter over the last two years hopes to get off HUAC and move to another committee assignment. He is Rep. John C. Culver, a third-term Congressman from Marion, Iowa, who wrote one-man minority reports on virtually everything that HUAC did during the 90th Congress. Culver, a 36-year-old lawyer with the beefy proportions of a truck driver, has some ideas of his own about changing HUAC and the way it operates.

Clash Expected

The two viewpoints, Ichord's and Culver's, are expected to clash Tuesday morning when the House Rules Committee takes up Ichord's resolution to recast HUAC as the "House Committee on Internal Security" and to redefine its job of investigating subversive activity. Culver will appear with his own set of reform proposals.

In general terms, the issue is the same one that has always surrounded HUAC. How does a legislative committee of Congress properly examine subversion and write laws to control it without doing violence to the First Amendment, the protection of private thoughts and unorthodox political views?

In the history of HUAC, this constitutional question has always been enveloped by the political context. In the perennial debates, it has been considered a foolhardy gesture for most Congressmen to vote against HUAC's continued existence and risk exposure to the "un-American" label at home.

Thus, some of his liberal colleagues regard Culver, with his east Iowa constituency, as an unheralded profile in courage for taking the HUAC

HUAC

assignment and speaking up for civil liberties. Culver himself takes a less melodramatic view.

Leadership Request'

"I'm asked to go on at the request of the leadership and I did," he said. "For two years, I did my best to discharge my

responsibilities in a way that I thought was appropriate. I have not tried to serve on the committee as an enemy from within."

As it developed, Culver's minority reports and his votes against measures he considered unconstitutional were not politically suicidal. Running in a district the Republicans expected to pick up last fall, he was re-elected by 20,000 votes.

"There was some praise and there was criticism," he said. "I can't really evaluate how much influence the (HUAC) issue had." As a sophomore Congressman, Culver made 150 trips back to his district and, perhaps, that sort of thing has more influence on constituents.

Continuing to serve on HUAC when he disagrees with so much of its activity does presents Culver with problems, however. For one thing, other committees might be more productive for him. If he stayed on as the ranking Democrat, his personal responsibility for what the Committee does — at the time-consuming job of preparing dissents — would increase.

Notes Reservations

More important, he said, "I have basic, fundamental reservations about the nature of the committee and how it works. Having these reservations, I think it's appropriate for me to work for the changes—but not as a member of the Committee."

That effort will begin Tuesday when HUAC's new chairman, Rep. Ichord, asks the Rules Committee to put his name-changing resolution on the House calendar for early action.

Chairman Ichord is not in the tradition of thunder-and-lightning oratory nor does he believe that subversive agitators are about to foment successful revolution. But, in the eyes of HUAC's critics, he is regarded as a potentially more formidable opponent than his predecessors. "He's bright and he's tough," said one liberal, "and he isn't going to make some of the horrible mistakes which made the Committee look so ridiculous in the past."

Ichord has staked out the New Left and especially the Students for a Democratic Society as the Committee's first target. He regards SDS as the center of revolutionary agitation and as a school for sabotage. He is prepared for some controversial encounters.

View of Threat

The threat to the Nation, Ichord believes, is different from the standard notion of a master Communist plot directed from the Kremlin.

"I don't think there's any group of revolutionaries in the country sufficiently strong to take over the government or anything like that," he said. "The problem is that they will agitate the people so much that the people in their desire for peace and tranquillity will accept a harsh body of laws or

a man on a white horse. Society demands order. Many of these fellows in the SDA are mere anarchists—they have an orgasm anytime a near-riot develops."

Ichord wants to take the "un-American" out of NUAC's name because he agrees that it ambiguous. "It allows the enemies of the Committee to misrepresent the purpose of the Committee, to say that it investigates unpopular political thought," Ichord explained. "This has not been true."

Restating Mandate

His resolution would also restate the Committee's mandate to investigate subversive activities but Ichord said, "We certainly are not going to diminish the powers of the Committee. If anything, it will broaden the powers."

When he first advanced the proposal last session, Ichord found himself under attack from both the left and right. "The far left doesn't want any investigations into subversion or any improvements in the Committee," he said. "The Johns Birch Society has been against change for sentimental reasons."

That configuration of opponents pleases Ichord because, in his view, it puts him in the moderate middle where most of the people are. A lawyer, he represents a south-central Missouri district that is regarded as rural but also takes in some St. Louis suburbs, the capital of Jefferson City and

the university town of Columbia. He speaks in a flat border-state twang that is almost a drawl.

Last fall, Ichord won reelection to a fifth term in a relatively close race, a fact that might make him a more active chairman of HUAC. "I get letters from constituents asking me to abolish HUAC—these form letters," he said with amusement. "I also get letters opposing my resolution."

Colleges in District

His district includes seven colleges and universities, which might also influence his outlook.

At the University of Missouri where he taught accounting while studying for his law degree, there is a small group of "would-be revolutionaries," Ichord said.

"It's been pretty well nipped in the bud," he added, "because the university administration hasn't been a namby-pamby outfit like some of these others. The college problems go back to the Vietnam war and the namby-pamby attitude of administrators. You've got to be careful and you've got to act fast."

Blaiberg May Tour

LYON, France, Jan. 18 (UPI) — Dr. Christiaan Barnard, who performed the first successful heart transplant, said Friday night he may take Dr. Philip Blaiberg, the world's longest-living transplant patient, with him on a tour of Europe next spring.