

## House probe committee its own worst enemy?

The Committee on Internal Security of the House of Representatives (it used to be called the House Committee on Un-American Activities) issued a report a month or so back called "A Limited Survey of Honoraria Given Guest Speakers for Engagements at Colleges and Universities." The report is, essentially, a roster of 120 names of men and women who spoke at selected colleges during the preceding academic year, and are, in the words of the chairman, "known radical revolutionaries." How do we define a "known radical revolutionary?" The committee defines you as such if you are "affiliated" with any one of 12 organizations listed by said committee as subversive.

What happened then was that the American Civil Liberties Union went to a district court judge insisting that the committee had no right to publish such a list. To everyone's surprise, the judge issued a restraining order on the committee, enjoining it (and the Government Printing Office) from publishing the report, on the grounds that the committee was not pursuing a valid legislative mandate.

The Justice Department has appealed the judge's ruling, and it is generally supposed that the higher courts will overrule him. Meanwhile, the identity of the speakers is well known, The New York Times having printed the list in full. A few observations:

1. The committee is clearly within its rights. Its "duties" under the law require it to "make investigations" of the "character" and "activities" within the United States of such "organizations" and "their members, agents, and affiliates, (as) seek to establish or assist in the establishment of, a totalitarian dictatorship within the United States, or to overthrow or alter . . . the form of government of the United States . . . by force, violence, treachery, espionage, sabotage, insurrection, or any unlawful means."

Among the organizations whose "affiliates" the committee focused on in the current inquiry are the Communist party and the Black Panthers. It would greatly surprise, and greatly offend, members of these organizations to suggest that they are otherwise bent than on altering the form of government of the United States by any means whatsoever.

2. On the other hand, the committee did a truly lousy job. For one thing, it was inaccurate. For instance, the ululator Nat Hentoff is listed, and his affiliations are given with three organizations, with which in fact he is not affiliated, or so he claims, and there is no reason to disbelieve him. For another, the mix has so many ingredients it loses any genuine flavor. One of the revolutionaries listed is Cassius Clay. Cassius Clay is a black separatist, who preaches to college audiences the disutility of violence, outside the ring.

John C. Bennett of the Union Theological Seminary, comes in as a revolutionary because he belonged to the committee that urged the abolition of HUAC. No doubt that committee was infiltrated, or who knows even conceived, by Communists. But Dr. Bennett is not a Communist; and remember, this is not supposed to be a list of dupes who travel with the Communists, on which list Dr. Bennett would belong. It is supposed to be a list of the revolutionaries themselves.

3. The committee has every right to seek to inform the Congress and the people, but if it chooses such lazy means of doing so as merely to publish the names of individuals who have appeared as speakers at given campuses, it damages its own credibility. How much more useful if it had painstakingly put together newspaper accounts of what it is that some of the radicals are saying to the students. In order to propose legislation to shut them up? No; although the committee should certainly inform the Congress whether existing legislation, state and federal, is doing what ought to be done. Rap Brown, for instance, was about to be tried (he either skipped town, or was killed) for giving a speech in Cambridge, Md., which, it is charged, drove his listeners to arsonist frenzies. That was a state law. Is there a federal counterpart? Is the 1968 law, under which the Chicago 7 were prosecuted, working? Does it need modification? What in fact do the revolutionists (who are well represented on the committee's list) say to the students? Chapter and verse. These are not prurient questions: indeed, any revolutionist worth his salt would presumably be grateful to the committee for helping to spread the word. One sometimes wonders whether those who fought so actively to destroy the House Committee on Un-American Activities didn't succeed after all.