

# Downwind of the Schwartz Affair

By Marquis Childs

BECAUSE Washington loves political whodunnits the real meaning of the Schwartz affair may be obscured by the thousands of words reporting plot and counterplot. In the perspective of American policy on travel to outlawed nations and on the admission of aliens with unwanted ideologies even the haphazard methods of removing Abba Schwartz as Director of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs is important only as a sign of which way the wind is blowing.

Schwartz was put in his post by President John F. Kennedy with the goal of restoring some of the traditional freedoms to America's passport and visa policy. Out of the McCarthy era and thanks in large part to the McCarran Act the United States had come to look like a frightened elephant. Applicants for visas to visit the United States were put through an examination calculated to make them appear suspects admitted to the land of the free on grudging sufferance.

With his volatile energy and enthusiasm Schwartz set out to change this. In hundreds, if not thousands, of cases where foreign visitors—scientists, artists, political figures—would have been kept out by the McCarran Act Schwartz called on the Attorney General to waive the provisions of the law.

The absurdity of barring anyone who has ever belonged to a Communist or Fascist party is well illustrated in the instance of Graham Greene, one of Britain's most distinguished novelists with a worldwide reputation. For a brief time in his student days Greene was a member of the Communist Party. It took an Attorney General's waiver to get him a visa good for two weeks to visit New York during rehearsals of a play made from one of his novels.

ON IMMIGRATION, too, Schwartz was one of the prime movers in liberalizing the law that for so long had been based on bigotry. There was a wide agreement in both the Kennedy and the Johnson Administrations on pushing the act adopted last year. While it leaves a lot to be desired the new law is a vast improvement.

But in most of his efforts Schwartz was bucking bureaucrats in the State Department linked with forces in Congress bent on keeping the old rigid controls. This is one of those curious un-

official combines that deserves to be thoroughly investigated in the upcoming inquiry into the Schwartz affair.

Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration William J. Crockett is credited with engineering the plan to abolish the Bureau of Consular Affairs in great secrecy months before it was surfaced, with Schwartz discovering at the last moment he had been reorganized out of office. One of the principal powers is Mrs. Frances Knight, head of the Passport Office, who reigns with seemingly unassailable authority as Secretaries of State come and go.

On Capitol Hill the power of the combine resides in the Internal Security subcommittee of the Senate and the Joint Committee on Immigration and Nationality Policy. Rep. Michael A. Feighan (D-Ohio), a staunch exclusionist in the passport and visa field, is chairman of the joint committee. Julian Sourwine, chief of staff for Internal Security, exercises broad authority with the backing of Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), who is also ranking Senate member on the joint committee.

THE IMPORTANT question for the future is whether this combine is now to determine policy in a field vital to America's standing in the free world. The atmosphere as the emotionalism over the war in Southeast Asia builds up may encourage a return to the old rigidities, thereby reversing all that Schwartz tried to do.

State Department administrators dealing with the moguls of Congress, who hold a penurious and sometimes vengeful hand on the purse strings, are often pushed to the wall. Chief among the moguls is Rep. John J. Rooney of New York. On the Appropriations Committee Rooney pares allowances for foreign service officers and rides herd on American embassies. The pressures to compromise with these agents of power is great. But when compromise involves fundamental policy, then the Executive branch has surrendered.

Shortly after the pulling and hauling over Schwartz's removal it was announced that American scholars desiring to go to Red China for study would have their passports properly validated. This is a token with little meaning, since China is unlikely to grant the necessary visas. There will be a very close watch on the direction policy now takes.

© 1966, United Feature Syndicate