

A List Is a List

Law and order are being badly served by Representative Richard H. Ichord, who, as chairman of the House Internal Security Committee, has announced his intention to publish a new version of his "radical and/or revolutionary" blacklist of campus speakers. Along with that list he plans to offer a resolution to prohibit the courts from interfering with its public distribution. A Federal Court injunction against such distribution, at public expense, is currently in effect, but has been appealed by the Justice Department. Representative Ichord apparently prefers not to wait for a judicial decision.

Entirely apart from the legal issue, the un-American nature of the use of blacklists remains the overriding objection to the committee's action. The very label of "radical and/or revolutionary" as a means of characterizing conveyors of ideas illustrates the danger of this form of vigilantism. The fact that the revised list is intended to be more palatable is proof of the committee's inability to comprehend the principles at stake.

There is no way of improving a blacklist by deleting a few victims — any more than the committee would be rendered acceptable by the removal of a few of its members. Nothing was gained by changing the committee's original designation as the guardian of "un-American activities"; nothing is gained by providing a "better" list. The answer is simply — no list and no committee.