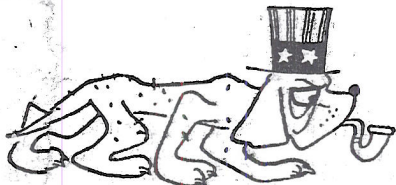


4 NATIONAL GUARDIAN

THE SNOOPER OPERATION IS EXTENDED**P.O. censors meddling with domestic mail, too**

THE U.S. JUSTICE Department admitted April 11 that the Post Office's foreign mail censorship program had been extended to domestic mail. A department spokesman asserted that the 1963 censorship act, directed against "Communist political propaganda," permits the interception, examination and destruction of such material even if it is legally imported into the U.S. and subsequently mailed between domestic points. The admission came as a result of an ACLU suit filed on behalf of Fritz Pappenheim, author of *The Alienation of Modern Man*, who on Dec. 28, 1963, purchased the following materials from a New York bookshop: Engels's *Dialectics of Nature*, published in the U.S.; two philosophy books published in England; several issues of a philosophical review published in East Germany, and some issues of Anna Louise Strong's "Letter



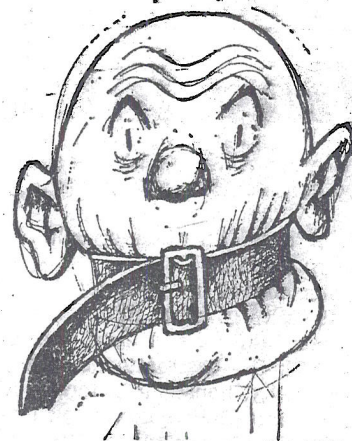
From China," published in Peking. Pappenheim asked that the material be mailed to him at his home in Cambridge, Mass. On Jan. 9, he received the Post Office form asking whether he wants "Communist political propaganda . . . addressed to you from a foreign country." He replied Jan. 15 and 27, asking what foreign country was involved, but refused to sign the form. On March 6, he received

the package, which had been opened and stamped "in poor condition."

OTHER INTERFERENCE: In addition, there are also other forms of censorship and interception of the U.S. mails. The Post Office denies that its inspectors actually open and read first-class letters, but it offers no such guarantees about other classes of mail. Former FBI special agent Jack Levine revealed (*GUARDIAN*, Oct. 29, 1962) that the Post Office turns over mail requested by the FBI and that letters are opened and read by that agency when the "case is important enough and the information reliable enough." This form of snooping is illegal, of course—outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1877.

The "mail cover" operation, ironically brought to public attention by Roy Cohn, involves the recording of all exterior data (return addresses, postmarks, etc.) from all classes of mail. This practice, extended to as many as 750 persons last year, has been going on since 1893, although congressional authority for it was never granted and the Supreme Court has yet to make a final ruling on its constitutionality.

Interception and censorship of what the Secretary of the Treasury (through his Customs Bureau) deems to be "Communist political propaganda" has been in existence since 1948. In that year, President Truman authorized the Customs Bureau to intercept all non-first-class mail from socialist nations, and because the Post Office refused to deliver it,



to require each addressee to claim what it considered to be the "most outspoken propaganda."

In 1961 President Kennedy hated the practice, only to have Congress reimpose it in slightly modified form, in January, 1963. Since then non-first-class mail from 26 countries, including socialist and non-socialist, has been intercepted and private addressees are required to sign statements publicly declaring their desire to receive "Communist political propaganda"; otherwise it is destroyed.

The 1963 act is being tested by the ECLC in New York, and the ACLU in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York.

SENATE BILL: Following the fuss over Cohn's mail cover, Sen. Edward Long (D-Mo.) on March 11 introduced S. 2627, which would impose \$100 fines and up to a year's imprisonment on any Post Office employe involved in a mail cover. Long called the practice a "violation of individual privacy" and reported that Postmaster General John A. Gronouski had turned down his request to halt the operation. The bill was referred to the Senate Post Office and Civil Service committee.