

Politico-Military Poison

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For 23 years, a senior Army intelligence officer used his official status and private resources to compile a massive file of what he considered subversive persons and organizations. The lists drawn up by Maj. Gen. Ralph H. Van Deman scrambled together all those whose motives he mistrusted and misunderstood—liberal politicians, scientists, entertainers, writers and artists, along with some who genuinely opposed the American system of government. The resulting stew was rancid with anti-labor, anti-Semitic and anti-civil-rights bias.

General Van Deman died in 1952, but his lists unfortunately were not interred with him. In fact, it has just been disclosed that this expression of political paranoia, assembled with the inexcusable complicity of official military and civilian intelligence agencies, has recently been turned over to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. In view of the committee's own chronic inability to distinguish between subversion and dissent, this is a singularly insecure resting place for the Van Deman files. In fact, those dossiers ought not to be deposited anywhere. They should be destroyed in much the same way as were the Army's biological warfare stocks. They are just as poisonous.