

File on Communist.

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Theoretically I suppose it would be possible to conduct a Congressional hearing on Communism in the public interest. Practically, however, every such hearing always and inevitably degenerates into an un-American inquisition. Starting from the narrow base of investigating Communists, such hearings inevitably spread to investigating every idea which the Committee does not like. Starting with the idea of tracking down and exposing subversive ideas such hearings inevitably end by creating a sense of insecurity throughout the land and making American citizens fear for the stability of their political institutions. Starting with the idea of protecting government from subversive employees such hearings inevitably result in destroying freedom of speech and association of all government employees.

Today a situation has been created where the independence, thought, action and association of every government employee is now in danger.

This has been the course of the Thomas Committee. It has likewise been the course of every such hearing of that kind throughout history. The Puritans thought that the Quakers with their peculiar ideas were undermining the power of New England theocracy and so they tried to drive out Quaker heresy. Philip of Spain engaged in a cold war with Elizabeth of England and thought that the answer was



to drive heresy out of Spain because Elizabeth was a heretic. And so whenever Elizabeth sank ships Philip intensified the investigation of heresy in Spain. He succeeded in destroying only initiative and independence throughout his government.

Today Senator Mundt is telling you that the same sort of a purge conducted, of course, on more civilized lines is necessary to protect our own government. He has succeeded in spreading fear, insecurity and hysteria to such an extent that it is dangerous to contradict him.

I assert that any government employee who made the speech that I am making tonight would do so not only at the risk of his job but of his future career. We are discharging men and women today with the public brand of disloyalty which ruins their careers on records which do not contain a line of derogatory evidence. The evidence against the accused on which conviction is made is kept secret. If you can convict a man on secret evidence it means you can convict him on no evidence. To adopt such a procedure is to spread terror throughout the Government in an un-American way.

Let's not blame Senator Mundt and his colleagues. They are doing the best they can considering the pressures and hysteria that surround their enterprise. How can you run such hearings without publicity if you are going to get appropriations? How can you avoid the necessity with constantly providing the public with thrills if the Committee is to have the power it wants. The trouble is not



with the Committee but in the idea that freedom of speech and association is dangerous if it happens to be something you don't like. We are engaged in a cold war with Russia.

Russia is ~~trying to undermine our institutions and ideals.~~

~~It~~ is trying to make us believe that <sup>our political institutions</sup> ~~they~~ can be pushed over

like a house of cards by the machinations of an insignificant minority. Nothing promotes the Russian purpose more than the reverberations in Government and industry which a hearing on un-American activities inevitably creates.

They say they are getting a few disloyal individuals. That may be true. It is equally true that if you turned a machine gun loose on Times Square you would get a few pickpockets.