

BACKGROUND ON HUAC

Summary History of HUAC

- 1938 - Formed as a temporary committee of Congress.
- 1945 - Became permanent committee
- 1965 - HUAC seeks to continue for its 27th year

Chairmen:

- 1938-45: Rep. Martin Dies, Texas
- 1945 : Rep. John Rankin, Miss.
Temporary Chairman (The Ku Klux Klan is a "100% American Institution" --Rankin)
- 1945-46: Rep. John Wood, Georgia
(elected by less than 6% of the eligible voters in his district)
- 1947-49: Rep. J. Parnell Thomas, New Jersey (convicted of conspiracy to defraud the government)
- 1949-53: Rep. John Wood, Georgia
- 1953-55: Rep. Harold Velde, Ill.
("The basis of communism and socialist influence is education of the people."--Velde)
- 1955-63: Rep. Francis Walter, Penn
(author of the Walter-McCarran Immigration Act which discriminates against persons of Eastern European, African, and Asian countries; member of committee distributing research grants for Wycliffe Draper which were designed to prove the genetic inferiority of Negroes)
- 1963- : Rep. Edwin Willis, Louisiana (a floor leader in the fight against the 1964 civil rights bill; signatory of Southern Manifesto defying Supreme Court school desegregation decision)



"I CAME IN LATE. WHICH WAS IT
THAT WAS UN-AMERICAN--
WOMEN OR PEACE?"

In its early days, HUAC was clearly seen as a weapon against the reforms introduced by the New Deal. Martin Dies was an opponent of the New Deal and used HUAC against it; President Franklin D. Roosevelt called the Committee "sordid, flagrantly unfair, and un-American."

On the opening day of Congress in 1945, it was generally thought that the temporary HUAC would die. But Rep. John Rankin of Mississippi moved to make it a permanent House committee; his primary argument was that all the HUAC files would be destroyed if the Committee was not continued. On a voice vote, Rankin's motion lost; but he demanded a roll call vote and won: Yeas-208; Noes-186; Not Voting-40.

HUAC has held innumerable hearings over the years, attacking a wide range of people and organizations. Some of the highlights of these hearings are:

- 1938-9: CIO Unions
- 1945: Broadcasting Industry
- 1947: Southern Conference on Human Welfare
- 1948: Hollywood Movie Industry
- 1953: Bishop Oxnham Case
- 1956: Foreign-Born
- 1958: Air Force Manual row with National Council of Churches
- 1959: California Teachers
- 1960: San Francisco student demonstration against HUAC, which led to the film Operation Abolition
- 1962: Women's Strike for Peace
- 1963-4: Students travelling to Cuba
- 1964: Hearings in Buffalo, N.Y. (May), Minneapolis (June), and Washington (Sept.)
- December, 1964: Women's Peace Organizations

ABOLISH THE

HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE (HUAC)

Basic Arguments Against HUAC

The First Amendment: HUAC's mandate empowers it to investigate only in the areas of speech ("Un-American propaganda"), press ("Un-American publications"), and political activity and association; it is not empowered to investigate in the areas of overt actions--espionage, sabotage, treason, etc. The latter areas are within the jurisdiction of the House Judiciary Committee.

The First Amendment says, "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." The legislative power to conduct investigations is based on the need to get information for legislative purposes; if Congress cannot legislate in the areas which HUAC's mandate covers, then it has no business investigating in those areas. If HUAC does produce legislation within the area of its mandate, the legislation is unconstitutional. Its investigations, by forcing persons to testify as to their beliefs and political activities, abridge the First Amendment freedoms.

Lack of Procedural Fair Play: With no valid legislative objective, HUAC has become an instrument of exposure--trying people in public without the protections of a court of law. People who have not violated any law are punished by the blacklist and ruined reputations. They do not have the right to cross-examine accusers. Accusations are protected from libel proceedings by legislative immunity.

The Partisan Nature of HUAC: HUAC is an institutionalization of racist and far right power which utilizes the powers of government to sell and enforce its conceptions. It has had major responsibility for exaggerating alleged "communist influence" and overfocusing public attention on "communism" to the exclusion of meeting pressing problems--civil rights, peace, unemployment, academic freedom, etc. Its political bias can be seen in its attacks only on movements of social reform and its avoidance of organizations of the right, such as the Ku Klux Klan, the John Birch Society, the Minutemen, etc. Our position is not that HUAC should investigate the beliefs, ideas, or political activity of these organizations, but that HUAC should be abolished.

ABOLISH HUAC NOW!

A vote on HUAC's mandate can come only every 2 years at the opening of a new Congress; for the newly elected Congress, this will be January 4, 1961. In 1961, 6 Congressmen (including Kastenmeier) voted against HUAC's appropriation. In 1963, a motion for abolition was not recognized; anti-HUAC sentiment had to be expressed later on the vote on HUAC's appropriation, against which 20 Congressmen voted.

In the recent elections, each of the 20 anti-HUAC Congressmen won overwhelming victories. A number of additional Congressmen considered opponents of HUAC were also elected. On the other hand, many supporters were defeated. Included were 3 members of HUAC!

Questions put to witnesses subpoenaed to appear before HUAC

"Are you a member of the army of the Kremlin operating behind a facade of humanitarianism?"

"Why don't you get yourself and keep yourself in shape as a young American citizen, where you don't have to plead your constitutional privilege?"

"Are you now or have you ever been a member of a Godless conspiracy based on perversion and deceit?"

"Have you betrayed the flag you were sworn to uphold?"



"ASK THE UN-AMERICAN
ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE TO
INVESTIGATE WHAT THIS STRANG-
FLAG IS DOING DOWN HERE."

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COMMITTEE TO ABOLISH THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE (HUAC)