

Students for a Democratic Society had as much chance of escaping the attentions of the House Un-American Activities Committee as Frankenstein's monster had of getting through Hollywood without meeting Wolfman.

S.D.S., of course, is the monster allegedly fathered by a permissive-liberal Dr. Frankenstein. June's opening installment of a serial which seems certain to continue into the far future did nothing to stir the slumbrous air of the capital. That, it was a flat beginning for so epic a Confrontation is a tribute to the new committee's new way of going about its work.

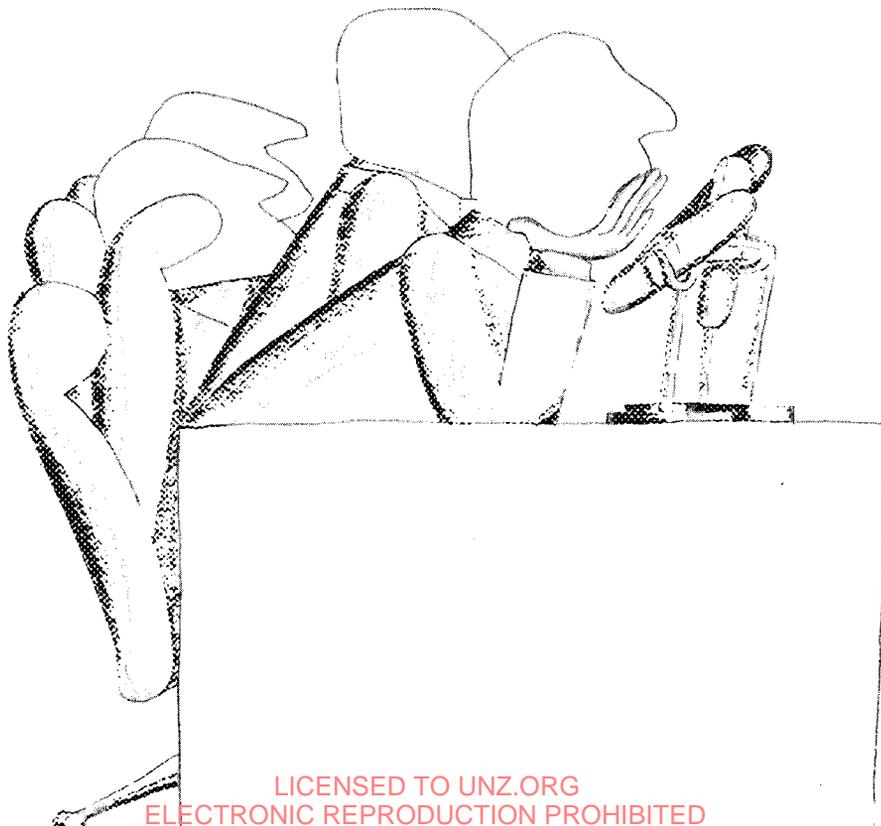
How new is the committee—which will henceforward have to be insulted as HISC instead of as HUAC? Well, the new chairman, Richard Ichord

(D-Mo.), has been a member since 1963; he owes his present eminence to the deaths and political calamities of his senior colleagues. Ichord experienced his baptism of fire last October when he presided over unmanageable hearings involving several of the more colorful personalities of the Chicago convention demonstrations, such as Yippies Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman and S.D.S. emeritus Tom Hayden.

On the Republican side, lingering members John M. Ashbrook of Ohio, Richard L. Roudebush of Indiana, and Albert W. Watson of South Carolina, who was a Democrat prior to LBJ's Great Betrayal of the Confederacy, have been joined by William J. Scherle of Iowa, thus maintaining an ideological balance somewhere to the right of Ronald Reagan. All the Democrats, with

The Committee Revisited

by Walter Goodman



the exception of the chairman, have been freshly recruited. Beginning at the low-seniority end, we have Louis Stokes of Ohio, brother of Cleveland's Mayor Carl and the first Negro to be admitted to committee membership; L. Richardson Preyer of North Carolina; Edwin W. Edwards of Louisiana; and, from Florida, Claude Pepper. *Claude Pepper?!** Now, as ever, the committee is in the hands of Southerners and Midwesterners; the Northeast and Northwest go unrepresented, and the

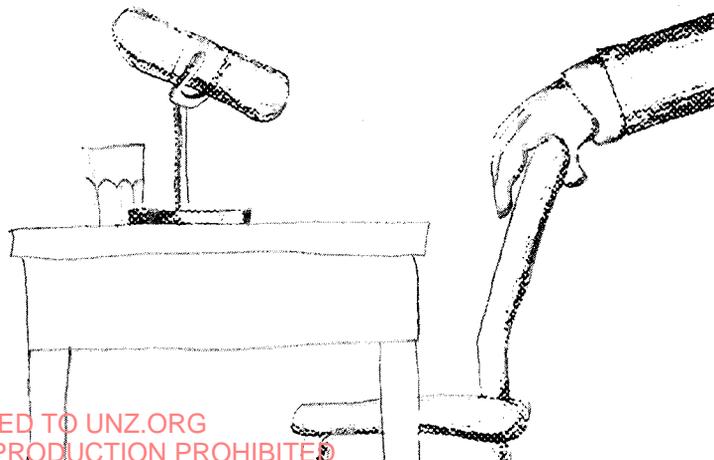
big cities receive scant acknowledgement.

The June hearings in Washington served as a coming-out party for the Internal Security Committee, and all members, with the exception of Pepper, stopped by for at least a hello. Ashbrook, brightest of the resident Republicans, put in the briefest appearance and went off, thereby undermining the I.Q. level on his side of the table.

To begin its refurbished life, the committee directed its attention at what the Congressmen took to calling "a fracas" that occurred at Georgetown University last March. In an effort to stir up support at that conservative campus, and perhaps to retain their franchise within the revolutionary movement, Georgetown's small S.D.S. cadre managed to break up a meeting at which

*Since his readmission to Congress in 1962, this dimly remembered marcher in Henry Wallace's Army of Gideon has not taken the opportunity to vote for abolition of the Un-American Activities Committee.

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Mayor Joseph Alioto of San Francisco was to speak—about “Law and the Campus.” Doorways were blocked as demonstrators attempted to lay hands on the mayor. One young activist knocked over the speaker’s stand, and another, on being given the microphone, notified the assemblage, which included several Congressmen and their wives, a federal judge and other notables, that Alioto was a motherfucker. There were fist fights between student ushers and the S.D.S. troopers, reinforced by allies from George Washington and American Universities. The mayor, the Congressmen, and the judge beat a retreat through a rear door.

Despite the apparent victory, S.D.S. in fact suffered a considerable loss of sympathy around Georgetown that night. Its previous activities on campus—disrupting ROTC ceremonies, showing a film celebrating the Black Panthers, sponsoring a talk by Tom Hayden, and denouncing the “military-industrial-university complex” on all possible occasions—had won it an attentive hearing, if no great surge of support. But the March attack on fellow students in an unabashed effort to shut down an open meeting was something too much. By refraining from calling in the Metropolitan police, the Georgetown administrators had deprived the S.D.S. of their cherished hour of confrontation, as well as the student solidarity that cops usually manage to bring out. Yet the majority opinion at the committee table seemed to be that the authorities had not shown sufficient muscle, since only one of the perpetrators of the assault had been punished (and that merely by suspension, instead of, say, hanging).

For roughly a quarter of a century, it has been the custom in this committee for the new chairman to knock his predecessors, at least by implication, and to pledge to do things better

hereafter. And so Chairman Ichord opened the June hearings by recalling that in the past the committee had habitually summoned witnesses who declined to cooperate. From now on, he promised, the committee would leave hostile witnesses to heaven and make do with cooperative and informative persons. To carry forward this program, Ichord had hired as his staff director and chief counsel an insufferably clean-cut fellow named Donald Sanders, lately with the FBI. (Francis McNamara, the former V.F.W. functionary who had run the committee for the past five years, took his demotion to “director of research” hard, and resigned. The present staff harbors at least three young men whose sideburns descend below the ear line; I do not know what this signifies.)

In an effort to bring order to proceedings which have not always been marked by that quality, Sanders played the part of an assistant district attorney, as if he were seeking to pin down responsibility for the Affair Alioto in preparation for trial. It seemed an odd endeavor for a committee of the legislative branch—and a tedious one. It may seem captious after years of decrying the committee’s extravagant indignities and indecencies to cavil at innocent boredom, but Sanders, who reads revolutionary slogans as though they were the week’s receipts from the grain-and-feed store, put a heavy strain on one’s attention. The only joy on the first afternoon came when a Florida policeman reported that an S.D.S. maiden had told him, “I’d like to kick your balls up your ass.” (The New Left has had a liberating effect on the language permitted in Congressional hearings.)

Most of Sanders’s witnesses were administrators and anti-S.D.S. students—including the editor of Georgetown’s campus newspaper and the leader of its ROTC unit. Like a monomaniacal drill sergeant, the chief coun-

sel led them over and over events which had long since been detailed in the press, or had gone unreported because they were of such slight consequence: "Did you observe Mayor Alioto enter the hall?" "Did you observe at orientation week a table at which was displayed material of S.D.S.?" "Did you observe any posters or signs at this sit-in?" Sanders took a collector's pleasure in the dozens of documents and photographs he inserted into the record as "exhibits." Regarding a flyer distributed throughout the campus, he asked a witness: "How did you come into possession of this document?" And then he asked the witness to describe the document. And then he read excerpts from the document. There was no question that the man was methodical, but it was difficult to discern the matter in his method.

The calling up of unfriendly witnesses for display purposes has long been a major source of complaint against the committee. For many years its members and staff have been charged, and rightly so, with engaging in exposure for exposure's sake. Now, by concentrating on witnesses who are not themselves under attack, the committee has managed to arouse (at least in this observer) another sort of disquiet. The subpoenaed administrators and students were brought to the hearing room for the main purpose of peaching on the opinions and actions of other students at Georgetown. Their testimony would doubtless be indispensable in a court where the S.D.S. rowdies were being tried for disturbing the peace. But to put such questions under the quite different auspices of the committee was to invite a kind of betrayal. Administrators' efforts to resist subpoenas issued by the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations for the academic records of S.D.S. students at other universities have so far proved unavailing; but it remained for the

House Internal Security Committee to have administrators (priests, to boot) bring the records into a public hearing and then read from them. "I consider it a privilege to be here," said Georgetown's Director of International Student Affairs.

It is remarkable that the two Georgetown administrators and the several students summoned behaved with as much dignity as they did. For the most part, they declined invitations to join committee members in demanding the blood of S.D.S. disrupters. But the need for putting these men in so unbecoming a position remains doubtful, and the practice can only prove invidious.

The committee also called up a *New York Times* reporter, Anthony Ripley, who covered an S.D.S. convention in Lansing, Michigan, in June, 1968. Ripley, with the approval of his employer, had refused to testify voluntarily, but appeared, accompanied by a *Times* lawyer, in response to a subpoena. He was called up, explained Ichord, so that he might swear to the fact that he had heard an S.D.S. officer say, "I consider myself a revolutionary communist"—a quote that staff investigators had cleverly discovered in Ripley's account of the proceedings in the *Times*. Ripley said at the outset that his being summoned for such a purpose would make the job of covering radical activities rather more difficult than it already is, but neither he nor his attorney suggested that a matter of principle might be lurking in the vicinity.

Ripley's testimony consisted largely of readings from his stories in the *Times*; he gave away no confidences. Yet in compelling this reporter to testify as to what he had seen and heard at the convention, the committee was turning him into an undercover informant *ex post facto*. He had been ac-

credited to the Lansing convention as a reporter, and for him to become a witness, even a reluctant and not especially informative witness, was not in the contract. Perhaps the *Times* and Ripley were taken unawares and the issue of whether such a committee may call the press into its service in this manner will be argued out when Counsel Sanders tries it again. Let us hope so.

The June hearings produced no revelations about S.D.S.—but they did throw some light on what may be expected from the committee's present membership. Roudebush, Preyer, and the gorgeous Edwards, freshly outfitted each day in shimmering silver or riverboat blue, produced from their wells of banality expressions of allegiance to the nation's values and accomplishments. (Edwards must be credited with the funniest line of the show. He said: "I don't want to get into a philosophical argument.") Watson and Scherle, a husky pair, sat shoulder to shoulder, two linebackers ready to smother any breath of sensibility that might escape a witness. "Believe me," said Scherle, an advocate of backbone, "if I had been there [the Alioto meeting] at my age, there would've been a real confrontation." Watson made leaden jokes about how boy and girl students look alike nowadays. He also told one of the administrators, who was earnestly and ingenuously trying to explain the difficulties encountered by universities in responding to disruptive tactics, that there was only one language "these wild radicals" understand—"and that's firmness!" Watson is the sort of politician whom it is impossible to quote without seeming to do him an injustice. These are not men destined to lead a repression, but they will do to start a scene or two.

Casting about for ways to register his apartness from his colleagues, Stokes indulged in a variety of harmless

gestures: he objected to the submission of an S.D.S. flyer because it was not identified to his satisfaction; he pointed out that demand Number 10 of a Black Panther manifesto was not revolutionary. This frivolity subjected him to rebuttal from Watson; their dispute was moderated by the boyish-looking Ichord, whose jutting lower lip and sober mien were not quite enough to transform him into a heavyweight. The Georgetown students present had surely enjoyed higher-class debating in their locker rooms.

At length Stokes settled on an argument which was used against the original committee of Martin Dies by the original committee liberal, Jerry Voorhis, 30 years ago. He maintained that the issues being exploited by S.D.S.—Vietnam, racism, poverty—warranted action; instead of figuring out how to squash dissent, Congress ought to be doing something about the real problems. In this untaxing way, Stokes, a first-termer, will probably win his spurs in the liberal community. If experience can be trusted, he will in time ride away from the committee toward less arid territory.

It is not likely that any addition to the committee's negligible legislative record will come out of these hearings: the serious bills on campus disorders are being developed elsewhere. Nor ought we to expect any news about the revolutionary inclinations of S.D.S. that S.D.S. itself has not been only too eager to give us. The committee is simply doing its thing. Its scenarios have ordinarily been composed with an eye to their effect outside the Capitol, and the latest performances are intended as a contribution to the rising pressures on college administrators and state legislators to clamp down. The form of the new old House Committee on Internal Security has changed somewhat; the function remains pretty much what it has always been. ■

BOOKS:

Pounding the Pavement

A review by James D. Dilts

Road to Ruin

by A. Q. Mowbray

J. B. Lippincott, 240 pages. \$5.95.

One evening not long ago, during a discussion of why cities seem so intent on dismembering themselves with multi-lane highways, an architect friend of mine put forth this explanation: "Every man assumes that he has a God-given right to drive his car downtown." He was correct. My friend might have added that this same man—who is really you and me and him—also assumes a God-given right to load up the family at vacation time and follow the white line right up into his favorite park.

The trouble is that 99,000,000 (the AAA's figure) American motorists—given constant encouragement by the automobile, oil, and asphalt interests which profit from such travel—are asserting their automotive rights. And in the very act of making a downtown or a wilderness area "accessible" by building a superhighway through it, we are systematically destroying what lies at

the end of the journey. That, in essence, is the subject of this book. Its author, A. Q. Mowbray, an editor for a technical society in Philadelphia, has also produced the first detailed attack on the U.S. highway program.

"There are those who say the American Dream is a split-level in the suburbs with a half-acre, a guaranteed annual income, and membership in the Best Club..." writes Mowbray. "Not so," he asserts. "The American Dream is to drive from coast to coast without encountering a traffic light." Presumably that is why, although there is already one mile of road and street for every square mile of land in the country, we are building a 41,000-mile interstate highway system which will have cost some \$56.5 billion by the time it is scheduled for completion in 1975. Even if it is finished by then, one gathers that it is only the beginning. The American

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