

ings which, to our generation, seem incredibly frivolous as we look back on them. But the money "wasted" went to support architects, dressmakers, cooks, and art dealers. So was it really "wasted," after all?

A Railroad that Couldn't Support a Dynasty

The New York Central passed out of Vanderbilt hands when Robert R. Young, backed by Richardson and Murchison money from Texas, took control of the railroad. Was this a good or a bad thing? Inasmuch as Harold Vanderbilt, as a director of the railroad, had helped to pick a good railroad president, William White, to run the Central, there was little justice to Mr. Young's contention that the Vanderbilts had lost their railroading touch. But when Mr. Young's own particular choice for the railroad presidency, Alfred E. Perlman of Denver and Rio Grande fame, took over Mr. White's job after the big Young proxy victory, one good man replaced another. So the stockholders came out just about even on the change. As for Harold Vanderbilt, he lost his base in the company that had been created by the old Commodore. But railroading as a whole had fallen on evil days, and the Central was no longer in a position to support a dynasty

in any case. Perhaps it would have been better, on balance, if Harold Vanderbilt had taken his money out of the Central years before.

The moral of books about monied families, then, is that there is no single moral. Monied dynasties are interesting. But if what a monied man creates passes into the hands of others, it can be interesting, too. In either case, money is as money does: the name that is attached to it is quite, quite immaterial. Whether a Dodge is made by a Dodge or by a Chrysler, the thing that counts is what is under the hood. ♦

► **THE COMMITTEE AND ITS CRITICS** by William F. Buckley, Jr. (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1962, 352 pp. \$4.95)

Reviewed by William Henry Chamberlin

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE on Un-American Activities (HUAC for short) has been the target for an unprecedented campaign of abuse, slander, and denigration, spearheaded by the American Communist Party and its proliferating fronts, but extending to well-meaning though poorly informed "liberals." As a result an image has been built up of a monstrous inquisition, invading the privacy and personal lives of blameless citizens, who are supposedly de-

nied elementary rights, such as representation by counsel. The thoroughly false allegation is sometimes made that HUAC has never sponsored legislation.

It is high time that the sober factual truth about the Committee, its functions, purposes, and accomplishments should be told. William F. Buckley, Jr. in collaboration with the editors and contributors of *National Review* has done this very effectively in an over-all survey of the history of this controversial body. What emerges is an image of a Congressional Committee, operating under legal procedures and restraints, properly authorized by Congress to keep a watchdog eye on a permanent conspiracy against the security of the American Republic, making its normal share of mistakes, but casting a badly needed spotlight on some activities of Soviet spy rings and on the operations and methods of the numerous "fronts" by which the Communist Party tries to infiltrate into American public life and enlist the cooperation of duped innocents for its purposes.

Investigation is one of the oldest established rights of Congress and has never been successfully contested in the courts. One of the curious inconsistencies in leftist attacks on HUAC is that methods of searching probe which

evoked loud cheers when applied against suspected criminals and "malefactors of great wealth" are denounced as outrageous when applied to individuals suspected of taking part in a conspiracy with implications of espionage and even treason.

One of the most colorful chapters in the book is Ralph de Toledano's staccato, rapid-fire reconstruction of the case of Alger Hiss, which was touched off by hearings of the HUAC. The confrontation of the repentant former communist agent, Whittaker Chambers and the unrepentant Hiss, who at first denied ever knowing Chambers, is one of the biggest dramas of the postwar period. Drawing on an intimate knowledge of all the details, acquired by journalistic coverage of the case, de Toledano shows how Hiss's first attitude of contemptuous superiority was broken down bit by bit, until the revelations in the spectacular "pumpkin papers" led to the indictment and conviction of Hiss for perjury, the statute of limitations excluding the possibility of a more serious charge.

Student groups, egged on by local communists, carried out riotous demonstrations against HUAC hearings in San Francisco in May 1960. A film, "Operation Abolition," showing these demonstra-

tions, has been attacked with remarkable venom. The book contains M. Stanton Evans' exhaustive examination of what really happened in San Francisco, and the role of well-known local communists in the affair.

The Committee has probably suffered from its name. "Un-American" does lend itself to satire and suggests an unduly wide free-wheeling range of activities. Perhaps "Anti-American" would be a more specific definition of what HUAC is really about. Mr. Buckley thinks "Committee on Communist Activities" would define the proper scope of the Committee's functions more satisfactorily and elaborates his suggestion as follows:

"It is not despicable movements . . . that we want to see watched over by a committee of Congress. It is any despicable idea (whether historically un-American or not) which (a) is being sustained by foreign and powerful enemies of the republic, or (b) threatens explosive internal crises."

As Mr. William F. Rickenbacker shows in his excellent chapter, a short history of the Committee, HUAC had a narrow escape from extinction in 1945, when illusions about the harmlessness of communism, the supposed "democracy" of the Soviet Union, and Stalin's willingness to cooperate

for peace and justice were at their height. An amendment offered by Representative John Rankin of Mississippi, making the committee permanent, squeezed through by the close margin of 208 to 186.

But since that time, despite the drumfire of hostile criticism, HUAC has gained steadily in popular esteem and congressional support. When Representative James Roosevelt of California went on the warpath against HUAC and started his own "Operation Abolition," he received commendatory pats on the back from *The Washington Post* and also from *The New York Times*.

But when the votes were counted, Mr. Roosevelt mustered exactly five supporters, as against 412 who favored the continuation of the Committee. Here, as on such issues as the recognition of Red China and its admission to the United Nations, the popular instinct, as reflected in near unanimous votes of Congress, has clearly not been much affected by the fulminations of leftist intellectuals.

A chapter on the procedures employed by the Committee shows that there were some mistakes and inconsistencies in the first post-war years. However, in 1953 elaborate rules of procedure were adopted, with careful consideration of the rights of witnesses to

be represented by counsel and of persons placed in an adverse light by testimony before the Committee to appear before the Committee and state their side of the case.

Most of what has been written about the Committee, apart from its own publications, has been in a hostile polemical spirit. Anyone who is interested in getting a fair factual picture should read this book, which, although prepared by individuals friendly to the aims and purposes of HUAC, contains much useful documentary and factual material. Indeed, no one can discuss the lively controversial subject of the Committee with authority without making himself familiar with the contents of this first over-all survey of its work.

In looking through this story of HUAC one is constantly impressed by the extravagant vehemence and persistence of the attacks which have been delivered against this particular exercise of the established investigative power of Congress. This seems to reflect not spontaneous outbursts of indignation, but a carefully laid design to discredit and, if possible, destroy a body which has cast much light on the dark and devious ways of the communist underground and made itself thoroughly obnoxious to subversives and conscious or unconscious Soviet agents.

Of these enemies HUAC may well be proud, as Grover Cleveland was loved for the enemies he made. ♦

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PELATIAH WEBSTER, "Strictures On Tender Acts" (1780).
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