One of four lectures at an Institute on American Freedom. The other lectures were by Paul G. Hoffman, Gerald W. Johnson and Kenneth C. Royall. They were published with a foreword by Stanley Marcus also in Southwest Review, Autumn 1953.
American Freedom and Education

HENRY M. WRISTON
law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of the American workman, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of the churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws, burning up the foundations of society.

Moreover, the furor thirty-three years ago was not limited to public statements; it proceeded to drastic acts. Wholesale raids led to arrests, which probably exceeded 10,000, in Boston, Paterson, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, and a few other places. These dragnet operations grossly violated due process. A federal judge described the raids as "carried out with . . . disregard of law and of properly verified facts." People were held for long periods without charges, "practically incommunicado." It was a shocking manifestation of illegal action.

When, therefore, one is tempted to think that he lives in tense times, that the public mind is inflamed, and that profit-seekers in patriotism exploit real dangers in order to suppress things which are not dangerous but which they do not like, he might remember that no occurrence in recent months has been worthy of such
scathing castigation as Judge Anderson then gave the illegal and outrageous behavior of the Department of Justice. Today we sometimes hear the words "hysteria" and "witch-hunting," but what happened thirty-three years ago much more fully deserves the names.

The rabble rousing reached a crescendo in New York in 1920 when five duly elected Socialist members of the state legislature, who had been seated and whose qualifications had been approved, were nevertheless discharged on April 1. Even so generally fair-minded a paper as the New York Times called this an American vote altogether, a patriotic and conservative vote. . . . The majority of each party in the Assembly voted in the affirmative. . . . Democrats and Republicans do not vote in that way when they are moved by partisan considerations. . . . The vote. . . . was as clearly and demonstrably a measure of national defense as the vote of Congress declaring war against Germany. And an immense majority of the American people will approve.

It took courage for a "conservative" like Charles Evans Hughes to denounce the procedure as illegal and destructive of American liberties. Yet his bold stand halted further action of like kind.
lake shore and burn, by God." The school-
books of Chicago were examined and only
one history textbook of a satisfactorily
patriotic nature was found among those
scrutinized for evidences of un-Ameri-
canism. It was asserted that "they showed
definitely seeds of the Rhodes scholarship,
the Carnegie Foundation and the English-
Speaking Union." The superintendent of
schools was suspended, later dismissed.

IN THE 1930's there was a fresh outbreak
against "radicalism," largely stimulated
this time by private agencies. Elizabeth
Dilling published *The Red Network: A
"Who's Who" and Handbook of Radical-
ism for Patriots*. By the most charitable
standards it was an incompetent work.
Communists, Socialists, radicals, liberals
— in short, anyone left of center — were
tossed into one basket. The book de-
nounced on successive pages Mahatma
Gandhi and Glenn Frank, then president
of the University of Wisconsin; it at-
tacked Albert Einstein and the great
social worker, Jane Addams. The tattoo of
charges against Bishop G. Bromley Ox-
nam was initiated at that time. To cap it
all, about 1,300 persons were listed, "who
are or have been members of Communist.
Anarchist, Socialist, I.W.W. or Pacifist-controlled organizations, and who, ... knowingly or unknowingly, have contributed in some measure to one or more phases of the Red movement in the United States.” This list included such persons as Senator Borah, Mrs. Roosevelt, William C. Bullitt, John R. Commons, Max Eastman, Clifton R. Fadiman, Waldo Frank, Zona Gale — a melange of people of many shades of opinion lumped into one group.

While the outcry at this time was principally the work of private agencies, restrictive legislation was adopted in several states. Teachers’ oaths were enacted in Indiana, Montana, North Dakota, Washington, Michigan, New York, Arizona, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Texas, and Vermont. In the town in which I then lived a school committee-man demanded that the school library be purged of all books written by persons mentioned in The Red Network. Subsequently Elizabeth Dilling was herself twice indicted for conspiracy and prosecuted in the federal courts. But she had done her share of damage first. By what authority did she and other volunteer censors of American thought presume to
establish standards of political and economic orthodoxy? Who gave them the power to speak ex cathedra and decide what was safe to believe and permissible for free men to utter? Yet they assumed — and sometimes exercised — the right to purge our schools. They have successors who arrogate to themselves the same false authority today.

This episode is instructive. Like all similar "investigations," it treated communism and socialism, left-wingism, New Dealism, and even liberalism as one. In order to avoid admission of this confusion, the phrase usually employed has been "un-American." "Un-American" can mean whatever the investigator, public or private, does not like. "Orthodoxy" is whatever the current sleuth wants it to be; all else tends to be "subversive." For example, in 1926 Fred R. Marvin, editor-in-chief of the New York Commercial, said, "Internationalism is the direct opposite of nationalism, it is Socialism, or as often called today Communism." Seldom is the grab-bag quality of presumed "un-Americanism" put as explicitly as that, but it is implicit in the publications and statements of most of the vigilante groups then and since.
During the thirties, as Hitler rose to power, the League of Nations faltered, and appeasement dominated British policy, students became much concerned about peace. Russian "peace" propaganda of the kind with which we are all by now thoroughly familiar put a taint on the very word "peace." Anyone who spoke for peace was accused of being a "Red." In 1933 the Oxford Union voted that it would "in no circumstances fight for its King and country"; that declaration was taken with great seriousness as reflecting a decline in the patriotism of students and in their commitment to patriotic causes. Suspicion about students' loyalty did not subside. In 1940 one of the great metropolitan dailies of this country asked me to tell why college students "seem to hold to a belief that no ideal is worth fighting for." I replied that, when the need arose, students would fight as they always had before; and, indeed, they did.

The most recent phase of the hue and cry is centered in Congress. It was launched in May, 1938, when the House of Representatives adopted a resolution by Martin Dies which set up the Committee on Un-American Activities. The committee explained its own tactics: "While
Congress does not have power to deny to citizens the right to believe in, teach, or advocate communism, fascism, and nazism, it does have the right to focus the spotlight of publicity upon their activities." A later report was even more explicit: "The purpose of this committee is the task of protecting our constitutional democracy by ... pitiless publicity."

The First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech." The Dies Committee sought to curb unwanted expressions of opinion through the employment of means not contemplated when the Constitution was written. The Constitution contains no warranty that congressmen will be polite, fair, or even intelligent; it does not guarantee that they will not bully people out of their freedom of speech, if people are ready to be bullied.

The Un-American Activities Committee has continually disregarded the warning of Chief Justice Hughes, who, conceding the right to curb abuse of free speech, declared:

The rights themselves must not be curtailed. The greater the importance of safeguarding the community from incitement to the overthrow of our institutions by force and vio-
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ience, the more imperative is the need to preserve inviolate the constitutional rights of free speech, free press and free assembly in order to maintain the opportunity for free political discussion, to the end that government may be responsive to the will of the people and that changes, if desired, may be obtained by peaceful means. Therein lies the security of the Republic, the very foundation of constitutional government.

This passage was quoted on May 2, 1953, by Judge Youngdahl in dismissing the principal count and three subsidiary counts in the indictment of Owen Lattimore. He was re-emphasizing the fact that there is no available acid test of political orthodoxy.

Since the Dies Committee began to function, both the use and the abuse of publicity by Congressional committees have indeed been "pitiless." Throughout the last dozen years the Committee on Un-American Activities has constantly contributed to the growth of mass emotion by statements and charges — some justified, but others exaggerated beyond the bounds of truth. The judicial department of the government can offer no protection against this technique; for, as the great constitutional lawyer, John Lord
O’Brian, has said, “The increasing use of publicity by legislative committees to intimidate witnesses and others and to hinder and discourage expression of unpopular views has been held to be beyond the reach of the courts.”

The misbehavior of some of those who conduct the investigations does not destroy their legality. The authority to make inquiries rests upon the provision in the Constitution that all legislative powers shall be vested in the Congress. At the time of the Teapot Dome episode the Supreme Court made it clear that Congress has sweeping power in this matter. The authority of its committees is clear, therefore, even when their manners are atrocious. The possession of power, however, does not justify its abuse; the greater the power, the greater the need for self-restraint in its use. The key to the success of democracy is the juncture of responsibility with power; this is what committees of Congress need to learn.

One of the most extraordinary aspects of the recent situation is the disparity in treatment of former Communists by the investigators. If a person leaves the Communist party with enough fanfare, he is treated with utmost respect, indeed almost
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canonized. People like Louis Budenz, Eliz-
abeth Bentley, and Whittaker Chambers
are recalled again and again for fresh "rev-
elations"; everything they say is accepted
as gospel truth, even though lying was ha-
itual with them until they recanted com-
munism. Others who also joined the party,
but took no active part and committed
no subversive act (as these people ad-
mittedly did), and later quietly left it,
are pilloried for having once been passive
members.

This inequality of treatment becomes
the more striking because the professional
former Communists who testify so freely
spread fear, hate, and divisiveness. Indeed,
they do it to a degree which must be
pleasing to still-active Communists, one
of whose characteristic objectives is this
very thing. In fact, if these recanters had
only pretended to leave the party and
were actually counterspies (as I certainly
do not assert), they could hardly perform
the function of creating confusion more
effectively than they have done.

NONE OF THE ABOVE is meant to mini-
mize the very real danger posed by the
present world-wide conspiracy, directed
from the Kremlin, which is designed to
overthrow our form of government, the structure of our economy, and our social order. No one can read the report of the Royal Commission of inquiry in Canada in the Gouzenko investigation without gaining an appreciation of both the reality and the subtlety of the Communist menace, and also the difficulty of coping with it.

Moreover, there were attempts by Communists in the thirties, the forties—and probably the fifties—at infiltration of the American educational system. Evidence is overwhelming that the Communists did attempt to infiltrate labor unions, churches, entertainment, social work, charities, the government, and the armed forces; to assume that they overlooked education would be naïve.

How successful were these attempts? We have three sorts of evidence. First, the behavior of students in the war and after: on this point the evidence is overwhelming—they have behaved admirably. There were no draft riots, virtually no disturbance at all in the mobilization of the largest percentage of the population ever undertaken. Fears expressed over a decade proved utterly groundless.

The second evidence is the behavior of
alumni. Regarding them the evidence is equally overwhelming. America's population includes many who have graduated from schools and colleges during that thirty years. They are the ones Attorney-General Palmer and his successors have repeatedly said had been inoculated with the communist virus. Among that presumably "infected generation" are all the present Congressional viewers-with-alarm. No evidence has been offered that the alumni of the last thirty years are markedly different in their social, economic, and political views from earlier generations. In fact, their politics has recently taken a turn toward more conservative lines.

It has been estimated that at the present time the Communist party has fewer than 30,000 members in the entire United States. That number is much smaller than the 1920 estimates. The real problem before the public, therefore, is not so much the indoctrination of youth with "Red" propaganda; the problem is the recovery of Congressional confidence in the institutions of America. Taming headline hunters would do more toward that end than any other single action.

The third evidence regarding the in-
effectiveness of communist infiltration is to be found in the disclosures of the various committees which have been investigating subversive activities for years. Their revelations are of slender substance indeed. Names are occasionally headlined; then large generalizations are made. No committee has ever tabulated the number of Communists or pro-Communists who have been uncovered in the schools and colleges; if infiltration over a period of thirty years had gone very far, one would certainly expect impressive statistical results. Instead, every indication is that the numbers are so trivial that no one seeking political gain from such investigations wants to be very specific.

WHY WERE SOME — a few — teachers, like people in other professions and walks of life, influenced by communist promises and principles? Without condoning their folly, we should attempt to understand how some honest people came, for a time, to believe in communism — or at least in some aspects of it.

At the close of the first World War Russia’s new government was not recognized by the United States and other leading nations; it was treated as a pariah.
Later, several factors softened the censorious mood of many people. Among these factors was a whole series of Russian reforms. A massive effort against illiteracy was launched—a movement bound to win applause in the United States, which has led the world in universal free public education. Discrimination against races and nationalities within Russia was "abolished." The cultural autonomy of its many peoples was respected. Everyone had a job. We now know that some reforms were ephemeral, others were shallow, and still others existed only as propaganda, without a firm root in reality. Nevertheless nondiscrimination, full employment, land reform, universal literacy, all held a powerful appeal to American sympathies.

The most influential factor in arousing a favorable response to communism, however, was the depression of the thirties, which afflicted the whole world but the United States most acutely and for the longest time. It led many to lose faith in our economy. The "mature economy" idea, later exposed as a gross fallacy, was then accepted and expounded by President Roosevelt himself at a time when his
influence and authority were overwhelming.

Politicians were not alone in doubting the resiliency of our economy. Businessmen joined enthusiastically in the NRA, which was designed not by college "theorists" but by practical politicians and hard-headed businessmen so little aware of the fundamental presuppositions of free enterprise that they were ready to abandon their birthright; it was one of the most violent assaults in modern times upon the free enterprise system. Even those who had the greatest stake in traditional economic doctrines quickly turned to the "new" idea. Seeking to meet a desperate situation, they threw economic sanity to the winds. Only a Supreme Court pilloried by the President for thinking in terms of the "horse and buggy" age saved us from utter folly.

As faith in our economy waned, doubt was engendered regarding the virility of the political institutions which formed its framework. In that mood and in those circumstances many felt that democracy had lost its dynamism. To such the available choice seemed to be between the "new" forms of government. Some people, weary of democracy, felt that the
fascist idea was an authentic "wave of the future." To others fascism seemed to offer the most immediate, the most direct, and the most powerful threat to the United States. Statements by high government officials gave support to that idea. Nevertheless, Hitler's threat to the world went virtually unchallenged by the victors of the first World War. Their response to aggression was appeasement. Many who recognized the menacing character of the fascist and nazi governments believed the Soviet to be the only implacable foe of those ideologies. Overconcentration upon the nazi menace blinded them to the serious dangers that lay within communism.

Moreover, there were signs that Russia might try to live at peace with the free world. In 1933 President Roosevelt reversed our policy regarding the Soviet, granted recognition, exchanged ambassadors, and rather pooh-poohed earlier fears. The next year Russia entered the League of Nations, dramatizing the possibilities of peaceful coexistence, if not collaboration. Then the Communists co-operated in "popular front" governments.

When war came, we were allied with Russia. Official censorship concealed from
the American people the failure of the Russians to co-operate wholeheartedly. There were warm comments by the President of the United States. It is said that the Senate arose and applauded as one man the heroism at Stalingrad; sentimentalism surrounded the Russians with a rosy hue.

Those were the conditions, of varying force, at various times, and with various people, which led some to look upon communism with a degree of favor. A few joined the party; others associated themselves more or less actively with organizations in which Communists had a hand — sometimes a controlling hand.

Those who espoused such views were quite wrong in their estimate of the situation. However, they were no more deeply in error than people who believed that fascism was the authentic "wave of the future"; they were no more wrong than those who felt the American economy was senescent or even fatally ill.

In short, many made gross errors in estimating the situation. When one adds together all whose judgment proved faulty, the total is very impressive. Among the worst estimators were members of Congress: only four months before Pearl Harbor the draft was extended
by the margin of a single vote. Most of those in error have long since abandoned their error. Yet today only one group among all those who misinterpreted the facts is treated as though it were not only wrong but deliberately disloyal. Were those representatives and senators who voted against the draft intentionally trying to sabotage the defense of their country? No one claims this; yet others whose error was no greater are pilloried.

In this group were some scholars and members of faculties who made emotional, intellectual, and spiritual commitments to communism or participated in "front" activities. My personal opinion based on long observation is that the number was trivial in proportion to the whole; Senator Jenner on April 11, 1953, asserted that the number of communist teachers was "small." And the few communist teachers were seldom in the "sensitive" subjects—the political and economic disciplines. Politically naive scientists were the most conspicuous victims; and clearly their political views did not relate to their teaching.

THE SUCCESSIVE WAVES of inquiry have reflected the investigators' doubt regard-
ing the integrity of all American institutions — not just educational institutions. They manifest disbelief in the viability of our basic social, economic, and political idea. The core of our national ideology is faith in freedom. In every case these inquiries stemmed from fear that freedom and security are incompatible — and the inquisitors invariably set security above liberty.

The earliest hysteria was over pro-Germans during the first World War. The study of German was dropped from many schools—as though ignorance were a cure for anything! Men who taught German were dismissed from teaching appointments on the flimsiest pretexts; Harvard helped halt that trend with an act of courage and sanity when it refused to barter its integrity for a large sum of money. Victory put an end to this phase of doubt of America's intellectual and moral solvency.

The next surge of hysteria, which opens the modern phase, was deliberately contrived by a politically ambitious attorney-general who hoped to become President. He abused the investigative powers of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; he incited voluntary spy-hunting; he violated
the law and trampled the Constitution.

Mr. Palmer's fortunate departure from office, and the action of a stern and caustic federal judge, ended that inglorious spasm.

Meanwhile the infection had spread to the states, and private groups of viewers-with-alarm were in full cry. New York had the Lusk Committee investigations; the committee's report was in four fat volumes which mentioned membership of teachers in "revolutionary organizations" and said that "in different parts of the State of New York systematic campaigns have been conducted to reach school-children and teach them to detest their own country and government." Real evidence to support the sweeping indictment was slender.

States passed laws requiring teachers' oaths, but the experience of many years has now proved the futility of such legislation. If it had been an effective approach, the uproar would have ended long since; its uselessness is fully demonstrated by the continuing lack of confidence that there has been any improvement as a result of such laws. The recent California episode shows the folly of an approach via an oath. No Communists were identi-
fied or dismissed. Instead, one of our greatest universities was torn with controversy, disrupted in its vital tasks, deprived of the services of distinguished scholars, and made suspect as a home for new scholars. It would be hard to imagine a more futile — or more disastrous — proceeding if we have any interest in advancing educational practice and providing our children with better skills and attitudes.

The private groups of political vigilantes have changed personnel over the years, and the root motivation has varied from time to time and group to group as new organizations emerged. Some have been fascist in inspiration and positively vicious. Some have grown out of a lack of basic faith in democracy; indeed there have been occasional explicit denunciations of democracy as "un-American." Others have contained sincere patriots scared to death by a world which had run beyond their comprehension; they yearned for "older and simpler" times which never existed save in their unhistorical minds. Some would give up the long battle for freedom in exchange for order and discipline of the masses — which means tyranny. Nearly all these amateur rooters—
out of "subversion" have this in common — they have been and are scandalously incompetent; they spread fear; they impair the functioning of the American system and tend to disorganize education.

Congressional committees are the most recent entrants in the confusion sweepstakes and are most in the public eye. Their tactics are often summarized by the word "McCarthyism." It is a poor word; Senator McCarthy is a Johnny-come-lately in hating Communists, having been at it only a few years. It would be better to call it "Palmerism," in memory of the man who launched the panic a generation ago. Painful as it may be to attempt to be fair to a man who seems never to make a like effort, the fact is that Senator McCarthy is neither the first nor even the worst of the Congressional sleuths. Both doubtful distinctions belong to the House. The first was Texas' own Martin Dies, who developed the technique of reckless headlines under the guise of "pitiless publicity." The worst also belongs to the House of Representatives; it was an explicit, incompetent, and wholly vicious attempt by the Un-American Activities Committee, under the chairmanship of Representative Wood of Georgia, to purge
schools, colleges, and universities of "dangerous" books.

The episode was brilliantly informative of the wrong way to "purify" education. The committee so far overreached itself that it was almost instantly apparent there was political dynamite rather than political profit in its shocking behavior. Its categorical imperative was followed by a spate of weasel words. It beat a hasty retreat and tried to pretend that it had not intended to interfere. Any witness before a Congressional committee who made such a series of contradictory assertions as were made by spokesmen for the committee would be indicted for perjury.

Congressional committees have gone far beyond the abuse of witnesses. On the initiative of the Un-American Activities Committee, Congress attached to an appropriations bill a rider which had the character of a bill of attainder. The Supreme Court unanimously declared it unconstitutional; there is no reason to believe its authors did not know that it violated the Constitution when they conceived the trick.

The first time Congress defined communism as subversive was in the Smith Act of 1940. If teaching had really been
in the parlous condition that a succession of investigations had headlined, some action would have been taken before that time. And if the act had been an effective reply to subversion, investigations need not have continued. Yet the Smith Act only gave them renewed life.

The present investigations of education are directed by Senator Jenner and Representative Velde. Both have been relatively orderly and relatively mild. Perhaps we should be grateful for such crumbs of comfort. But the inquiries are still futile; their net effect is to keep the public needlessly alarmed, to spread fear within and without educational institutions; they sap confidence in the cornerstone of the American system — educational opportunity for all in the highest possible degree.

They exhibit lack of faith in the American family, the American church, and the manifold agencies of enlightenment — since the investigators appear to believe that a few Communists infiltrated in a few institutions can overcome all those stabilizing influences. Common sense should make it clear that if a few obscure teachers are stronger than all our American institutions, the fabric of our
society is weak indeed. That is what is essentially vicious about these investigations. They all stem from lack of faith in the strength of the American system.

A full generation of Red-hunting has led to executive trespass upon the Constitution, to legislative abuse of investigative powers, to the promotion of ruthless private vigilante groups. Besides the harm all this has done education, there is a substantial body of evidence that it has harmed the government itself and impaired the principles embodied in the Bill of Rights. It is time to stop such subversive activities.

The present federal administration is headed by a former university president. He held that post long enough to see this problem from the inside as well as from the outside. In bidding farewell to Columbia he said:

When I was asked to come to Columbia by the trustees, I, like all others outside of university halls, had heard of this constant rumor and black suspicion that our universities were cut and honeycombed with subversion and there was communism lurking behind every brick on the campus and every blade of grass. . . . I have found universities in general engaged in how to bring up, how to teach, how to develop fine citizens to serve in a free de-
American democracy. . . . This is not to say that there may not be people among us false to the doctrines and the basic principles in which we believe. If they are there, if they are sworn enemies of our system, if they believe in its destruction by force, then I know of no one who will be more anxious than the true teacher to get rid of them. We are engaged in a war of great ideologies. This is not just a casual argument against slightly different philosophies. This is a war of light against darkness, freedom against slavery, Godliness against atheism. No man flying a war plane, no man with a defensive gun in his hand, can possibly be more important than the teacher.

WHAT, THEN — against this thirty years' background — shall we do? In one of his plays, *The Skin of Our Teeth*, Thornton Wilder writes: "Every good thing in the world stands on the razor-edge of danger." It has always been so with free speech and will always remain so. Nothing in the First Amendment to the Constitution promises that you can exercise free speech without unpleasant consequences. If you say something a senator or representative does not like, you may be exercising a constitutional right, but he has the privilege of getting behind Congressional immunity and throwing mud. We must learn to accept such acts of cow-

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ardice as indicative of the character of those who employ them and come as near as we can to Benjamin Franklin's prescription. After he had been slandered by one of his fellow commissioners to France, he observed that when an adversary spattered you with mud the proper course was to let it dry—at which time it would easily brush off.

Senators and representatives have found new means of harassing private citizens, and some are ruthless in the employment of those techniques, so ruthless as to render their actions a clear and scandalous abuse of their legitimate powers. But the First Amendment offers no warranty, express or implied, that from time to time people will not send to Congress fools, knaves, bullies, self-seekers; the history of America shows that has happened even before our time. The only way to deal with such people is to make it politically unprofitable for them to employ their techniques.

Patrioteers can silence men by bullying them only so long as there are cowards abroad in the land. No senator or representative has power to stop anyone from saying anything; he is totally without authority to do so. He can stimulate the
timid to such fear that they abandon freedom. But if you are going to flee from exercise of your rights when someone calls you names, you are not worthy of freedom. Responsible thinkers do not yield to pressure when the issue is drawn. You may lose friends or comfort — Gandhi and Nehru spent time in jail; Adenauer was also put in jail. Freedom must be won, not only on the battlefields, but at the tea party, in the gossip column, at every point where one life touches another — otherwise it is meaningless. You cannot have freedom without risk.

For myself I do not believe that the scholarly world is an association of Casper Milquetoasts. It is true that the great emphasis upon tenure and upon security has made the academic world hospitable to some who like to have a shield between them and the winds of doctrine, but education is no tender plant and is not easily "controlled." Of all things the hardest to control is thought.

The First Amendment assumes that men want to speak their minds. It does not proclaim a right to parrot somebody else's mind. We know that when a person becomes a Communist he surrenders the right to think for himself; he must
follow the party line. That has been demonstrated a countless number of times, perhaps most dramatically when a "capitalist war of aggression" became a "war of peace-loving democratic peoples" overnight because Hitler turned on Stalin. The First Amendment, I repeat, makes no provision for a man to speak someone else's mind; Charlie McCarthy has no rights under the First Amendment, nor has any other mouthpiece for the mind of another.

There is something slightly absurd in the claim that the right to "free speech" is violated by questions regarding a man's loyalty. Yet that is the claim which has been made by men whose actions have been so clandestine that few people knew about them. It is absurd for a man to claim his opinions are no one's business when he is estopped from having any opinions of his own by the nature of his commitments to communist discipline.

It is possible to argue (though not with much conviction since the courts have spoken) that no one should be asked, "Are you now or have you ever been a Communist?" But, if it is proper, as the courts say it is, to ask that question, it is fantastic to assert that professors should
be exempt from responding. So long as the question is not outlawed, there is no basis for any claim to a “class” exemption. The question, the answer, and the compulsion involved have none of them anything whatever to do with “academic freedom.”

A positive approach to this problem is to set freedom above security. Our generation is conterminous with an over-accent upon social security, national security, security in appointments, security in employment, old age security, and security in many other guises. If you concentrate your whole attention on security, you cannot have your mind on freedom, which is always risky. Benjamin Franklin said, “They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” Therefore, a necessary step in recovering public confidence is once again to set freedom ahead of security.

Another constructive step is to reject a current fallacy which plays directly into the hands of those who menace liberty in the name of protecting America. It is the fallacy of supposing that the opposite of something wrong must be something right. A moment of analysis shows that
this is nonsense. It is based upon the assumption that opinion is distributed along a straight line. But that is not the nature of opinion, which scatters in all directions, to make a pattern which is infinitely complicated. This is so elementary that it seems hardly credible it can be doubted. Yet hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of our fellow-citizens have been gulled into the belief that, if a man proclaims himself an anti-Communist, those who oppose him must be in favor of communism.

If we express it diagrammatically, the point will be clear: the McCarthy diagram would be a straight line with communism at one end and McCarthy at the other; if you are not with McCarthy, you must be closer to communism. Change the diagram and you get nearer the truth: put communism in the center of a circle; put McCarthy, McCarran, Velde, Budenz, Bentley, and any others on the circumference; place yourself at your favorite place on the circumference. You may be right beside McCarthy and Company, or you may be 180 degrees away — yet you will be just as far from communism as he is, but still not close to him.

There was a time when it was asserted
that the only choice was between communism and fascism, because democracy had too many weaknesses to survive. That was a manifestation of this same "either-or" fallacy. Today it takes the form of either communism or McCarthyism. The stupidity of this false alternative must be brought home: just as many kept their faith in democracy and wanted neither communism nor fascism, so you need not espouse either communism or McCarthyism. If you believe in freedom, help refute this nonsense that those who oppose un-American methods must be partisans of communism. You can hate both. That is the answer to people who say that because McCarthy, Jenner, Velde, and others are against communism they should not be criticized for abuses of Congressional immunity or assaults upon the integrity of honest men.

There are other means far better adapted to the desired ends. In politics, if the means are wrong, the ends will not be good. The classic instance of a fatal disparity between means and ends appears in one of the essays of Charles Lamb. He described how the Chinese first discovered the delicacy of roast pig — by the accidental burning of a house. Thereupon
there was an epidemic of house-burning to roast other pigs. Men ultimately learned that there were more economical means of getting better roast pig. Some of our investigators have not yet learned this simple lesson; they are willing to burn the house of liberty to destroy invaders who have no more business being within it than a pig has inhabiting a human residence. Yet their pretense is that no other means are available, that the end justifies any measures, however drastic, however hurtful to liberty.

Here are the continuing obligations of students and teachers: neither cower nor invite martyrdom; seek no fight but avoid none when the issue is clear; be neither truculent nor pusillanimous. The pressures today are not nearly as great as those in times past. Security for communities, for industries, for profits, for occupations would bring only stagnation; it ultimately means the acceptance of controlled rigidity. There can be no liberty without hazard; freedom would be meaningless if it were safe.

Remember this: "Every good thing in the world stands on the razor-edge of danger."