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No. 67

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 17th, 1940.

My Lord,

22.4/17/39

With reference to my despatch No. 1254 of the 11th November last I have the honour to transmit to Your Lordship herewith copies of the report submitted to Congress by the House Committee on un-American activities. The report recapitulates the conclusions reached by the Committee after a year and a half's work, and suggests that they be allowed to continue their investigation for a further period.

2. The introductory part of the report sets forth the general principles involved in the Committee's work. These are, in their own words, "to prevent the growth or spread of influence of any organisation or group which seeks to undermine democracy and substitute dictatorship of whatever sort for it", but also to recognise that "it is at least equally important that in combating subversive groups of this character nothing be done which would undermine the fundamental structure of constitutional liberty itself". In accordance with the first principle the Committee represent their task as having been to bring publicity to bear on the

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The Right Honourable

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

INDEX

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various extremist groups existing in the United States. Recognition of the second principle seems to have been the main reason why they have refrained from recommending any legislation which would specifically prohibit such groups from continuing their activities. They content themselves with urging the authorities vigorously to prosecute any breaches of the existing law which un-American organisations might commit, and imply that in their belief the weapon of exposure and publicity are sufficient to keep these organisations in check.

3. Much of the evidence presented at the Committee's public hearings has been reported in previous despatches from this Embassy. The summary of the evidence which is to be found in the body of the report is able and unbiassed, and it is possible to accept without reservation both the description of the organisation of the different groups and the Committee's estimate of their joint and several importance. The latter is presented in a statistical form in the last paragraph of the report, as follows: "We believe that the committee would render a disservice to the Nation if it left the impression in its report that there is anything in the present situation to cause anyone to lose faith in the American people as a whole or their devotion to their basic institutions. Indeed, one of the greatest facts of all that should be

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their belief that in view of recent events "it is reasonable to expect that there will take place a sharp reduction not only in the influence exerted by the Communist Party in the United States but also in the number of people adhering to it".

5. The German-American Bund is set in the forefront of the section devoted to Nazi-Fascist organisations. As I have reported elsewhere, the imprisonment of Fritz Kuhn has been a blow to the prestige of the Bund from which it is not likely to recover, and the Nazis may be expected to turn their attention to other less obvious channels through which to influence the German-American population. The emphasis placed on the Bund in this report is due first to the fact that the evidence has proved it to be the instrument of a foreign government and secondly to the co-operation which the Committee has found to exist between it and certain of the innumerable other organisations of a Fascist or anti-Semitic character that exist or have existed in this country during the last few years. As the Committee point out, these organisations spring up overnight and are replaced by others with a name which is thought to have a more popular appeal. The words "Christian", "patriotic" and "American" are most often used for this purpose. Some are the creations of genuine would-be Führers and others are simply mechanisms for extracting money from the gullible. Attempts have been made by the leaders of various groups to bring about a  
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