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Loyalty Legislation

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Loyalty Legislation . . .

. . . Carl Ramsay

In the last three years have been sown the legislative seeds which, if nourished, might well turn the United States into something like George Orwell's nightmarish conception of the 1984 state. And it might not take thirty-some years! This growth of legal tyranny is accepted in the belief that it provides internal protection from that totalitarianism that takes the form of World Communism. And certainly it is providing such protection. But where is the logic of protecting us from totalitarianism by making us totalitarian? Is governmental tyranny any more desirable because it originates within rather than without? Is the suppression of free expression any less suppressive because it is implemented by an American rather than by a Russian? Is a dictator necessarily any less dictatorial because he was born in Georgia, U.S.A. rather than in Georgia, U.S.S.R.?

But wait! You say this talk about dictatorship and suppression is nothing like the true situation in America today. And we must certainly protect ourselves from Communism. I agree on both counts; but in protecting ourselves we are turning out a lot of legislation that can easily be converted into machinery for producing an Orwellian America.

The law most potentially destructive to democracy in America is McCarran's Internal Security Act. There are several parts of the McCarran Act which have contributed to putting America on the road to totalitarianism. The act calls for the registration of all Communist and Communist-front organizations. It also requires that these organizations label all mailed publications and all broadcasts as having a Communist origin. Members of these organizations are ineligible for non-elective Federal jobs. And, with incredible non-specificity, the Act makes it unlawful to perform or plan any action "which would substantially contribute to the establishment within the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship."

These provisions of the law apply to the Communist Party and to so-called Communist-front organizations. There can be little opposition to this law being applied against the Communist Party. But an objection of monumental proportions arises when the Law is used to suppress what the Law itself considers Communist-front organizations. The objection is that any organization from the PTA to the

GOP could be considered Communist-front. Whether or not it is, depends on the ruling of a five man board which, according to the McCarran Act, bases its findings on such dubious criteria as whether or not the organization is giving aid and support to the Communist Party. Would an organization that proclaimed itself in favor of public housing, Federal work projects and a high minimum wage; and maintained a steadfast opposition to dictatorial tendencies in government, be considered a Communist-front organization because the Communists ostensibly shared these views? Apparently so, because it would be giving aid and support to at least a part of the Communist Party's program. So, if someday when the Republicans have a firm grip on Congress and want to make their grip a bit stronger: and if the Democratic Party's views coincide with the Communist's on some innocent issues, then the government could quite easily have the Democratic Party declared a Communist-front organization and have it suppressed by the McCarran Act.

Having an organization declared Communist-front deprives its members of their Constitutional rights by refusing them Federal jobs. But more important, it could severely cripple a worthwhile organization by making it brand its views Communist. So the McCarran Act can be used as an agent to suppress political parties. The suppression of all political parties but one has fearful parallels in Nazi Germany, Russia and Fascistic Italy and Spain.

But you say the Act is not being used that way today. Nevertheless it's there and it can be used that way. It's a young law. Give it time.

The section of the Act most effective in general suppression is that which outlaws any act or plan of action "which would substantially contribute to the establishment within the United States of a totalitarian dictatorship." How's that for vague wording? Would a vote for Joe Smith (according to our files, a totalitarian, though he may deny it) contribute substantially enough? (Of course, to make sure you don't vote for Smith we'll have to do away with the secret ballot.) Might not some day, voting for any but a specified slate of candidates "contribute substantially"? Would an editorial criticizing some government project be an indirect contribution to establishment of a dictatorship (by weakening present government)? And how would you execute this law? In order to prevent America from becoming a police state we must use all methods of detection, counter-espionage and spying in all areas of society—in the name of the McCarran Act.

In other words anything could be construed as "substantially contributing" by an unsympathetic government. And the methods used to enforce the Act would reek of police-stateism. The loose-wording and

suppressive applications of the McCarran Act make it too dangerous a legal instrument to be tolerated in a country that intends to remain democratic.

Lullaby . . .

. . . Mary Louise Lemon

Sleep now, child; your mother is worn
—Fa! my boy, my dear, naughty boy—
You've hidden your blocks and you've broken your horn
—Fa, Fa! my dear, naughty boy—
You looked for adventure and you soon found
A frog in the pond, a worm on the ground.
And now you must sleep with what you have found
—Fa, Fa! my dear, naughty boy.

Away to the west where the sun goes down
—La! my boy, my sweet darling boy—
Away to the night on your bed of down
—La, La! my sweet, darling boy—
Away I will whisk you; and we shall see
Stars that are ships on the night's dark sea,
Bobbing, and blinking the lights on their lee
—La, La! my sweet, darling boy—

Then back to the east where the sun comes up
—Ha! my boy, my pretty, bright boy—
Back to the morning when you'll wake up
—Ha, Ha! my pretty, bright boy—
Back to your room, to your wee, blue crib,
To your tall highchair and your messy bib,
Back to the day and the toys that you hid.
(Fa! my dear naughty boy, my boy!)
—Ha, Ha! my pretty bright boy!—