

Govt. Plans to Probe New Left

Fifth Estate Collective

1967

NEW YORK—The American Civil Liberties Union has warned that a new round of anti-Communist investigation by congressional committees could turn into a “congressional inquisition” and jeopardize freedom of speech and association.

In a statement issued by John de J. Pemberton, Jr., the Union’s executive director, the ACLU sharply attacked the sweeping investigation by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee of New Left organizations and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and the House Un-American Activities Committee’s inquiry into the alleged role of Communist influence in last summer’s rioting.

The civil liberties organization also expressed alarm that another Congressional committee studying racial riots, the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, headed by Senator John McClellan, might move into “sacrosanct First Amendment areas” by linking the protected political activities of New Left groups to the urban disturbances.

The ACLU struck hard especially at the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee’s announced inquiry and its investigators’ seizure of the files of the National Conference for New Politics and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party from MFDP’s headquarters during the recent Chicago meeting of the former group.

“In an arrogant display of government power which flies squarely in the face of the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition against illegal searches, employees of the Committee, without a warrant, rifled the personal possessions of citizens to obtain information pertaining to their political activity,” the ACLU statement said.

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