

allowed to investigate the Black Legion, an insignificant anti-Semitic gang. Now he wanted to probe all organizations "found operating in the United States for the purpose of diffusing within the United States of slanderous or libelous un-American propaganda of religious, racial or subversive political prejudices which tends to incite the use of force and violence or which tends to incite libelous attacks upon the President of the United States or other officers of the Federal Government, whether such propaganda appears to be of foreign or domestic origin." Dickstein promised that his resolution—with its evocative term, "un-American," destined for so long and famous a life—would permit the investigation not merely of Nazis, but of "Everybody!"

When the resolution came to the floor of the House in April, it found almost no support. Representative Johnson of Minnesota asked a question—"What is meant by un-American activities?"—which was to echo down the decades without ever receiving a much better answer than it received that day, when it was ignored. Civil libertarians opposed the resolution as a witch hunt, and Maury Maverick of Texas cautioned Dickstein that it could "start a wave of anti-Semitic propaganda all over this country." The pro-German contingent was opposed because the gentleman from New York had made it abundantly clear that what he meant by "un-American activities" were pro-German activities. Even so confirmed a subversive-hunter as Hamilton Fish—perhaps taking personally the reference to libels on the President—came out against Dickstein, warning in the very language of his enemies: "This bill sets up an un-American check-up, nothing more or less, and restores the Alien and Sedition laws." J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, a freshman already winning a reputation for being able to spot Communist subversion in the fall of any sparrow, mocked the Dickstein resolution as inviting the investigation of soldiers parading in kilts and playing bagpipes.

Sam Dickstein must be forgiven if he suspected that it was not so much the language of his resolution that offended men like Fish and Thomas, as its sponsor. He, Sam Dickstein, was the main obstacle to his own ambitions. The entire House